



Stewart Lee

President - 1962-63

***Newsletter* Editor - 1960 to present**

Distinguished Fellow - 1977

Interview with Stewart Lee (Norman Silber)
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Prof. Silber: This is an interview with Prof. Stewart Lee. The interview is taking place at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on March 16, 1983. The interviewer is Norman Silber.

Dr. Lee, could you begin by telling me how you became involved with the consumer movement and then with ACCI?

Prof. Lee: There were two ways. One was when I started teaching at Geneva College in 1949. The next year or two, I was asked to teach a course in consumer economics, which I'd never taught before. That certainly got me interested in the subject. I had the good fortune to choose the book, *Economics for Consumers*, which was by Leland J. Gordon, who interestingly enough, was a charter member of ACCI. That, I think, stimulated my interest in the consumer area. My formal education—by that I mean all three of my degrees—had been in economics.

I am an economist by profession. I specialized ever since the early '50s in consumer economics, consumer advocacy and consumer education—all of those being different to some people, the same to others. Also, my doctoral dissertation was about the economic implications and retail price maintenance with particular attention to the discount house. That was in the mid-1950s.

That certainly indicated to me that a very significant piece of legislation, which had been passed in 45 of the 48 states at that time, to establish retail price maintenance—which a public relations man labeled "Fair Trade"—led me to realize how legislation is passed to the detriment of the consumer, and the work I did on that dissertation certainly stimulated me in the area of consumer advocacy, so that in the '50s, I was down in Washington a number of times testifying before Senate and House committees in opposition to making resale price maintenance the law of the land.

My particular area of interest was working against retail price maintenance. I ended up with a research grant from Sperry & Hutchinson and put together an article for the *Journal of Retailing* indicating that many of the arguments for retail price maintenance just were not true. When we got statistical evidence, we found out that small retail stores, drug stores, independent stores really were not protected by price-fixing of this nature. In fact, some of the studies indicated that in the states with this kind of protection, there were more bankruptcies among these stores than in those states without this protection.

The culmination came in 1975, when legislation was introduced into both the House and Senate to repeal all "fair trade" laws and both the House and Senate passed this. The Senate passed it without any debate, which is amazing.

I was invited to the White House for the signing on December 12, 1975, when President Gerald Ford signed the law repealing all national "fair trade" laws. From that time to the present, we have a much freer market, a much more competitive market. Those are the things that stimulated my early interest.

One of the questions that I have been asked and I don't have the answer to is, where did I learn about what was then called the Council on Consumer Interests. I don't know where I got the information about it, but I do know that right after I had my dissertation completed in 1956, that I wrote the Council and I suggested a presentation about "fair trade" and discount houses to the 1957 conference in St. Louis, Missouri.

I was accepted, and in 1957, I attended my first Council on Consumer Interests conference. That was really the launching of a very, very close relationship with consumer educators across the country, consumer advocates and people in government who were interested in consumer

welfare. I have had the good fortune, from 1957 to the present, to never have missed a conference. I did miss the first two in '55 and '56 when I didn't know it was in existence.

NS: What needs did it fill for you?

SL: I think probably one of the most significant needs was to become acquainted with many other people in the field. I got into the consumer field at the right time in the '50s, when it was really a fledgling.

There had been consumer movements before, in the early 1900s and the 1930s, but they somewhat fell by the wayside. In the early '50s, there was a little movement to get more consumer education in the school system.

When Consumers Union, under Colston Warne as president, stimulated a group of people to get together, 21 charter members formed the CCI. I was so glad to become a part of CCI, because these were the key consumer educators—and interestingly enough—key people in government, and there weren't very many at that time. At the federal level, the Food and Drug Administration Commissioner took a very active role in CCI. Some of the Attorneys General took an active role in CCI. You had some people in the business community, a few who had a consumer orientation, taking part in it.

CCI brought these various groups together. We all got to know each other, and it was very stimulating. I can remember that conference in 1957. I imagine the registration was no more than 75 people. It was the St. Louis Consumer Federation that hosted it. It was just a real nice get together of a concerned group, and from that CCI grew and grew and grew.

They probably have 300-400 at this conference here in Kansas City this year.

NS: Did you become an executive officer right away?

SL: It is sort of interesting. I will refer to what was then called the Council on Consumers Interest as ACCI.

In 1959, I took a couple dozen students with me to the ACCI conference in Washington. Two things happened. First of all, we made up about 25% of the attendance. The others were so impressed when I brought a couple dozen students with me, that I was named to the board of ACCI, which was a very nice compliment. Also, that same year, I had sent a number of items to the editor of the *Newsletter* of ACCI indicating things that I thought might be interesting to consider putting into the *Newsletter*.

I didn't realize, in doing that, what was going to happen. What did happen was that, at the end of that year, the editor resigned. He had other responsibilities. He recommended me as editor in 1959.

Here it is 1983, and I have just been reappointed for another three years. Little did I realize that that move back in 1959 would be one of the major things. What actually happened was, I went on to be a member of the board of directors, went on to be vice president, and then president of ACCI in 1961-62. I have continued as editor of the *Newsletter* to the present time.

NS: Do you have views about how the board has changed in that time, in terms of its composition?

