

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Could you describe to us briefly what you mean by poorer quality?

Mrs. DAMES. Well, this was in the produce and meats. For example, we had bananas, green peppers, lettuce, hamburger, and pork chops, and this was pretty startling, because besides—now, bananas were both priced higher and of lower quality. Grade 1 at the inner-city store was 21 cents a pound, this is the better grade, and it was 20 cents a pound or 2 pounds for 39 cents at the suburban store. Now, the difference in the quality was that the suburban bananas were much better, they were just much better bananas.

In grade 2, two for 39 cents at the inner-city store were quite old. A banana has a limited shelf life and you would have to use these things right away and even so they were beyond that peak of freshness, I think they say flecked with brown. Well, these had gotten pretty brown and bad and bruised, they were not good bananas. I don't think most housewives would buy them, so this was two for 39 cents. Grade 2 were 15 cents a pound—

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Did you tell us what stores these were?

Mrs. DAMES. This particular chain was the National store, 4231 Natural Bridge, serving a low-income area, 630 North McKnight, a suburban store were the two we compared. There were so many things we decided just to compare these two and stick to two stores that we actually surveyed.

On the lettuce many of the lettuces in the inner-city store were old and wilted and some of them had wedges cut off of the heads and were rewrapped after having a wedge cut out. You could see the rotten portion had been removed. In addition to this, on many of these heads of lettuce, the price sticker of 33 cents had been placed over the old price sticker of 29 cents, which was the price perfect heads of lettuce were selling for in the suburban store.

On green peppers, now this was something I don't understand, I can't figure it out, I can give no explanation for it since the chainstore officer said it can't happen. Each pepper was individually stamped in the inner-city store. Prices were either 15 cents or 19 cents. Many of them were wormy, they had gone past their point of freshness, the skin begins to get soft and not firm any more, and they were obviously older. Some were gashed, they had been dropped or gashed and had gashes and indentation in them, the skin was broken, and they were of different sizes. Some were quite small, some were quite large, some were—there were some good within this batch, but they were all different size, and I would assume were different grades.

In the suburban store, they were all perfect, they were even nearly uniform in size, as uniform as you can expect any product which grows to be, but there was such a startling difference, and they were sold at 15 cents apiece, which is lower, of course—it would be the same price that the worst peppers were available at the inner-city store but lower than the best peppers which were, as I said, all individually marked.

Now, of course, subsequently I spoke to the chain manager and he said this was his best produce man at the Natural Bridge store. But then when get to the meat, the hamburger, hamburger is ground at each store individually by the butcher. One of the things you can tell about hamburger is how much fat is showing. There are certain limits.