

Dr. MEHREN. Generally not, with very few exceptions.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. So it would have happened in the plant or after it thawed out when it reached DSA?

Dr. MEHREN. I would be most doubtful that it occurred in the plant. I have observed most of the inspection activities of our people. I have been close to the matter of inspection and food service. They are effective. There are, however, breakdowns.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Did you order a reinspection of this particular plant now that you have additional authority?

Dr. MEHREN. Yes; Mr. Grange and Dr. Somers, who handles the inspection work for this agency, have been in direct contact with the plant but they have advised me no information is available there.

The information I gave you with respect to the status and disposition of these products was obtained from the New York office yesterday afternoon. They don't keep records, apparently, there. And we therefore followed it to the headquarters office in New York and got this information last night and their concurrence in holding the product.

Mr. WYDLER. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Yes.

Mr. WYDLER. Let me understand this, Dr. Mehren. These dinners were inspected by your inspectors at the plant; is that correct?

Dr. MEHREN. Yes.

Mr. WYDLER. Do you have the reports they submitted on the inspections they made of this particular batch?

Dr. MEHREN. Those have been checked and there was no evidence of any deviation from the normal requirements for passage of this kind of product.

Mr. WYDLER. In other words—

Dr. MEHREN. If I may add, Mr. Wydler, there is a standing regulation in the Department that any rejections, any condemnations, must be identified with respect to reasons for such condemnation and disposition thereafter.

Mr. WYDLER. In other words, your records show that these particular dinners were inspected at the plant and found to be free of this bacteria?

Dr. MEHREN. No; they don't show that. They show they met the standard regulations of the meat inspection division for the passage of products.

Bacteriological standards are not a mandatory or universal element of such standards. The bacteriological testing is not a continuous analysis of every item that goes through a meat plant under our standing rules.

Mr. WYDLER. Were these dinners inspected for this bacteriological content?

Dr. MEHREN. Not to my knowledge, but I don't know that they weren't so inspected.

Mr. WYDLER. Well, in other words, you are telling me that these particular dinners could well have been inspected and approved and have had the bacteriological content in them at the time they left the plant?

Dr. MEHREN. It is not impossible, but it is not likely. We had, as I recall, 120,000 bacteriological tests in all of our inspection and service activities last year.