SL: Actually in the early years, ACCI, being such a small organization, almost everybody knew everybody. Even today, one of the nice things is that you come to the conference, there are 300 or 400 attending, and you probably know 100 of them very well. That's so different from the American Economics Association. Maybe 6000 to 8000 get together and you don't know many

at all, and if you do, you have trouble locating them.

The board was a self-perpetuating board. In other words, the board would nominate people from the membership, and then they would be elected at the annual meeting. Gradually the organization grew. There was the realization that it had to be more democratic, so it opened up nominations to the board and the officers to the members at large. Ballots were mailed out. Before that, only those who attended the annual conference would vote and that was a very small representation. Gradually they realized they had to do something different and I think the move was very good. Now, every member has the opportunity to nominate people to the board, as officers, and to vote in the annual election.

NS: Do you know when the mail ballot began to change things?

SL: I don't, but it seems when you have been in an organization as long as I have, you sometimes lose track of time. It seems to me that it must be at least six or eight years.

NS: Did the change in the electorate change the kind of person who became a board member?

SL: I don't think so, because basically, your board members still are consumer educators. In consumer education, one of the problems is that we don't have it as a specific discipline over a long period of time like mathematics, history, English.

For most of us, some other subject area tends to be our #1 field; consumer education is #2, but I think what you find is that there are certain ones who have dedicated themselves. I think I have. I think I have because economics is my profession, but the consumer area I have made a high priority. Even though in college teaching, it is only one of the three courses I teach, the other two are general economics courses.

I don't think it really changed the composition of the board very much in terms of representation. I think probably one of the significant changes--and this did not come without a floor battle--and that was a redesignation of membership. It used to be that anyone could become a full member. There was a little fear, in the days when corporations, businesses, did not view consumer activities with a very friendly eye, that if we had business people as full members, if they chose to, there could be a possibility of them joining, attending the meeting making a large percentage of the group and they could take over the organization. Whether that was a fear that was well-founded or not, I don't know. I think the business community today looks at consumer education and the consumer movement with more acceptance.

What happened was that we had associate members who did not have voting rights and there was a knock-down, drag-out battle during the business meeting when this motion was discussed.

I will never forget, one representative of a trade association got up and vehemently spoke about being disenfranchised. He did not attend another ACCI conference. Up to that time, he attended very regularly.

NS: Was this at the Atlanta conference?

SL: No, this would have been before. I'm just not sure, but it was an interesting conference. That was one of the probably about three or four tense moments in the history of the ACCI business meetings.

NS: Was this a conflict between those who felt the organization should be more or less activist?

SL: I think no. Another of the battles at the business meeting a number of years ago--this came up more than once--and that was whether ACCI should take an advocacy position.

Every time this issue came up, there were very forceful arguments presented on both sides. Each time there were those who advocated that it be a professional consumer educator organization, not an advocacy organization, in general. Those who were very strong for advocacy tended to join other kinds of consumer organizations which had as their major role, advocacy, or lobbying.

NS: Most of the board members were leaders of those kinds of organizations?

SL: Absolutely. Not only that, but many of us had been individual advocates in Washington, or at a state capital or a local community on consumer issues just like I was on retail price maintenance—going down to Washington, battling, writing letters, writing journal articles, writing letters to the editor of newspapers, doing everything that I could, getting petitions signed, and so forth, to do away with that kind of price fixing.

NS: Was there a feeling that the interests of different advocates would be hard to reconcile once you began to take positions?

SL: No, I don't think that so much. I think part of it was there was a feeling that, if we went to an advocacy position there would be the belief that we would be a political affiliation, because in general, the Democratic Party has contained more consumer planks in its platform than the Republicans, and I think that it was not felt that it was good for a professional educator's association to get too closely allied to a particular political party.

NS: Where does the line between policy prescription and advocacy get drawn?

SL: Well, I think over the years, we have gone on record on resolutions in which we talked about policies. For example, I think it was probably a year ago, there was a resolution presented at the business meeting and passed unanimously that ACCI go on record that the Department of Education not do away with the Office of Consumers Education.

NS: The reason I asked, is that the *Journal of Consumer Affairs* encourages articles to have strong policy implications, and in a sense, the *Journal* frequently publishes articles that advocate changes in prevailing law. Would it not have been enough to take a non-partisan position rather than a non-advocacy position in your opinion?

SL: Maybe this is not answering the question, but each time the vote came up whether we should move toward advocacy or not, I voted not to. It's a fine line and certainly pieces of legislation have been introduced that our members have been very active in. Some of them have wanted the organization to be active, to support them, but the organization did not feel they should take a position.

On the other side, you look at some of our members, Bob McEwen and myself--both past presidents--were diligently against retail price maintenance. Dick Morse is Mr. Truth-in-Lending and Mr. Truth-in-Savings. There are others who have taken very strong stands, but the organization itself has not.

NS: Were you involved in the pamphlet series that CCI issued?

SL: Yes. In fact, the first thing I had published was "Consumers Look at Discount Houses", which was from my dissertation and from that talk that I gave in St. Louis, Missouri back there in 1957. That was one of the pamphlet series.

