

Nelson-Consumer Counsel

Helen Ewing Nelson was named California's first Consumer Counsel this Monday by Governor Edmund G. Brown.

Mrs. Nelson, formerly assistant chief of the Division of Labor Statistics and Research in the State Department of Industrial Relations, had the uniform and vigorous backing of consumer-oriented groups and organized labor generally who want to see the new office of Consumer Counsel become an effective spokesman on behalf of consumer interests.

The new Consumer Counsel was also the first choice of Dr. Persia Campbell, who headed up a similar office under the Democratic administration of Governor Averell Harri- man in New York.

In successfully proposing the establishment of a Consumer Counsel office to the legislature this year, Governor Brown borrowed heavily from the favorable New York experience.

The legislative mandate under which Mrs. Nelson will operate as Consumer Counsel is broad in scope: (1) to advise the Governor on all matters affecting the interests of the people as consumers, and (2) to recommend to him and the legislature the enactment of legislation as deemed necessary to protect and promote such consumer interests.

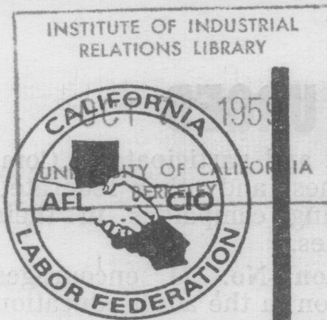
The measure enacted fixes the Consumer Counsel's salary at \$15,000 per year, and permits the Governor to appoint, at fixed salaries, assistants and employees for the Consumer Counsel as required.

Specific provision is made in the law that the Consumer Counsel may appear before various commissions, departments and agencies to make representations and to be heard on behalf of consumer interests, to co-operate and contract with private agencies for obtaining statistical surveys, printing, economic information and other similar services.

Each state agency, officer and employee must cooperate with the Consumer Counsel.

Finally, by Executive Order, the Governor may create advisory committees to assist the Consumer Counsel and serve under the Coun-

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C. J. HAGGERTY
Executive
Secretary-Treasurer

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SECRETARY HAGGERTY OUTLINES LABOR CONSUMER ACTION PROGRAM

A call for the development of a three-pronged labor program for the protection of trade union consumers and the public at large was issued last weekend by C. J. Haggerty, secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, at a weekend conference on consumer problems called by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor.

The challenge to the labor movement today in the efforts of anti-labor forces "to confine trade union activities to narrow economic actions in collective bargaining by law," while these same forces "isolate the consumer sphere of influence for their own exploitation to undermine union strength in the collective bargaining system," Haggerty declared, requires the development of a "broad and continuing consumer program" by organized labor.

The state AFL-CIO leader grouped the areas for consumer action in three categories:

- (1) Consumer counseling and education.
- (2) Consumer representation before legislative and administrative bodies, and
- (3) Development of effective vehicles for cooperation of labor and other bona fide consumer interest groups.

Dedication to Action

Haggerty told the better than 200 participants in the Los Angeles Consumer Conference that the Federation is dedicated to action in the consumer field under a mandate of the recent San Diego convention of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO.

"By this conference this weekend," Haggerty said, "your Federation has indicated that it is dead serious in developing a continuing consumer program.

"I can assure you at the state level," he added, "we are equally serious, and we do not intend to allow the movement in this direction

to die on the vine, because . . . this is the area in which we must be moving if we are to meet the challenge before the labor movement today while we revitalize our traditional methods of defending the integrity of the labor movement and promoting the prosperity of the nation.

"We cannot fall into the trap of allowing the enemies of labor to

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Local Union Cooperation Urged

The importance of local cooperation in carrying out the mandates voted by delegates to the 1959 convention of the California Labor Federation was underscored this week in a communication to all affiliated bodies in the state.

C. J. Haggerty, secretary-treasurer of the state AFL-CIO, called to the attention of the affiliates a series of resolutions which require local action if they are to be made effective.

Convention actions, Haggerty said, "are meaningless unless we immediately take hold and start working on a sustained program of education and action aimed at developing better appreciation of the needs of our membership and our neighbors."

The Federation, he added, is "eager to assist in any way possible, but the primary initiative and ener-

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LOCAL UNION COOPERATION URGED

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gy often can only be supplied by the affiliated local unions and central labor councils themselves."

