

I spent my entire lifetime in the retail food business, in the meat business, and I have followed this investigation on the part of people that are inexperienced, our writers for some of the newspapers. To my great amazement they did in their humble way the best job that they knew how to present to this committee. They know there is something wrong but they don't know what it is and it appalls me to see an industry that's being indicted that is the most highly competitive industry in the whole world. That's the food industry and I spent my entire lifetime in it, in fact, 42 years of it.

In official executive capacity managing the affairs of 3,000 people, closely associated with, directly and indirectly with 70,000 people in the retail food, wholesale food industry, forward and backward, and still privileged to represent that organization because the various trade unions that are directly and indirectly affected by labor contracts or were affected by one or another labor contracts that we make.

I think that Mr. Robert O'Neal with the National Tea Co., he probably hit the nail on the head, and I am going to try to make this as brief as possible, but I think I ought to bring this to your attention.

You have to be an imbecile or out of your mind, if you've got the right kind of a mind, to make an investment, build a supermarket that would be competitive to the Kroger store in this highly poverty area here on Stoddard Street, something that I know something about, and I'm one of the men that's responsible that that store is in existence. I am the man that's responsible that the National Tea Co., the successor to the Food Center Corp. that built and established a \$75,000 supermarket and had to put the key in the door a year later because they couldn't make a quarter.

I think if Mr. Walter White had his way about it, with the Kroger Co., and he doesn't have, he'd put a key in the door tonight on Stoddard Street in the Kroger store. He'd have to. Actually that store is being subsidized by customers that are patronizing the other Kroger stores to keep this one open, and I have no sympathy for Kroger and I'm not on their friendship list, but in all fairness I think this is right in bringing this out, that this company is maintaining this store because 20 years ago the Urban League, and I am a member of it, we the labor officials, the representatives of the Urban League, representatives of the Catholic church, the Baptist church, we got this company to originally establish and open this store and build it, and against their better judgment. They knew that this wasn't the right thing to do from the profit standpoint, but a store of this type was needed.

Now, when the housing programs were developed and built and slum areas were torn down and new areas were being built, hundreds of our stores and hundreds of our jobs disappeared as meatcutters in these markets in all of these housing areas, these jobs completely disappeared and these jobs weren't picked up in the industry any other place; they were absolutely destroyed.

Many of our small market operators, successful market operators, and some of the markets that I personally worked in as a journeyman meatcutter and head meatcutter and managed the affairs of certain markets in this high poverty area here back in 1925 and 1926, successful markets, many of our men, members of ours that grew, opened up and operated their own stores, were destroyed, not only by competition, by the community. They were out of business, and 50 percent of them in this area that went out of business went out of business broke