They had many of these pamphlets put out in the early days. If you look at the publishing history of ACCI, you see a very interesting change in direction from what were self-help type pamphlets for the consumer to the *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, which is "a professional

journal for professional consumer educators." A real change has taken place.

I think there were two reasons for that. One is, in the early days not much was published in the consumer area for consumers. These pamphlets were helpful for consumer educators to pass on in their classroom.

Then, what was needed was more and more consumer information which was made available through the press, newspapers and magazines, etc.

A little more professionalism came out with the *Journal of Consumer Affairs*. I think some of us feel that maybe the *JCA* has gone a little bit too quantitative, a little bit too professional, a little bit too in-depth research-oriented. We sort of miss some of the kinds of things that the early journals and self-help pamphlets had. You might say, they really zeroed in on a problem.

NS: Do you remember any of the guidelines or general rules that you tried to follow in writing that pamphlet or that were issued for the pamphlet series?

SL: To the best of my knowledge, there were no guidelines. If a person had an idea, he put it together, he submitted it, the board looked at it and they decided whether to publish it or not. I think two things came up.

First of all, in the early days, a pamphlet was to be published in the area of trading stamps and the person who was writing this had done considerable research and he ended up going with Sperry & Hutchinson as their economist.

The board finally decided not to publish that pamphlet. I was not in on that decision, but apparently there was a rather interesting battle over that particular publication and a conflict of interest.

There was some debate over the publication of a couple pamphlets on aspects of interest rates, Truth-in-Lending aspects.

I think the problem here was that there were two publications available and some felt they were just too much in-depth on the subject, while the author thought this was something very vital.

Dick Morse was the author, and in one respect, he was vindicated in the culmination of the Truth-in-Lending law in Congress.

On the other side, I think a lot of people would say, "Well, now that we have the information, that's it."

NS: The pamphlets sold very well at one point—3000 or more were being sold a year. Was it your impression that most of those were sold through classrooms and through teachers?

SL: Actually, I would have no idea how they were sold. I think that there was one pamphlet in particular; it might have been the one on funerals, "Consumers Look at Burial Practices." That one was bought in large quantities by the funeral industry [laughter]. That was kind of interesting because it certainly was not something that they were very supportive of, but maybe they felt that they ought to know something about it.

NS: I believe I was told that Household Finance reprinted some other pamphlets; I don't remember which ones, though.

SL: That, I don't recall. I do know, as the author of "Consumers Look at Discount Houses," that was a bestseller for quite a few years except for the one on burial practices.

NS: I'm asking that because one wonders if, at that point or while the pamphlets were being done, there was an effort to strike a balance between the ultimate consumer and consumer professionals.

SL: Actually, at one time, they had two different labels to the series, then they all went under the same label.

As you look at them, for example, one of them is "Consumers Look at Labels." That is really geared to the consumer. Another one, "A Guide to Family Financial Counseling," is geared to the professional counselor, the educator.

Another one, "The Consumer Looks at Deceptive Packaging," was definitely geared for the consumer. I think most would say, "Bringing the Consumer Point of View into Government," was geared for the professional consumer educator.

You sort of had two paths that they were following. I forget the label that they used in the early days. I would have to go back to my file to the early pamphlets, but they definitely had two headings: Consumer Problem Series and Consumer's Self-Help Series. Later, they put them all together and numbered them straight through.

NS: When did the *Newsletter* start?

SL: The *Newsletter* began very shortly after the organization started, and that would have been in 1953. It's sort of interesting when you see that the editor was in there for one year. In 1954, they had three editors. In '55, they had a new editor, in '56 a new editor, then '56-'59 one editor, and for 1959 to the present, one editor.

NS: It sounds as though they finally found what they were looking for.

SL: I hope so. It's been fun to do it. It's been a real challenge. There have been a couple of very positive pluses for me. One is that it forces me to keep up in the subject area. The second is, I think that I can say without exaggeration, that I have probably the best personal consumer library of anybody in the United States. Almost anything I want, I ship off and I get review copies of books, pamphlets and leaflets, review copies of film strips, films, slide sets and computer programs. Sometimes I get to keep them, sometimes I don't. Films, you don't, but I get these on a review basis so that it forces me to keep up. This job gives me a real good library.

NS: Do you recall how you changed the format of the *Newsletter* when you first took over?

SL: Actually, when I took over, I changed very little. I think the predecessors did a good job in setting it up. Along the years, there was a change in the format, a graphics person looked at it and gave some very good suggestions. I accepted all her suggestions and it made it a much more attractive item.

I think probably the nicest compliment I ever got on the *Newsletter* was when a friend of mine was in Europe for six months, and I said to him, "When you get back to the U.S., how in the world do you catch up?" and he said, "I just read the *Newsletters*."

That's the type of thing that encourages one to keep up. I think the most valuable aspect of the *Newsletter* that was reported back to me are the approximate 30 annotations of resource materials in each issue—films, film strips, articles from newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, leaflets. In fact, the April, 1983 *Newsletter*, for the first time, has diskettes for Apple II computer.

What I try to do is get a representative of what seems to be the best material—or, if there is something very poor in the field that I think the membership ought to know about, I will annotate that. One of the classic annotations was a book titled, *20% to 90% Off*. It was not much of a book, but I thought they ought to be alerted to it, so what I did in the annotation was say, "If you can get the book for 90% off, it just might be a good buy" [laughter].