To ensure the earliest and most systematic beginning of such programs, Haggerty forwarded affiliates the text of the following resolutions dealing with issues involving local action:

Resolution No. 132 calls for all possible support from affiliates for the AFL-CIO Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee's drive upon the nation's most glaring organizational need by bringing the benefits of unionism to California's farm workers.

Resolution No. 60 cites labor's successful efforts in warding off the "right to work" proposition last year as proof of the need for increased political action and education to cope with the campaign for punitive labor legislation and the inadequate performance of Congress and the legislature.

Resolutions Nos. 26, 58 and 99 urge increasing support for the fundamental trade union principle of patronizing only union made goods and services. They deal respectively with purchase of union label hats and caps, support and publicity for all union label goods, and the campaign against the non-union Los Angeles Times and Mirror-Daily News.

Resolution No. 50 asks affiliates

to support and participate in Community Chest and other federated fund raising campaigns in their communities.

Resolution No. 71 encourages participation in the adult education programs of the University of California's Institute for Industrial Relations and its liberal Arts for Labor Program. It seeks expansion of adult education opportunities and the granting of certificates by the University for completion of a prescribed number of these courses.

Resolution No. 144 urges opposition to the "Safe Driver Insurance Plan" and seeks legislation against such schemes which primarily enrich the insurance companies.

In addition to these resolutions, Haggerty called specific attention to convention resolutions urging continued cooperation with outstanding community groups such as the Jewish Labor Committee, Community Services Organization, the Coro Foundation and the City of Hope.

Other organizations which won the convention's acclaim were Israel's General Federation of Labor (Histadrut) and the Italian-American Labor Council.

Early responses received at the Federation's office from the local unions and councils indicate a lively interest in the several matters brought to their attention, and active support of the campaign to organize the farm workers.

COPE Endorses Schlessinger for Assembly

California Labor COPE has endorsed Philip J. Schlessinger for Assembly in the 56th District special election to be held October 20, it was announced this week by Thomas L. Pitts, president of the California Labor Council on Political Education.

Schlessinger, a Democrat, is running in a field of five candidates for the vacancy created by the death of Seth J. Johnson (R).

Located in Los Angeles County, the 56th District is considered "marginal" with a 51 per cent Democratic registration and 44 per cent Republican registration.

Running against Schlessinger are two other Democratic candidates and

two Republicans. He enjoyed the solid backing of organized labor at the 1958 general election, when he ran a strong race against the late Seth Johnson.

Schlessinger is a professor of political science at the Los Angeles City College, and has the broad backing of Democratic party regulars. Labor activities in support of the Schlessinger campaign are being coordinated through the political action body of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO.

California Labor COPE president, Thomas L. Pitts, said in Los Angeles that the state labor endorsement action will give a big boost to the local labor campaign.

Consumer Counsel

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sel's direction with no compensation except for expenses.

Generally, it is recognized by supporters of consumer activities that the new office of Consumer Counsel will be only as effective as the support that is developed for it by the public.

In this connection, C. J. Haggerty, secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, told a Los Angeles labor conference on consumer problems last weekend that whether or not the "potential of authority given by the legislature to the Governor to appoint a Consumer Counsel" is realized, "rests not alone on the Governor's shoulders."

Haggerty added:

"There may be governors in the future who unlike Governor Brown have no real interest in the public as consumers.

"The effectiveness of the office of Consumer Counsel is going to depend upon the kind of support we in organized labor and other consumer groups give it to make sure it has a solid base and demand for action, and which will ensure its actual operation for the benefit of consumers and not as a 'whitewash' or a cover-up for the consumer-milking practices which are strongly entrenched at every level of our political economy."

In San Francisco, commenting on the appointment, Haggerty said that Helen Nelson "is admirably qualified for the job and is the type of person who instills confidence in any group with which she is working. The Governor is to be congratulated for making such a good choice, after months of literally scouring the state for the best person available."

It is reported that one of the first aims of the new Consumer Counsel is to make an inventory of state services presently available to California consumers, and then to go on from there.

The field of consumer-interest is, of course, almost unlimited, as indicated by the pioneering experience in New York, where activity ranged from intervention in telephone and railroad rate cases to exposure of misleading merchandising practices.

