

Mr. REID. What we are receiving reports on, and we are trying to substantiate, is that in effect in some stores—and I am not talking specifically about a particular chain—in fact these items are not changed. The customer comes to the checkout counter, perhaps is not aware of the special items, the checker at the cash register goes fast and the individual customer may not notice it, but the fact is that frequently, some of these items are not changed. What I am getting at here is should there not be a better administrative procedure where you do have these special items to make sure all the items are in fact fully changed because there are some stores that bring in a crew at night when there is no one in the store and physically pull all the items off the shelves and change it so that it's systematically done and there is no question that an occasional can or box is missed.

Mr. VITULLI. Congressman, may I point out the difference between our practice—I believe now I understand fully the point that you are getting at. We don't as a matter of policy, reduce items on Saturday and advance them the following week. The prices that we change are reduced on a permanent basis, unless market changes dictate the necessity of readvancing them.

Mr. REID. I understand that and I am not questioning that. What I am talking about are the items that are specials that you have a systematic means of changing the price on these nonrelatively perishable items and what I gather is that in these instances, you have one or two men on Saturday during store hours doing it and they may or may not get it all done during the day in question.

What I am asking is, if you do have specials in volume, should you not have a procedure that would more nearly insure in nonbusiness hours perhaps or whenever you can do it, that all the items are changed because there are reports reaching the subcommittee that some of these items just are not marked down.

Mr. VITULLI. Our system is to change the items in the selling area. Perhaps you are under the impression that a large quantity has to be changed initially.

Mr. REID. All the tomato juice or a certain type of cheese or all the rice or flour or something, that would be a fair amount to be stamped, wouldn't it?

Mr. VITULLI. Only a moderate amount, because the majority of the merchandise will be in the storage area. That will not be price marked until it is ready to come into the selling area. So we will mark the merchandise on the shelves.

Mr. REID. All I am trying to call to your attention is the fact that there seem to be some instances where this has not occurred. Isn't this worth your looking at to see whether procedures could be improved to insure that the items on the shelves, where they are special items, are all remarked before the store opens?

Mr. VITULLI. Yes; it is.

Mr. McINERNEY. As we mentioned at the outset, Mr. Vitulli speaks for the area of his jurisdiction which is Bronx and Manhattan.

Mr. Van Lenten, who has jurisdiction over all of the New England States and the metropolitan area, I think, is better able to answer the question of whether there is any broad policy of marking price changes during business hours.

Mr. REID. Certainly Mr. Van Lenten can respond.