If there is something that is getting a lot of publicity that I think is pretty poor and I think they ought to know about, I will annotate that. The biggest changes that I have seen over the years are the quantities of materials coming out.

When I first took over, the *Newsletter* came out four times a year and I had a little trouble filling it. Then we went to six times a year, and I began to have a little bit too much to put in. Then we shifted to nine times a year. When the May issue goes to print, for example, last year I had about five feet of materials that didn't make it. I don't think that was a real disaster to the membership because I keep gleaning each month and I keep pushing stuff aside that just doesn't seem important enough to make it. We have seen so much material being poured out today. Every publisher has to have a book on personal finance, consumer finance, nutrition, etc., so that what you try to do is glean through these and select what seems to be of most value to the members.

NS: Did you consider making it longer rather than publishing it more often at one point?

SL: No. Actually, I think that going to monthly publication was very significant because the timeliness of it is vital. It's possible. For example, in the April *Newsletter* that people will be receiving in a couple weeks there will be an item that I received the first week of March. The time lag could be as short as one month, and that's one of the key things.

On anything that I annotate, I normally put the name of the publication, the address of the publication, the date and the price, so a person does not have to look anyplace else. If they want to order, they have everything they need and they can order, and that's it. I get so upset at the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. They'll put a book in their paper and they don't give adequate information. What I've been doing in more recent years is if a telephone number is there, I'll put it in and if somebody wants to phone in to get it right away, they can.

NS: Do you have help putting this together?

SL: All the secretary does is send out letters requesting materials. My sister, who has a Master's degree in French and English and Bachelor's degree in Latin, and has taught English, French and Latin, does the final proofreading job. My dad did it for about 21 years and then his eyesight went bad and my sister took up after that. They are the best proofreaders in the world. My wife sits down with me with galley and reads that to me.

I have had the same printing firm do it, in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania for 24 years, and the crew there just cannot be better. Every month, Monday morning they pick up the copy, Monday night they deliver the galley to my house, Tuesday morning they pick up the galley, Tuesday night they deliver page proofs, Wednesday morning they pick up the page proofs, Friday they mail it out to ACCP's headquarters in Columbia, Missouri at the University of Missouri, and the staff out there does a great job of putting it out. If I had one wish, that would be that it would go out first class, because it would get to the members about 2-3 weeks ahead of time.

NS: It makes that much difference?

SL: There's about a two to three week lag in getting it out by sending it the cheaper rate, but the higher cost is just out of the question.

NS: Do you read all of these things?

SL: No. Nothing will be annotated in the *Newsletter* that I have not looked at. I will look at the films entirely. The film strips, if there is a series of 5, I will look at one or two. If the film strip has a record, if it's a 33 rpm, I'll turn it on 45 rpm because it's still understandable but it reduces the time that I have to take to look at it.

With regard to books, I read very few clear through. Over the years, you sort of get a feel as to what to look for. Just a few illustrations to point out what I mean. For example, if it is a textbook for high school or college, I look at what they say about life insurance and that gives me a pretty good idea whether it's very consumer-oriented or not. I look at the resource materials they list.

For example, in two 1983 publications, I couldn't believe that they were talking about *Consumer Reports* and *Consumer Bulletin*. *Consumer Bulletin* changed its name eight years ago. I don't have too much confidence in a consumer educator writing a book for other educators who's not aware that *Consumer Bulletin* changed its name eight years ago. To me this is disturbing.

You look at the Table of Contents, you look at a few things in the Index and follow up there, and you can get a pretty good idea of whether the author really is putting out a book that's going to be serviceable.

NS: How has this process developed over time? Is it possible for you to go back and reconstruct the way that this whole newsletter development process has come about?

SL: Probably not, because it's gradual over a quarter of a century. I have thought that, when I pass it on to somebody else, what I would request of the board would be that they come to my office and spend a couple of days with me, just to see the whole procedure. I have, in my right hand drawer, file folders with the headings, "Council Business," which is the first part of the *Newsletter*, followed up by "Other Consumer Organizations," followed up by "Federal Action," "State Action," "Items of General Consumer Interest."

Every day as I'm reading, I'm clipping and putting items in these files. Then, at the end of the month, I'll pull that file out, put it in order, type the copy out and then send it down to the printer. As the books and films come in, I'll put those aside and then take a day or two and just sit down with them and look at the audio visuals, and flip through the books and decide which books ought to be noted, which leaflets and pamphlets ought to be noted in that issue, and then look at those a little more carefully and put it together.

To show what you have to do: Every annotation is on a 3 x 5 card. As soon as the *Newsletter* is printed, those are filed. I try to avoid any duplication. As soon as something new comes up, I check my file to see whether I have already ordered it and if it is annotated. Sharp-eyed people will have seen, over the years, that I've goofed a few times. I've given a few books a plug twice instead of just once. Hopefully, none three times.

NS: I hope you make a mistake in my case.

SL: I did! Incidentally, on the other side, I've been sort of amused two or three times. I have had authors very upset with me for not annotating their publication. Then, they're embarrassed when I tell them what issue it was in and they missed it. Also, I've had a few people very upset with me because I just didn't think their publication was worth the space to annotate it.

