

Senator NELSON. That is the point I was making when I first raised my question—that unless there is understanding by the public of the existence, importance and significance of a certain problem, you cannot get public support. When I said I did not think the majority of the general public is willing to tolerate organized crime I meant to imply that the apparent apathy of the public is simply a result of ignorance.

We know very little about the Cosa Nostra. And yet it only takes, according to your estimates, about 6,000 members of the Cosa Nostra to form the basis of the heart of organized crime in this country. We do not know who they are or where they are, and nobody has given us any suggestions on how to strike right at the heart of this organization.

Mr. RUTH. I do think, though, Senator, in the last few years the media have done a lot to publicize what organized crime is—national magazines and some of the newspapers in larger cities. I think they have been rather explicit and specific about some of the implications of organized crime. So I think maybe in the last few years there is more public education than there has been previously.

I might add about a Federal recommendation—I think a joint permanent congressional investigating committee as to organized crime would be helpful in keeping this matter before the public. I cite the problem of Federal intelligence just sitting there over in the files with specifics to back up our general assessment of organized crime—these never come out, because in a prosecution you do not prosecute someone for organized crime, you prosecute him for a specific crime. So you do not really know what that person is, even though it might come to court on a specific case. But I think a permanent joint congressional committee would bring the specifics, just as this hearing is bringing some specifics to the attention of the American people.

Senator NELSON. How good a job is the Attorney General of the United States, and various other organizations doing in educating, for example, the district attorneys and the State attorney generals in this country? The fact is when you say that the State attorney generals around the country have not done very much about organized crime, it is not surprising—except for a few of the major States, since there is no continuing organization within the attorney general's office that is aimed at the question of organized crime. The attorney general who is elected is frequently an able lawyer who has had no exposure to the fact that organized crime even exists. He is in office for 2 or 3 years and then leaves it. I have known the attorney generals in my State—we have had some very fine ones, Republicans and Democrats—who knew very little about organized crime.

Mr. RUTH. I think the present attorney general from Wisconsin knows a great deal about organized crime, and has tried to do something about it.

Senator NELSON. I think in the last 4 years there has been some activity and attention directed to the problem.

Mr. RUTH. He has run into a lot of problems.

Senator NELSON. The point is that most attorney generals come to office with no preparation in this field, and in the modest and smaller sized States their offices are not properly equipped, either. So again it seems to me that the problem is an educational one.