

Mr. MYERS. Do you think that your survey that you made in the stores, the two of you, was it comprehensive?

Mrs. DAMES. Oh, no; absolutely not. Ours was a small survey, it was a small, honest survey which contained the main food groups—

Mr. MYERS. And there could have been mistakes made in your survey and article, then; is that correct?

Mrs. DAMES. No, there were no mistakes made in my survey and article.

Mr. MYERS. You don't think it was conclusive, then, you don't think that really you had this situation well in hand?

Mrs. DAMES. What do you mean by conclusive?

Mr. MYERS. Well, is this a general trend? Do you think that really you went into it deep enough to say yes, this is fact, that this is what is actually happening?

Mrs. DAMES. I went into it deep enough to say it is fact insofar as to say any housewife doing her food shopping can be said to say—in other words, a housewife is not going to go out and compare 8,000 items which change daily and try to make an intelligent use of her food money in the sense that HDC did. We didn't try to prove any more than we said here, that there does seem to be a difference in food prices, and I think that we honestly did a decent job on it.

Mr. MYERS. I read one article that you wrote and one that, what was his name, someone else wrote, and he isn't here today, is that right?

Mrs. DAMES. Gene Briarton has been writing on food costs in general.

Mr. MYERS. You had some complaints or how did you come about it?

Mrs. DAMES. We had had many complaints and we didn't know whether or not the complaints were justified. Many times people call the newspaper, contact a newspaper, and they have an ax to grind and we went out and took our survey just trying to see if there were some truth in this and this is what we found.

Mr. MYERS. You didn't name the chainstores. Did you go to different stores?

Mrs. DAMES. Two chains. I went to one, Mr. Franklin went to another.

Mr. MYERS. Did you go to various stores within the chains?

Mrs. DAMES. I went to four stores of the National food chain, Mr. Franklin went to two stores of the Kroger food chain.

Mr. MYERS. You spoke about the green peppers here. All the green peppers on the display were spoiled.

Mrs. DAMES. No. I think you missed this.

Here's another thing. The officers of the foodstore chains—well, let's talk specifically about National, since it was National's peppers that I noticed particularly. There was a slightly different situation with Kroger's peppers, but in National's peppers they had what I would call three grades of peppers. I checked with the USDA.

Mr. MYERS. Three price ranges, too?

Mrs. DAMES. No, they had each pepper individually stamped. Now, I have to say this loosely because I am not a vegetable authority. I checked with the Government and I said, the USDA vegetable man who talked to me off the record, and he said that anything that grows you can't have absolute similarity on, but that peppers are graded. Now, and this was also borne out by the National foodstore people