ditionalistic backgrounds. It is a technique used by merchants to manipulate their customers and to get their customers to come back.

One reason why these poor people do not shop in the large stores is not that they cannot afford to shop there, although that is often the reason, but also they are intimidated by the style of the large store, with its impersonality.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. You mean they find it difficult going to the larger store on 34th Street or 42d Street; they would rather stay uptown, in New York City, at least?

Mr. CAPLOVITZ. Correct.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. How many people are there in the United States in this marginal population you have described?

Mr. CAPLOVITZ. There is a considerable variation in the estimates of how many people fall below the poverty line. One figure frequently heard is 20 million. These estimates range from 20 million up to 40 million, depending upon how poverty is defined.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Presumably they predominate in the large cities.

Mr. CAPLOVITZ. They predominate in the large cities but they also are to be found in all parts of our country. Even in the rural South, buying "on time" is a very common phenomenon, and there is certainly poverty in other sections of our country.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. But the survey that you made——

Mr. CAPLOVITZ. Was in a large urban center.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Well, now, let me ask you the key question for the day:

Have the cities, the States, the Federal Government done enough to solve the problems you talk of?

What should they be doing that they are not doing?

Mr. CAPLOVITZ. I think there is great need for new credit legislation. I understand that soon there will be a report of the Commissioners on Uniform Laws who have been working several years now on drafting an up-to-date credit bill. But since I do not know what its provisions are, I cannot talk about it.

There is certainly a great need for correcting and making more universal and consistent, credit legislation. That is only one part of the issue, though.

I hope I will learn very shortly what the Office of Economic Opportunity is doing in the way of consumer action. My off-the-cuff hunch is that it is not as yet doing as much as it could be doing in the area of consumer action.

I have recently taken the trouble of finding out what is going on in New York City, and I was told that there is a considerable amount of interest on the local level in consumer action. There are a number of antipoverty groups in the New York City area that find it relatively easy to get people to show up at meetings involving consumer action. There are a number of groups that have written proposals for consumer action programs. But as of last Thursday, very few of those programs have been funded, and very few of the noble plans for consumer action in the New York area have actually gotten underway. I do not know what the situation is in other parts of the country.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. What about the process of general education, what can be done in that area?