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confine the labor movement's efforts to narrow economic activities while they, in turn, manipulate the public to undermine the most narrow areas of collective bargaining to which they would confine our activities."

New Law and Steel Dispute Related

Haggerty explained the need for action by direct reference to the new anti-labor law and the steel dispute:

"Examine the new labor-management reform bill, and I am certain that you will come up with the conclusion that here is a bill that contains many inadvisable excursions into the internal operations of unions, which could well hamstring their effectiveness.

"But," he continued, "look at it further — at the secondary boycott provisions — the picketing provisions — the hot cargo provisions — the federal-state jurisdictional provisions — and I am sure you will agree that here's a bill whose main purpose is to narrow the purpose and functioning of the labor unions in direct conflict with the basic principles upon which our trade union movement has been built."

He went on to show that these restrictions are part of the age-old efforts of "reactionary employer groups such as the NAM and Chamber of Commerce" to confine the area of trade union activities to the immediate economic area of primary dispute in a particular collective bargaining situation.

"It is an attempt," he charged, "to revert back to pre-Norris-LaGuardia and Wagner Act days by using the injunction against labor whenever an appeal is made to brothers and sisters in the labor movement."

Specific reference was made by the labor leader to the provision in the new bill which prohibits picketing of a retail store selling goods produced by a manufacturer with whom a union has a dispute.

"Here we come right down to the consumer," Haggerty said, "the trade union consumer and consumers at large, and the anti-labor efforts to force a separation between the economic interests of union members and the interests of consumers."

The "irony" of it all, he pointed out, is that while "these anti-labor forces are working on the legisla-

tive front viciously trying to narrow bona fide activities and separate us from the consuming public, at the same time they are embarking on the most vicious effort of all to isolate the consumer's sphere of influence for their own exploitation, for the purpose of undermining union strength and the entire system of collective bargaining.

Asserting that this is what the steel strike is about, Haggerty stated: "If the corporate giants (in the steel industry)" succeed in masking their "administrative pricing policies and gain consumer acceptance of them in the name of fighting inflation, than we in the labor movement indeed deserve to be eclipsed.

"So I say to you today," he told the conference participants, "it's good we are awakening. It's good we are becoming more and more involved in the field of consumer interests. It is good that you in Los Angeles are just as determined to press ahead in a full-time consumer program as we in the California Labor Federation are on a state level."

Consumer Counseling and Education

The state leader outlined "where we in the California Labor Federation fit into the picture between the growing consumer programs of the national AFL-CIO and the hard work that must necessarily be done at the local level in servicing our members as consumers and protecting the interests of non-member consumers whose stake in the prosperity of the nation lies inexorably with the working man."

The labor movement, he urged, must start with the "vacuum that has been created by the lack of consumer education and counseling among our own members as well as the public at large . . . in cooperation with the Union Label Department."

Haggerty reminded the conference that the field is wide open for cooperation with such groups as the Consumers Union, through our national organization, the California Labor Federation, and local unions and councils "to undertake a broad consumer counseling program which would avail itself of all agencies and groups that work for consumer interests — cooperative groups, credit unions, pure food and drug administrations, and government agencies."

Such counseling and education

programs, he advised, should cover more than the purchase of quality products, and should include the whole field of consumer financing, prepaid medical care programs and insurance generally, as well as broader issues affecting consumers such as inflation, taxation, resources development and the like.

Haggerty warned that in the broader field of education, as for example, wage-price relationships, "we cannot hope to reach the general public, let alone our trade union consumer, unless our educational efforts are coupled with sound counseling programs on products and services.

"We must demonstrate," he asserted, "who are really the friends of the consumer. . . . There is no short-cut. . . . We will be able to reach the consumers on broad wage-price and inflation issues only when they realize who is helping them in their day-to-day problems through consumer counseling and education."

Consumer Representation

Our consumer counseling program can be as narrow or as broad as we make it, Haggerty observed, but "only within the limits of effective representation which the consumers get in the halls of Congress and our state legislature and before the administrative bodies of government."

Haggerty reminded the conference that labor has stood practically alone thus far in fighting consumer battles in the legislature and before administrative bodies, but "we cannot hope to do an adequate job alone."