NS: Have you included the consumer classics? For example, you didn't miss *Silent Spring* when it came out and *Unsafe at Any Speed*, and the books that have become classics?

SL: Absolutely.

NS: Are there features in the *Newsletter* that you ever proposed which were declined? Did you ever discuss proposed changes?

SL: Actually, the board has always given me a 100% free hand. There has been no dictation from the board about what I do with the *Newsletter*. In fact, rarely do I get anything from anybody to put in it.

NS: Do you ever ask for submissions?

SL: What I used to do was send to the board members once a month saying that the *Newsletter* is going out, do you have anything to suggest? After doing that for a couple years and getting almost nothing, I quit doing it. Time, effort, and expense didn't make it worthwhile. The board knows that. When I meet with the board each year, I tell them to please submit anything they have.

NS: The newsworthy items. You've talked about the resources, etc., but the news items, how do they get included into the *Newsletter*?

SL: I have never counted, but I subscribe to scores of magazines. I'm on more than scores of mailing lists. I'm on the mailing list of many consumer organizations for their newsletters. I read the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, and the *Beaver County Pennsylvania Times* every day [laughter]. When you put that together with the scores of magazines, you're just constantly getting items. If they look like they would be of interest, I clip them and put them in the file, pull them out at the end of the month, and am in business.

I think, if anyone were to follow the *Newsletter* very closely, there would be one thing that they would see that is one area of particular interest to me. That is, the impact of advertising on the consumer. In almost every issue—generally it would be under the items of general interest—there will be something on advertising, because next to formal education, advertising has more money spent on it than any area in the country.

Number one is public "education," number two is the amount spent on advertising. In 1983, I think the final figure will be about 74 billion dollars. I put that word "education" in quotation marks but it is consumer education. Some would say miseducation, etc. I think we can't ignore it. We can't ignore when M*A*S*H was on for the last time that it cost \$450,000 for a 30-second spot.

Why are they willing to pay that? Because they believe there will be enough viewers that will be stimulated to buy their product or that will reinforce the product they have bought so that it's worthwhile to them. I think we can't ignore it. I don't think there has been any major area that over the years I have shifted from. There are certain areas, for example, personal finance. There's an awful lot coming out in personal finance, some in nutrition, insurance a great deal, and other areas over time.

I have annotated some books on consumer behavior. These are not "written for consumer educators," they are written for the marketing people, but I think it is very important that consumer educators see what the marketing people are telling themselves about consumer behavior. I think one of the very significant areas in consumer education is helping consumers understand why they buy what they buy, why they have the behavior patterns that they do, the influence that advertisers have, and the influence that peer group pressure has on them. All these are very important.

When I chose *Economics for Consumers* originally as the first textbook I taught from—that was the one by Leland Gordon—I chose it primarily because it had buymanship and personal finance. It also had a section on patterns of consumer behavior, advertising, fads, fashions,

customs, and these kinds of influences. That choice, as well as attendance at ACCI was awfully significant to me.

A few years later, Leland Gordon asked me to be co-author with him on his text. On the fifth edition, I was in charge of five chapters; on the sixth edition, 10 chapters; and the seventh edition, I was in charge of the whole thing. Fortunately, I was able to get Mel Zelenak, executive director of ACCI, to come on in, and he was responsible for the latest edition that just came out in 1982.

NS: Have you noticed any kind of a gap in the ability of consumer educators to absorb, be more quantitatively inclined and quantitatively oriented studies?

SL: I would say this. I do not teach at a graduate school, I do teach at various graduate schools in the summer, but what I teach is not quantitative. I am not quantitatively directed, so I am really not in a position to answer that question, except to say that there is no question in general, in consumer affairs there has been a move toward more quantitative research.

NS: The decision to publish the *Journal of Consumer Affairs*—did the existence of another journal in any way affect the publication of the *Newsletter*?

SL: No. Actually, there is no overlapping there at all. For example, the only area where there might be overlapping would be in the book review section. The book review section for the *Journal* generally will be coming out anywhere from one to two years after the book has come out, and it will be a two-, three- or four-page book review. The *Newsletter* tries to get notices in as quickly as possible. If it is real current and is real significant, it can be in the next month. It is just an annotation. Generally they run an average of eight lines, including the title and the address. I try, in those eight lines, to give the person enough of an idea as to whether they want to pursue that book or not.

NS: There was a complementarity between the pamphlet series and the *Newsletter*—at least other people have commented on it. Was there an understanding or anticipation that, when the pamphlet series was dropped and the *Journal* began to be published, in a sense the *Newsletter* would serve those members whom the *Journal* would not serve?

SL: If that was the thought, it was never mentioned to me. In fact, the *Journal* started in 1966 and I'm not sure when the *Newsletter* went to nine issues, but it very likely would have been around that time. It was filling a void, but it's very different than the pamphlets, except in the aspect of getting something that is not research oriented.

ACCI used to work with the *Journal of Consumer Research*, put out by the American Consumer Research organization, but they became so market oriented that it really didn't look like there was a relationship there, so we do not have a relationship with them anymore.

