

and clerks who process them are well trained to watch for unusual deviations in prices which might be due to errors in reporting.

The Consumer Price Index represents the average movement of prices for wage earners and clerical workers as a broad group, but not necessarily the change in prices paid by any one family or small group of families. The index is not directly applicable to any other occupational group. Some families may find their outlays changing because of changes in factors other than prices, such as family composition. The index measures only the change in prices and none of the other factors which affect family living expenses.

In many instances, changes in quoted prices are accompanied by changes in the quality of consumer goods and services. Also, new products are introduced frequently which bear little resemblance to products previously on the market; hence, direct price comparisons cannot be made. The Bureau of Labor Statistics makes every effort to adjust quoted prices for changes in quality, and has developed special procedures for this purpose, including the use of technical specifications and highly trained personnel referred to previously. Nevertheless, some residual effects of quality changes on quoted prices undoubtedly do affect the movement of the Consumer Price Index either downward or upward from time to time.