

Suffice it to say that all of our stores are served out of the same warehouse where orders are handled under an impersonal assembly system. The quality of our goods is as uniformly high as it is possible for us to buy, and these goods are shipped indiscriminately to our stores without regard for what kind of neighborhood a particular store serves.

The charges and allegations which have been discussed here today have been made before, and investigated before, and disproved before.

Separate studies in Kansas City, Milwaukee, Jersey City, and Cincinnati, to cite just a few that have been brought to my attention, have been carried out by local citizens groups, university personnel, and official government bodies. Repeatedly, the charge that food chains discriminate against some of their customers by selling inferior merchandise at higher prices in low-income neighborhoods has been found to be baseless.

The most recent comprehensive study of this nature, perhaps, was the one carried out less than 2 years ago by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor at the request of the National Commission on Food Marketing appointed by President Johnson. I recognize that you, Mr. Chairman, are well acquainted with this study as a result of your service as a member of the Commission.

The study covered six cities: Atlanta, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Houston, and Washington, D.C.

The final report concluded:

The Bureau of Labor Statistics has found no significant differences in prices charged by food stores located in low-income areas versus those charged by stores in high-income areas when the same type of stores (chains, large independents, small independents), the same qualities of foods and the same sizes of packages are compared.

We expect the same findings to be forthcoming here. We hope, then, that those who now question our honesty will acknowledge publicly that we are, indeed, playing fair and square with all our customers.

To do otherwise is to question the personal integrity of some 4,000 hard-working Kroger employees who are proud of their reputation as outstanding citizens of this community.

That, in our humble judgment, would not only be unfortunate, it would be unfair.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Thank you very much, Mr. White. I do have some questions. I would like to say this first.

You reference on page 7, the study of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and you rightly point out that I was a member of the Food Commission, and I remember that study quite well. The Food Commission paid \$15,000 and the Office of Economic Opportunity paid \$30,000 to the Bureau of Labor Statistics to make that survey. It was probably the greatest waste of the taxpayers' money in history because of the way the Bureau of Labor Statistics made the survey. Before going into each store the stores were notified that BLS was coming. So that if the manager wanted to shape up the store he had about 2 weeks in which to do it. If I knew how to get that money back I would start an action to do it. I'm sure Kroger is more efficient than BLS was.