

Dr. MEHREN. The reason behind that is we maintain 2,200 inspectors in poultry and 6,600 people in meat inspection and we have to have procedures in order effectively to use our inspection service.

Mr. MYERS. I hope there is a reason behind these procedures.

Dr. MEHREN. Yes. We want a clean product to come out.

Mr. MYERS. What is the reason behind this one?

Dr. MEHREN. For the convenience of our procurement of any product we not merely say what the grade and quality attributes of that are but in general we will specify what raw materials must be used, in what condition and what procedures are followed.

Most of those contracts specify in detail the procedures to be followed. If there were no authorization in those terms for refreezing, this would not be conformity to the procurement contract and it would be a breach thereof.

Mr. MYERS. But you said in your testimony that frequently this is done and you realize it is done, that you freeze in quantity, even mass, and then break it down and thaw it and refreeze it then and you would accept this, wouldn't you?

You said you would a while ago.

Mr. GRANGE. Mr. Myers, if I might explain we have been—perhaps you would call it arbitrary. We have a general prohibition against accepting an item once it has been rejected, for whatever the reason.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Why?

Mr. GRANGE. The reason is this: If we didn't have this rule, it would mean that vendors would be—some of them—would be trying to get by with the absolute minimum requirement to barely meet our standard. We might be faced with making many, many rejections because we would be offered borderline goods. I am not talking about frozen foods now. I am talking about this as a general rule, you see.

So in order to know that we are giving ourselves this much protection and not dealing in borderline goods from some of the vendors who get competitive bids with Government agencies, we have the general rule that once we have rejected something, it is going to stay rejected. They couldn't reoffer it.

Mr. WYDLER. It has to be rejected for your consumers but not somebody else's.

Mr. GRANGE. Right.

Mr. MYERS. Do you ever reject bids because of repeated violations?

Mr. GRANGE. Yes, sir. There is a general blacklist for us as well as all Government agencies for repetitive failure to perform in accordance with contracts.

Dr. MEHREN. I am not sure the committee understands that in our procurement we specify the process that must be followed. This is because we have to operate and administer it and do it efficiently and as low cost as we can. One must not merely deliver a clean and wholesome and honestly packed product, he must conform to the contract terms in its total processing activity. Once it is rejected, that is it. It is out.

Mr. MYERS. The reasoning behind this is what I want.

Why do you set one standard you said a while ago you could refreeze without any damage and now you say you wouldn't accept it for your own use?

Dr. MEHREN. Again I say we must administer a large procure-