

GOVERNMENT-REJECTED CONSUMER ITEMS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 1968

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SPECIAL CONSUMER INQUIRY,
SPECIAL STUDIES SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 10 a.m., in room 2203, Rayburn House Office Building, The Honorable Benjamin S. Rosenthal presiding. Present: Representatives Rosenthal, Gallagher, Wydler, and Myers. Also present: Peter S. Barash, professional staff member in charge; I. Warren Harrison, professional staff member; and Dolores L. Fel Dotto, clerk.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. The subcommittee will be in order. Our first witness this morning is Dr. George L. Mehren, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture. You have a statement and you may proceed. We want to thank you for coming here and taking time out from a busy schedule. We very much appreciate your appearance.

STATEMENT OF GEORGE L. MEHREN, ASSISTANT SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE; ACCOMPANIED BY GEORGE GRANGE, DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR, CONSUMER AND MARKETING SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Dr. MEHREN. Thank you.

I have with me Mr. George Grange, who is Deputy Administrator of the Consumer and Marketing Services in the Department for marketing services. I am happy to respond to your request for information about practices of the Department of Agriculture governing sale in commercial channels of food products which fail to meet departmental purchase specifications.

We have a twofold interest in your inquiry. First, we carry major responsibility in the field of consumer protection through enforcement of the meat and poultry inspection programs along with many other services and regulatory functions. Secondly, we are one of the major Federal agencies buying food. With our relatively tight specifications for the school lunch and needy family distribution programs, many rejections of commodities are made.

The Department provided or helped to provide food to almost 26 million people during fiscal year 1967. Some 22 million schoolchildren, 1.3 million people in institutions and 3.3 million needy persons received almost 1.5 billion pounds of foods costing about \$247 million. In conducting these programs, we have made a continuous—and we believe a successful—effort to insure that only high quality, wholesome foods