

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Do the poor pay more?

Mr. ROSS. I have summarized it for food—in the case of rents we found that the poor did pay higher rents for the same or equivalent space and facilities.

In the case of nonfood commodities, the results were not so clear. For example, for clothing we found differences in the prices charged in the two income areas were negligible for the same quality, brand and style, but were comparative, but generally the higher income areas had higher priced and higher quality items.

We found that the prices for washing machines and television sets were higher in the low-income areas.

For drugs we found widespread price variations from one store to another, but no systematic differences between the low-income and the high-income areas.

Prices for service items, like haircuts and other services, were generally lower in the low-income areas.

For cigarettes and household supplies, there were little differences. The differences were not great, except the one that I have already mentioned, that is, the prices were lower in the chainstores, and that there were not so many chainstores available in the low-income areas.

There was little or no difference between the low- and high-income areas as to the number of days or the average number of hours that the stores were open.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Mr. ROSS, you are really in the business of tabulating statistical information, are you not?

Mr. ROSS. Yes, sir.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. And your agency is a repository for many types of information?

Mr. ROSS. Yes, sir.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. And in your judgment, based on the things that you have heard today and the newspaper accounts and the other testimony before other committees about the fact that the poor pay more, do you think that the Federal Government has sufficient information on this subject?

Mr. ROSS. No. I think that it is a subject on which I would like to be able to do more. And, certainly with the emphasis on and the consciousness of urban problems, poverty problems that have emerged in recent years, I think that this particular element of the poverty problem, that is, the consumer problem, and particularly the credit problem, deserves a lot more attention.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. What would you recommend be done? What would you want to do?

Mr. ROSS. Well, Mr. Chairman, I had the pleasure of appearing before you in July and at that time you will recall I indicated some things that we hoped to do by way of consumer education, consumer information. I tried to indicate how we might utilize our data to bring more information and education to consumers. Subsequent to that testimony we have tried to price out such a program, what additional work we have to do in a proper or satisfactory way, in a fairly large number of cities. We ascertained that it would cost about \$400,000 a year.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. If there is a social need for the Federal Government to do something in this area, they cannot meet that need without the basic information as a condition precedent to doing anything.

Mr. ROSS. Right.