

better results. That is to say, lower prices and better quality in the free market.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Now, are you satisfied about what the press does, aside from dramatic rises such as milk, have you found the press useful in disseminating information that would be concretely useful to the consumer.

Mr. ROSS. Oh, yes.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. You said in your statement, it is better to buy a used car in February than July.

Have you ever seen anything like this reported in the press?

Mr. ROSS. Well, I don't recall that particular statement. I don't want to single out different newspapers, or magazines for comment. I would say some of them do a better job than others.

I have seen in some newspapers and magazines, particularly valuable treatments of consumer budget information and of the CPI, and the wholesale price index, what they are, what they measure, how they can be used by the consumers, what they show, and so forth. The particular point about seasonal fluctuations has been dealt with quite adequately in some treatments I have seen. For example, one newspaper had a series of five long—I think almost a page long each—articles last year, on the Consumer Price Index, and the man who wrote that had the space to give a very adequate treatment.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Some of the studies you have made for the Consumer Price Index on the costs of such items as mortgage insurance, real estate property taxes, insurance rates, appliance costs, clothing, and so forth are published on a national basis rather than a city by citywide basis.

Wouldn't it be more useful if it were published on a citywide basis, or a communitywide basis?

Mr. ROSS. I think I will ask Mr. Chase to comment on that.

Mr. CHASE. It certainly would be more useful. It goes back to the problem the Commissioner mentioned earlier, that the samples outside of food are too small to support separate city indexes for these other items.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Is that because you don't have enough people to take samples, or you don't choose to take larger samplings?

Mr. CHASE. We don't have enough resources to do it on a city by city basis.

Mr. ROSS. Collection of prices is a pretty expensive process. There are just so many hundreds of different goods and services which have to be sampled. There are hundreds of cities. In each city, there are many types of stores, discount houses, chain stores, independents, supermarkets, and so forth. So that it is a pretty complicated task to get a sample of all these different variables.

Of course, there are different qualities of merchandise, different package sizes, all kinds of variations. There are really millions of different prices in the economy, and I think Mr. Chase is correct that right now we don't have the budget which would permit publication of city by city prices for all these items. We would have to get bigger samples in each city.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Do your field clerks check stores the same day of each month?

Mr. ROSS. No.