

which the poor have been fleeced. The Safeway denies this, of course, and cites two other Government studies—both 2 years old—to exonerate them.

Neither study connects the timing of price increases to welfare checks.

One study was handled by the fledgling United Planning Organization over a 5-day timespan, covering four aspects of supermarket shopping, one of which covered the behavior of 30 customers in a supermarket.

The study, according to UPO spokesmen, did find the poor pay slightly more in the inner city slums, which we find remarkable. We find it remarkable because the study was made in connection with the National Association of Food Chains. The shoppers even carried letters of introduction from the association and UPO to ask the managers for permission to record prices. It is not recorded, however, which organization paid for the cost of the study or the purchases.

The other study, done by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, covered the 1st through the 30th of a month and would you believe, the investigators gave stores a 2-week notice? They found no discrepancies.

You won't find a reporter in this room who would write a story based on investigations like that and we hope the association does not continue to insult the intelligence of this panel with further mention of these "studies."

The representatives from Safeway will suggest, I'm sure, that we were incorrect, either out of malice or stupidity. We think we were, if not wise, then painfully careful. If any goods were unmarked, as many were, we asked the manager for the price. No shelf tabs were used—since many were absent. All items were recorded, then and there. Any items questioned later by the shoppers caused the entire section to be disqualified.

As for malice, we can only plead stupidity. Not one of these shoppers would have had the intelligence to rig their price charts to make graphs come out like that. It took an economist to figure these things out.

We have nothing to gain, and at this point we all lost quite a bit out of our personal funds—our grocery funds—to finance this investigation.

Nevertheless, we will continue it, Mr. Chairman. This is just the start. There are too many related, unsolicited reports pouring in to allow us to drop it. We have definite indications—and a lot stronger than we got in a northeast alley—that other chains are involved, other places, other charges connected with quality, shortchanging, customer service.

We hope you will continue your inquiry. We hope the Senate will pursue it, as part of the deceptive practices investigation in January. We have asked for an investigation, both by the Agriculture Department and Congress, of the obvious exploitation of the Federal food stamp program. We have asked for the Federal Trade Commission to rule that stores which advertise chainwide standards of quality, cleanliness, and customer service must give it equally in all neighborhoods, and stores which advertise chainwide sales imply chainwide prices for the unadvertised goods, too.

Have you ever seen a shopper go from Safeway to Safeway for a bargain here or a bargain there? They don't, because they have be-