

Mr. WYDLER. There wouldn't be any way you can think of to encourage chains or large stores of this type to go into these areas?

Mr. Ross. Well, I am sure there are ways it could be done, but I really haven't studied that.

Mr. WYDLER. Possibly the cost of doing business in an area such as that, looking at our recent disturbances around the country, I would imagine your insurance rates, for example, must be tremendously different—or they will be at least in the near future. I don't really know what they are.

Mr. Ross. Well, I have been in the Watts area a couple of times since the riot there and I know that some of the chainstores have not been rebuilt, and I think there still is a shortage of chainstores in the Watts area.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. One way Government could help would be through tax abatement or tax advantages of one sort or another to induce them to go into these areas.

Mr. Ross. Yes.

Mr. WYDLER. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Thank you very much, Commissioner.

Again, please accept my compliments. It has been a pleasure to have you, and I want to congratulate you on coming up with new thoughts and ideas. Maybe we can be useful in putting them into action. Your full statement, together with a description of the CPI and the "Estimated Retail Food List for May 1967" will be printed at this point in the record.

(The information referred to follows:)

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ARTHUR M. ROSS, COMMISSIONER OF LABOR STATISTICS

I have been requested to discuss with the Special Studies Subcommittee how Bureau of Labor Statistics data can be of help to consumers and how this information might be more effectively presented and disseminated.

Most consumers need and want help in the form of information to assist them in their shopping. In order to buy wisely, consumers need objectively-determined facts about the comparative prices of the alternative products among which they must choose. Consumers need an appraisal of the current price situation. Which prices are rising? Which are falling? What are today's good buys? When is the best time of the year to buy various items? How much can be saved by deferring some purchases? How much can be saved by stocking up when prices are lowest? Many consumers also want help in developing family budgets. How much do persons in a particular income bracket generally spend for clothing? How much does it cost to own and operate a car? The Bureau receives thousands of letters each year wanting to know the answers to such questions. Many letters are referred to by Members of Congress.

As you know, the Bureau does collect and analyze a great deal of information that is of value to consumers. We publish the Consumer Price Index, a statistical measure of changes in prices of goods and services bought by urban wage earners and clerical workers. It is published monthly for the country as a whole and separately for 23 large metropolitan areas. On a national basis the details extend to separate indexes published either monthly or quarterly for about 300 individual consumer items. We also publish average retail prices for nearly 100 food items for the United States and the 12 largest metropolitan areas.

I should like to make special mention of the Bureau's standard budget studies, estimates of what it costs in dollars and cents, to maintain various standards of living. Next month, the Bureau will begin publishing new indexes of intercity differences in living costs. The Bureau plans to publish cost estimates for a modest living standard separately for 39 metropolitan areas. A U.S. urban average cost estimate will also be published and, in fact, will be the "base" of the intercity (or interarea) indexes of living costs.