Mr. Berry. There is substantial evidence that poor buying habits, the overextension and use of the kind of credit that is made available, the kind of paper they have to sign to secure it, which mortgages them and their jobs, because that is the only security that they have, and the processes by which that paper or that legal obligation is enforced against them does contribute substantially to unemployment. The short-term employment they have is usually cut off.

I know, from my own experience, the large number of persons who lost their jobs when they got that second garnishment. So, it is a substantial contribution to unemployment and to continuing them in poverty, so that if they could modify, retrench, consolidate their debt, and be made aware that there are other sources, through a credit union, that they can consolidate their debt, and follow a practice or habit of buying within their means, that they might be able to be assisted. But it is a vicious cycle in which they get themselves, and it virtually discourages them, knowing that they are burdened with debt, discourages them from seeking employment, because they say, "As soon as I get a job, after my first payday or even before my first payday, I will have it garnisheed."

Mr. Rosenthal. Would you suggest that this attitude affects a large number of people?

Mr. Berry. This, I think, has not been statistically evaluated, and this is one of the purposes of the contract that we had with the Department of Labor Statistics in their analysis or study of the high cost of commodities purchased by the poor.

Mr. Rosenthal. Thank you, Mr. Berry. I think you have made a very meaningful contribution to the inquiry.

Today is the first day of the inquiry. What we are very much concerned with, besides the economy and efficiency of each agency in meeting its responsibilities to the consumer, is the extent of cooperation and communication between agencies in the consumer field.

At the moment, I do not know a great deal about how your agency cooperates with other agencies on behalf of the poor consumer.

So, I would appreciate it if you would send us a supplemental statement on the extent of cooperation between your agency and other Federal agencies on behalf of the poor consumer, the nature and type of communication you have with them, the number of meetings you have with the departments, the programs that you have formulated in cooperation with other Federal departments. This is really the crux and the thrust of this inquiry.

(Subsequently, the following statement was submitted:)

The Division charged with responsibility for consumer action is the Community Services Division of CAP.

Thus far its relations with other Federal agencies has included the Bureau of Federal Credit Unions of the Social Security Administration in HEW, the President's Committee on Consumer Interests, the Federal Trade Commission, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor and the Small Business Administration.

Although formal tabulation of the number of meetings has not been made, the responsible Division of OEO has had several consultations over the past year with these agencies.

The specific results of our coordination have been as follows:

(a) An interagency agreement between OEO and BFCU, involving a transfer of $125,000 to BFCU for a training program entitled "Operation Moneywise." Operation Moneywise trains selected local personnel in problems of the low-