

PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZING CONSUMERS

CALIFORNIA

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1. The principal problem we have encountered is how to do an even reasonable effective organizing job without any paid staff and officers and directors who are already extremely busy.

2. The problems are complicated for us by the size of the state. Our membership presently is concentrated principally in the San Francisco Bay Area and, to a lesser extent, in the Los Angeles Area. But we do have members spread from San Diego to Humboldt County - a distance of well over 700 miles.

3. Tentative plans which are now in process of formulation and will come before the Executive Board of the Association next month, include the following:

(a) Focusing on doing a few things well this year, as outlined below.

(b) Selection of packaging and weights and measures as the principal area of our concern this year.

(c) Planning and holding a conference dealing with the above area in the fall of this year, in conjunction with the annual convention of the Association.

(d) Developing exhibits and a program kit for use in speaking to groups. A start has been made in this direction by obtaining tapes of speeches by Helen Nelson and Mildred Brady.

(e) Start a bulletin dealing with consumer problems and Association activities. Initially this bulletin might be mimeographed and come out four times a year.

(f) Develop area chairman, responsible for organization in their region, together with materials to assist them and targets to aim for. One possible avenue of approach here is the development of local consumer associations to be affiliated with the state-wide organization. This is already taking place in San Diego and Sacramento, and our bylaws favor such development. In such an event, the state-wide organization might ultimately be a federation rendering educational, news and legislative services.

(g) Develop a legislative committee, with each person responsible for maintaining contact with legislators in his area and attending major hearings held there, and for seeing to it that others voice their views on significant consumer questions and bills.

(h) Exhibit at the California State Fair in Sacramento.

I should emphasize that all of the above plans are still in the formulating stage and have not been finally approved. They may change substantially and their implementation will pose obvious problems. We welcome the advice of other consumer groups and the benefit of their experiences.