The varied demands on the limited resources of organized labor completely rule out this possibility, he said, "even though our membership, as the largest organized group of consumers, have most at stake and stand most to gain."

This, he declared, is why the California Labor Federation and organized labor generally throughout the state gave enthusiastic support to Governor Brown when he successfully proposed at the 1959 session of the legislature, the creation of the office of Consumer Counsel for California.

The labor leader added that whether or not this new office of Consumer Counsel operates effectively on behalf of consumers will depend upon the type of support

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FORM 3547 REQUESTED

Los Angeles Moving on Consumer Problems

Better than 200 trade unionists studied their problems as consumers for three days last weekend at a conference on "The Consumer and Purchasing Power" sponsored by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, in cooperation with Consumers Union and the University Extension at U.C.L.A.

The enthusiastic and active participation of the southern city's trade unionists who attended the conference marked it as an outstanding success.

W. J. Bassett, secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, had announced earlier that the conference's main purpose was to develop and expand the Los Angeles Community Services program in servicing union members as consumers.

Conference participants moved quickly from general sessions to workshop sessions, where the detailed problems facing the consumer were discussed after experts had surveyed the problem areas in the broader sessions.

The conference was opened at a dinner session which featured John F. Henning, director of the California Department of Industrial Relations, on the subject of "State Government and the Consumer," and director of AFL-CIO Community Services Activities, Leo Perlis, who discussed AFL-CIO services to the consumer.

The wage-price-profit relationship was surveyed in a Saturday morning session where AFL-CIO legislative director Andrew J. Biemiller spoke on "Inflation and the Consumer."

Mildred E. Brady, editorial director of Consumer Reports, vividly brought home to participants how consumers are being deprived of their hard-earned dollars through shady consumer financing practices.

Workshops included the family budget, changing family needs and

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attitudes, credit unions and consumer cooperatives as discussion subjects.

A panel discussion on Sunday on "Safeguarding the Consumer — A Program for Action," which combined California Congressman James Roosevelt, state AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer C. J. Haggerty and San Francisco State professor and former Congressman George Outland, was followed by discussion on "A Local Program of Community Services."

Outlining the road ahead, George B. Roberts, president of the Los Angeles AFL-CIO Federation, reviewed plans to bring and expand the AFL-CIO program "into an active effort here in Los Angeles to serve the 750,000 union members and their families who are the affiliates of the County Federation of Labor."

Recognizing the establishment in California of the first state Consumer Counsel on a statutory basis, Roberts said, "This area plans to take an active interest in this new consumer set-up," adding "We intend to join with other interested consumer groups and citizens in an organized community association to strengthen the state's efforts, to inform and educate the public, and to work for legislation designed to protect the consumer against all the flourishing evils which would rob him of a substantial part of his income."

Consumer Information Courses

The inauguration of consumer information courses, planned and carried through by community services representatives of the Los Angeles group, was revealed by Roberts.

"These courses will be open to union members and their spouses, and will be directed to inform them about consumer problems so as to enable them to make a wise decision when buying the goods and services which they need," he said.

"The importance of the Union Label will be emphasized and the

courses will have the full cooperation of the Union Label Council in Los Angeles."

The Community Services Department, it was stated, is also planning to help members in giving the best expert advice on family budgeting, and will "seek to obtain accurate information on rackets and on actual cases of fraud, misrepresentation and illegal activities in the sale of goods and services, and will see that these cases are reported to the agencies established for consumer protection."

In the area of leadership training, Community Services representatives Susan Adams and Charles Harding reviewed plans for consumer counseling classes on a weekly basis, which will bring the best of community experts on consumer problems to the Los Angeles movement in a training program for action.

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which workers and consumers generally give to the new Counsel.

Cooperation Vehicle

Specific reference was made by Haggerty to the recent formation of the California Consumer Association to (1) promote consumer education programs, (2) broaden areas of mutual interests for cooperative action, and (3) represent consumer interests before legislative and administrative bodies.

Pointing out that the San Diego convention of the Federation endorsed labor participation in this Association, Haggerty said, "We in the California Labor Federation are looking forward to the actual functioning of the Association, and also to its development into a kind of state body which will facilitate the establishment of similar working relationships at the central council level in at least the major metropolitan areas of our state."

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