NS: The *Journal of Consumer Affairs* was not geared intentionally to secondary educators. To what extent is there any kind of tension between directing the *Newsletter* toward secondary as opposed to college level?

SL: I believe there is no tension there. First of all, we have relatively few members of ACCI in the secondary schools which is a real disappointment, but the kinds of annotations in there are K through graduate school. The overwhelming majority are geared toward the college level because that is primarily our readership. Any new consumer education book for high school that I am aware of will be annotated in the *Newsletter*, because I think--particularly those who are teaching in college—teachers who will be teaching in high school need the awareness of what is coming out in the high school field.

NS: What critical feedback have you had, if any, about the *Newsletter*?

SL: Actually, either people are very kind or they don't think it's worth a stamp to criticize. I have received a few criticisms in the early years; the fair trade issue was one. There were some proponents of that form of price fixing that were really not supportive when I would annotate something in that area. People have been very kind.

In the April, 1983 issue, in fact, I think I have two corrections in the resource materials. It's sort of funny because the Joint Council on Economic Education came out with "Developing Reasoning as a Fourth 'R,'" and I noted that in the February *Newsletter* as being free. They got too many orders from it, and it's a dollar, so I corrected that. Also, in the same *Newsletter*, I have another note because the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration put out a publication, *Auto Safety Hotline*, and I said it was available free up to 50 copies by calling an 800 number. They called me, and said they got too many calls there. I think this is federal bureaucratic nonsense, but they said from that number, you could only order one. If you want to order 50, then you have to send it in by mail to another address. I thought it would have been very nice if they would just take the information down and give it to the other place. They weren't willing to do that.

I have gotten very little criticism with what has gone in. Probably one of the more potent criticisms I got was in a note with regard to federal legislation. I editorialized and the person took issue with me. He said, "Certainly in the annotations you can give your opinion, but in news, with regard to federal consumer action, you ought to do straight reporting."

NS: Did you ever have the temptation to write a column or add a column to present your own personal views?

SL: Oh, there are many times I would have loved to put in my bias, prejudice, preconceived opinion on some of the items because I feel rather strongly sometimes, but you just don't want to call attention to something and say, "This is no good!" or "This is good, let's go."

NS: On the other side of that, many people have told me that the *Newsletter* does perform a very much needed clearinghouse function in terms of communicating information that otherwise wouldn't get communicated. What I'm interested in is, to what extent do you feel that the *Newsletter* has broadened? Do you feel that the *Newsletter* has preached to other than the converted, in a sense? Is there any way in which the *Newsletter* has expanded the community or potential membership of the organization?

SL: I would like to think so. I would have nothing definitive on that. The membership of ACCI are the dedicated convertant. What they do with the *Newsletter*, with their various constituencies, hopefully would give it broader coverage. I wouldn't really have a measure on that. In fact, the only kind of measure is there have been a few times when the ACCI executive director has run surveys of membership. What are the valuable services? You can get responses from him on that. One of the things in the *Newsletter* that is encouraging, is that I have had many organizations and people who put materials out say that they did not realize when they said, "OK, put it in there," that they would get one, two or three hundred requests for material.

NS: Can we switch from the *Newsletter*—actually, it's not totally a switch—to the *Journal* more specifically and the decision to publish the *Journal*? You were both the publisher of the *Newsletter* and a board member at the time?

SL: I don't know whether I was a member of the board in 1966 or not. I sort of doubt if I was in '65, when that took place.

NS: In 1963, you were on the board.

SL: I don't think I was on after '63 because you usually stay on one year after, as past president.

NS: Then you were a member when the board made that decision and also the publisher of the *Newsletter*?

SL: Right.

NS: Do you remember what your input was about the decision to publish the *Journal*?

SL: It was something that we all felt was a must. If I recall correctly, it seems to me that Bob McEwen was one of the real stimulators behind it and then the blessing was that Gordon Bivens was willing to assume the responsibility of putting out a new journal. It's a lot easier to follow somebody than to start out new. The feeling was that ACCI had grown and reached a certain degree of professional stature and we ought to have an outlet for significant research to be published.

NS: Could you see from your position as *Newsletter* editor, or from your vantage point as a professor, the difficulty that people in the field were having getting published?

SL: I cannot answer that. I would say this. Back in that time, for those that had an interest in the consumer area, there were not too many outlets for it. Today, there are a number of outlets of various kinds—refereed journals, non-refereed journals, etc.—that you just didn't have in the mid- or early-'60s. At these "publish or perish" institutions, it is vital that you have an outlet for publications.

NS: Do you know whether a journal article grew into a book which you subsequently reviewed in the *Newsletter*?

SL: Not to my knowledge.

NS: In looking at the life of the *Journal*, there was some question as to whether or not the pamphlet series would end when the *Journal* began, but it was always assumed that the *Newsletter* was a completely separate entity. Is that right?

SL: Right.

NS: I'd like to ask you specifically about being president. Did you continue publishing the *Newsletter* while you were president?

SL: Yes, because I got out of one of the very difficult tasks when I was vice president of ACCI. The normal procedure was that the vice president was program chairman. The board, in its infinite wisdom fortunately, thought that it was asking me too much to be vice president, program chairman, and *Newsletter* editor. I have never had that difficult task of program chairman, for which I'm thankful, but I surely give credit to all those that have had that job.

