

last point because I think there is some tendency in discussions of this type to emphasize pretty heavily food. Of course, we all know that food represents about 23 percent of the budget of urban wage and salary earners and smaller percent of the budget of more affluent groups, so in discussing consumer education we ought not stop at food but also consider what can be done for other items.

If prices for more items, either average prices or a range of prices, were published for a greater number of localities, consumers might be able to determine whether items they are considering are really the bargains that sellers claim them to be. If they were able to obtain a reasonable estimate of what they should expect to pay for an item, they could be in a position to be more careful shoppers.

3. There appears to be a great deal of confusion in the minds of consumers about the price per unit represented by different sizes of packages. Because of its present method of collecting price data, the Bureau's existing price records do not provide a complete answer to this question. With an expansion of coverage to include a broader cross-section of package sizes, however, we could advise consumer of per-unit differences in prices for various package sizes.

This comes back to the point I made with respect to our survey of food costs for poor and affluent consumers. The price per pound or per unit is generally higher for the smaller packages with so many hundreds of consumer goods and such a confusing variety of package sizes. We don't presently have a good sample of prices for all sizes of packages for all goods but this is something which conceivably could be done. We also could provide information on changes in per-unit prices as new package sizes are introduced, or old ones are altered.

4. A major area in which BLS data could be made more useful to consumers is that of family budgeting. In connection with our forthcoming reports on standard budgets, we are planning to prepare pamphlets in popular form. More could be done along this line than we now are presently able to do. It would involve further simplification of the manner in which the budgets are presented, and their adaptation to various types and sizes of families. The results would provide a "norm" against which individual families could measure their own spending for various classes of goods and services.

I know Mrs. Ross and I have discussions approximately once a month on why we are spending so much. This often comes down to the question of whether we are spending too much for food. Are we spending too much for recreation? Are we spending too much for the auto? And so forth. I think probably most families have this type of discussion about once a month it would probably help them to know how their expenditures for their particular items compare with the average for families in their income group.

The data which the Bureau gathers on consumer income and expenditure, as well as the work that is done in preparing the standard budgets, could be exploited further. For example, we could prepare pamphlets on "the cost of running a house," or "the cost of owning and operating a car," or "the cost of rearing a child." These are subjects on which we receive many inquiries.

We do the best we can with these inquiries but we are not able to handle them at all. Most of the basic data needed to produce them are contained in the results of our consumer expenditure surveys, but