

keep track of those in 42 different categories; that is, such as home remodeling, appliance problems, automotive and all the discount things and things of that sort.

In the food field, we have exhibit A attached. In no case in the last 5 years have our problems involving food matters exceeded 1.5 percent of the bureau's total traffic, and a table is attached to substantiate that. Specifically, in the first 6 months of 1967 we recorded a total of 596 instances of service involving food matters, of which 317 were inquiries concerning business firms or their conduct, presumably prior to the sale, 264 were what we term customer relations, cases which involve matters not formally jacketed complaints. We accept complaints only in writing. We had 15 complaints against the food industry in writing. Of this total traffic of 596, the majority of them involved what we call freezer food plans wherein someone is going to get you the food wholesale and freezer free if you sign on the dotted line in the wee hours of the morning. This is apart from our present concern. The other majority of cases were in the question of the sale of bulk meat. These are the fellows that offer a side of beef for 29 cents a pound which is a little cheaper than baloney bulls on the hoof in Chicago, and we have worked with these groups for some time now. We developed a set of advertising standards working with the industry and with advertising media on a voluntary basis which required that they discontinue selling you the meat hook along with the side of beef, so forth and so on. Four of those five firms are now out of business, possibly because of the advertising standards. One of them is currently in hearings before the Federal Trade Commission—that's Bruens of Elkhorn, Nebr.—they have left St. Louis some year and a half ago. The only one we have here is Hutchinson Meats out of Bradbury, Tex., and their advertising and selling practices have not come into sharp focus from our viewpoint since the advertising systems have been developed. That's merely by our effort to bring about certain kinds of improvements.

Our basic job in this field, we have developed advertising and selling standards for the freezer food field which is a relatively active industry.

We have worked with the food industry that we are meeting here today with on problems involving comparative price claims among stores. We have, with the cooperation of the industry, gotten them to voluntarily eliminate comparative price claims in advertising, largely based on the FTC comparative price rules of 1958.

We have from time to time disagreed rather strongly with the members of the industry in certain of their promotional advertising. We don't always succeed in those debates. Now, we have read newspaper reports and magazine articles alleging the discrimination and pricing quality of various types of food stores in the poverty areas. Up to now the better business bureau has made no formal investigation of this matter. My reason for the perspective above is the reason for this. Our volume of traffic has not warranted a direct investigation. With the reports of recent inquiries and the concern expressed in the District of Columbia, the subsequent news articles appeared in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch concerning their own reporters' examination of the problem, supplemented by certain examinations by representatives of the Human Development Corp., we, the Better Business