

son's Committee on Consumer Affairs, different bills presented in the Congress, and the hearings that are conducted on a nationwide basis, such as this one of today.

This concern is not only shared by the Government, the rich consumer, the middle-class consumer; but also by the "poor" consumer. I have been a witness on how the "poor" consumer is getting alerted to their daily problems as consumers and how they, themselves, are looking for the ways and means to overcome such problems.

In our Bedford-Stuyvesant community, the residents have been asking themselves on a day-to-day basis, Why is it that they pay such high prices, particularly for food? The concern of this community has been brought by many residents to our organization and to me, personally. Plans of action to analyze the reasons behind their concerns have taken place. Questions like the following are being asked by these "ghetto" residents:

1. Why is it that my money goes "down the drain" when I enter a supermarket?
2. Why is it that when the welfare checks are received I have the feeling I am paying more?
3. Why is it that some of my family and friends who have been able to move to the so-called better neighborhoods are telling me that "over there" things are cheaper?

Do we have a definite answer? No. Are we looking for reasons and answers? Yes. How?

First. Community meetings were held by the different consumer block committees organized by our staff, in order to analyze and put into a frame of reference the complaints of the residents.

Second. The residents decided to carry out a comparison shopping survey.

Third. Five residents and myself conducted the comparison shopping survey.

The consumer block committee leaders employed "poor" residents of the CABS Corp.; requested these residents to submit a regular shopping list of the items, amounts, brands, and chainstores where they regularly buy. Tabulation and analysis of the submitted lists was made; the outcome being a resident's typical shopping list of 20 items and five major chainstores.

Plans were made to conduct the survey of these 20 items on the five different major chainstores on November 14 and November 16. The dates were picked in accordance with the residents' complaints of variance in price on welfare checks arrival date; namely, the 1st and 16th of the month.

The five major chainstores were surveyed on the same dates in Flatbush, a middle-class-income area. The actual purchase of the items took place on November 14 in the five major chainstores in Bedford-Stuyvesant and the same 20 items were purchased on the same day in the same major chainstores in the Flatbush community.

On November 16, the same five residents purchased the same 20 items on the same Bedford-Stuyvesant major chainstores as well as in the corresponding major chainstores in Flatbush. It is now that we can talk about findings.

For reporting purposes, we identified the major chainstores with the letters A to E.