

and could select stores located outside these preferred tracts so long as the location was within the low income area. In making the selection the regional price economist was instructed to include only full line grocery stores insofar as possible in order to maximize the number of different items priced in a single store.

It should be pointed out that the distribution of the sample among the three types of stores should not be interpreted as representative of the distribution of full line grocery stores within the low-income area, or of the volume of sales of these types of stores. Data were not available for making the selection on either of these bases. Nor do we know what proportion of food purchases by low-income families are made in stores located in the neighborhoods in which they reside. The samples were selected by economists familiar with the various areas of the city and to the best of their knowledge consist of establishments typical of full line grocery stores located in the low-income areas.

B. Higher income area

The Washington staff selected 15 stores located in the higher income area of the city from the full CPI food store sample. Since the low-income areas were all within the city limits, higher income area stores located in the suburbs were excluded in most cases. Stores selected were located as far away as possible from the low income areas.

5. Data obtained

A. Prices: The goal of the project was to have two price quotations on each of the 18 food commodities from each of the reporting stores. One price would be for the quality of that item sold in greatest volume by those food stores located in the low income area that were included in the store sample for that area. The price on that quality was to relate to the quantity in which it was most commonly sold by the reporting store.

The second price was to be for the quality and quantity of the commodity for which prices are reported for the CPI; these represent those qualities and quantities most frequently sold in stores in middle to higher income areas. Brands or varieties for which prices were most frequently reported for the CPI in that city were entered on the schedules used for stores in both income areas in order to obtain the maximum number of price comparisons between stores in the two areas for the CPI quality. Price comparisons for the two areas were made only for identical brands, or (for unbranded commodities) for identical varieties, and between the same type of store (chain, large independent, small independent).

The BLS agents were instructed to complete data collection in their low income area assignment first in order to determine the volume selling quality and quantity of each of the 18 commodities in each of these stores, and the current price for that quality and quantity. Prices were also to be obtained for the quality and quantity of the commodity identified in the CPI specification, and for one of the brands previously listed on the schedule, if any of them were in stock. If none of the listed brands was available, but a competing brand in the same quality class was available, price and other requested information was to be reported on that brand.

Prior to visiting stores in the higher income area sample, the BLS agent was to make a record of the qualities and quantities reported as volume sellers in stores in his assignment in the low-income area, and endeavor to obtain quotations on the same brand and quantity in a corresponding type store in his higher income area outlet assignment. If none of these brands was carried in the latter stores, but they did carry another brand of the same quality, price and other information on this brand was to be entered.

B. Supplementary information was obtained relative to services provided and quality of selected items.

6. Pricing dates

Pricing in all six cities was scheduled for the period February 21-25 and agents were instructed to complete as much of their assignment as possible during the first 3 days of the week. If weekend special prices were reported for any item in stores priced on Thursday or Friday, the prices in effect earlier in the week for these items were used in this study.

7. BLS agent assignments

The BLS agents were assigned an equal number of stores in the two income areas of the city; the same agent collected data from the two stores (one in each