NS: Was there any kind of difficulty being ACCI president at Geneva College, while the headquarters were located in Missouri?

SL: Actually, when I was president, the headquarters were in Greeley, Colorado, the University of Northern Colorado. There was really no problem because the mail and the telephone access were fine. Also, I think we have to remember that those were the early years of the organization and (I use this in a favorable term), it had not grown into the bureaucracy it is today, which it has to. I mean, it's much, much more formalized. You have board meetings more frequently. You have conference calls more frequently. You have longer board meetings, before and after the annual meeting. It is a much broader organization, its constituency is more numerous and you just have to have a more formalized setup for it.

Incidentally, along that line, I think a significant aspect of ACCI in its founding years (when its major financing was from Consumers Union), is to realize—and I don't know whether you can find this—how many consumer organizations are spin-offs of ACCI. ACCI in its early years was a meeting place for business people. Out of that eventually came SOCAP—the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals in business. It was a meeting place for government people in the consumer area. Out of that, you have now (if I can remember the title) you have something like the National Association of Consumer Administrators in Government. That's not quite the right title, but that was a spin-off. We had a few attorneys general that would attend our meetings. Now you have the National Attorneys General Consumer Organization, a consumer section of attorneys general.

NS: That is an outgrowth?

SL: That's right. In other words, you could say that the few who were members of our organization decided that this ought to be implemented in their own organization. In some respects, I think you could say that the Consumer Federation of America was somewhat an outgrowth because ACCI would not be the advocacy organization, so there was a need for an advocacy organization. A number of the ones who got involved in the founding of CFA were activists in ACCI. Bob McEwen, I think, was the first president of the Consumer Federation of America.

That is a very significant role that ACCI has played. I don't think we can ever thank Consumers Union enough for giving the seed money. It was about 20 years before CU ceased contributing to ACCI each year. When it ceased contributing, ACCI was able to survive and move forward.

When I was on the board of Consumers Union, every year it was a battle whether they should fund ACCI. That was in the early '70s, and the organization was not quite 20 years old. There was the feeling that, if it hadn't been able to make a go of it financially now, maybe it shouldn't. But it did, finally, and ACCI said no more money was needed, and that was it.

NS: Do you think that the non-commercial policy of Consumers Union influenced the ACCI in its position towards the association membership?

SL: I would think so. Look at some of the key ones in ACCI: Colston Warne, president of Consumers Union for so long, was a charter member of ACCI, was on the board of Consumers Union for many years; Ray Price, a charter member of ACCI, was on the board of Consumers Union for many years; Arch Troelstrup was on the board of Consumers Union and an ACCI charter member. Bob Herrmann, Dick Morse, Gordon Bivens, and myself all served on the board of Consumers Union or are serving. I think that has played a role. There is a feeling that you want to be as pure as Caesar's wife. I think it is a good thing.

NS: We have discussed the importance of that policy in terms of increasing the amount of objectivity and the degree to which it has helped the organization remain free and clear of commercial interest, but in another sense, has this promoted or increased the adversarial nature of the relationship between business and ACCI?

SL: I would say it has not increased it. Some organizations have pretty well ignored us. There are a few organizations that would like to help ACCI financially and ACCI has bent a little in accepting some money. The Shell Foundation, in particular, for specific purposes that ACCI says what they are for so they cannot dictate to ACCI. That doesn't bother me. Some would say, "Well, actually, you are sort of compromising." I do not think we are compromising principle, and I also don't think we are being bought off.

NS: Were you involved in the name change, the decision to change the name from CCI to ACCI?

SL: Yes. In the course of human events, it doesn't seem like the change of name ought to be too significant. There was a great debate at the national conference over the name change. People liked the ring of the Council on Consumer Interests (CCI), but the argument that I think was very strong and certainly carried weight was, it was a *national* organization, and the Council on Consumer Interests did not indicate a national organization. There were a number of names that were proposed, and I spoke very strongly in favor of the name American Council on Consumer Interests because that kept the CCI, the distinction which is merely adding American, which gave it the national item.

I think we did have a Canadian or two there who objected because they said, "We are Americans, too," but that objection didn't carry very much weight. I think it was a very good move. When people see Council on Consumer Interests, that is a little bit different in its impact than to see American Council on Consumer Interests, and it is a national organization.

NS: I know that the charter members came from all over the country. Would you be in a position to tell me whether or not the base was changed, for example, from the predominance of members that have come from the east coast?

SL: It really has, I think from day one, been pretty much the idea of national. Some might say its birth was in Minnesota and/or Columbia, Missouri. There might be an argument between those two groups, but I think that it has had, in its membership right from the beginning, the idea of being a national organization.

NS: What about the role of women and minorities in ACCI? Has this been something that has been discussed?

SL: I don't even think it's been discussed. In other words, it's been a group of consumer educators and we didn't care whether you are tall, short, fat, thin, white, black, yellow, male, female, or what have you.

As you look back at the board over the years, at the president and at other offices held, we've had all kinds of people on there. It's a little bit surprising. I would think that we would have a larger percentage of women than men because of the home economics always having been somewhat a home for consumer education. In looking over the presidencies of the charter members, there have been eight women and thirteen men over the years, and maybe this is not representative. There has been only one woman as executive director.

