

Mr. MYERS. Let me get to the point. You do try to hire, then, in your local—

Mr. O'NEAL. We not only try, we hire them and we pay them while we train them. We follow up afterwards to see if they are getting along all right. And I might add that many of them that we have trained and spent time and money with, and especially so in males, we bring them along and we think, gee, we have really got something going here, he is going to be an assistant manager, he is going to be a store manager, and then he winds up he is out here selling new automobiles and he is one of the best automobile salesmen in St. Louis.

Mr. MYERS. Every industry has that problem.

Thank you, Mr. O'Neal.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Thank you very much.

Our next witness is Mr. Jack Conreaux, president of Associated Grocers.

STATEMENT OF JACK C. CONREAU, PRESIDENT OF ASSOCIATED GROCERS CO. OF ST. LOUIS, MO.

Mr. CONREAU. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I do not have a prepared written statement.

My name is Jack C. Conreaux, president of Associated Grocers Co. of St. Louis, Mo. We are a wholesale food distributor. We are a co-operative in the sense that we have sales to our member stores who are our stockholders and own our company.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Do you yourself own a store?

Mr. CONREAU. No, sir, I do not.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Have you owned a store?

Mr. CONREAU. I have never owned a grocery store.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. How long have you been president of A-G?

Mr. CONREAU. Twenty years.

Our method of distribution is to serve some 750 stores in the States of Missouri, the eastern half of Missouri, the western half of Illinois, and in the western half of Kansas.

We have a warehouse in St. Louis that services in a radius of 160 miles of St. Louis, and we have a Wichita division of Wichita, Kans., serving the Kansas stores.

We attempt to give services, help, aid, and assistance to our members. One thing we do not do we do not at any time tell our members at what price they should or should not sell their merchandise, from the fact that spread over three States in farm communities, small towns, large cities, different geographical areas, ranging in stores from \$2,000 a week on up to \$50,000 to \$60,000, we would not actually have the know-how if we were able to do so. That is our operation. We are not in the retail business, have no legal ownership of any retail store.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. To make a long story short, your stores are individually owned and operated?

Mr. CONREAU. Yes, sir.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Do you have recommended prices?

Mr. CONREAU. We do not have recommended prices, no, sir.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Is it purely accidental that some of your stores charge similar prices?