NS: There haven't been many executive directors.

SL: That's right. One out of seven. I think there is a likelihood the next one will be a woman. In the membership, six of the eight presidents from 1976 through 1985, which we already know now, will be women, and then the three before that were men. Actually, the only place the membership splits is they have the non-smokers sit on the right and smokers sit on the left at the conference.

NS: Smoking would probably have been an issue, wouldn't it?

SL: Yes, that's right.

NS: You said that there have been three or four occasions in the whole history of ACCI when there was some tension at a board meeting, on the floor. When would you say the organization reached those peaks? One of them you mentioned was the associate membership.

SL: The associate membership was one. Another was the trading stamp pamphlet issue and the possible publication of that. That was just a year before I came on. I got the idea that was a pretty tense situation. The advocacy issue was another, whether we should or should not. There

were some who felt that we should be consumer advocates; we should take positions on legislation and almost go into lobbying.

Probably the most unfortunate one—and in my years in the organization—one that reached the highest level of tension, was the relocation issue. It would have been back in 1978, I believe. That was a very unfortunate situation. The board was wondering if we should relocate from the University of Missouri. They put out bids, and three schools put in bids. The board and the president decided to choose one and it came up to a discussion at the annual meeting and the vote was taken to override the board. There were very, very hard feelings over that. Sides were drawn. If ever anything came close to breaking up ACCI, that came closest. Feelings were so strong on that.

NS: Were there any issues involved in this that transcended personalities or the immediate question of relocation?

SL: I think it basically was (Here I will speak off the record and you can decide) Texas Tech wanted it and they put their big guns out for it. Missouri was doing a good job. Many felt there was no reason to change. One person threw his weight to Texas Tech, and Texas Tech lost, and that person then did not become president of ACCI. I think there was a good likelihood if he hadn't gotten involved in that, he would have been president of ACCI.

It was felt by a number of us that if it went to Texas Tech, those responsible there were a little bit naive in the relationship with business. There was a little fear that they might get a little bit too cozy. It was real unfortunate.

I think Oregon was also running. The board felt it had the right to make the location decision. Lawyers were there ready to sue people. The president at the time, who was supportive of the move to Texas Tech, resigned from the board.

Most of these annual conferences were just great. Everyone comes, everyone has a good time, and so forth. At that one, sides were drawn, and you could hardly walk down the hall, without seeing a couple over there talking and wondering, are they on this side or that side, and you didn't feel that you wanted to be seen talking with one person because then people would think you were on his side. It was just too bad.

NS: Were the sides strictly related to personality in this situation?

SL: It was personalities, and the issue that the University of Missouri was doing the job well, why change? At Texas Tech there was a question of whether new people in this activity really understood what we were saying when we didn't want to have any possibility of business influence on us.

NS: There was a possibility of business influence in this situation?

SL: I think so. I think the people from Texas Tech were very, very dedicated to doing all they could to help ACCI, and I don't think they understood what we were talking about. Oh, the floor debate, shouting and almost name calling. It was too bad!

NS: Can you remember when it was that you didn't know everyone in the organization by name?

SL: Oh, I still don't.

NS: Do you remember the point at which the organization was so large that you didn't know?

SL: It's been so gradual in the increasing membership that I just couldn't pinpoint it.

NS: Would you be able to put a date to any kind of a gulf in communication between the board and the membership?

SL: There definitely was a feeling that there were the insiders and the outsiders. I don't know when that feeling came about. That was one of the things that helped to lead toward a more democratic organization with mailed ballots and anyone able to nominate anybody. There was a feeling that the insiders were making all the decisions and the outsiders had no chance for input. Probably a couple of years before the mail ballot started, would have been about that time. I don't know when the mail ballot would have started.

NS: 1969, 1970. I'm guessing.

SL: Over the years there has hardly been a board member that I did not know personally. Normally, you didn't get elected to the board unless you were at the annual meetings, and if you were at the annual meetings, you tended to get known. I would say there might be only three or four board members that I didn't know when they were elected.

NS: A look at growth of membership in ACCI shows that between 1970 and 1972, the membership in the organization rose from approximately 1500 to close to 3500. That's more than doubled in size. Most organizations that grow so quickly in proportion to their original number have certain growing pains.

I think it happened approximately at the time of the mail ballot. I'm wondering if you, yourself, noticed any kind of change in the new membership. How did the new membership differ from the old membership?

SL: Many of the old members had been in the consumer area long before ACCI was established, so they had deep roots. When you think of Arch Troelstrup, Henry Harap, Colston Warne, Ray Price, Leland Gordon—those great old men of the consumer movement—by the time the organization was started in '54 or '55, they were well into the consumer movement. The members who were coming in later on were just new young people in it. It was great to have them come in, but they did not have deep roots. They couldn't, because they were so young. That's a very significant difference between the early membership and the members that have come in later on.

NS: You were saying "young" so you would say there was a difference in their age?

SL: Absolutely. In that charter membership, I wouldn't be a bit surprised if the average age was 55. Certainly the average age of the people coming in recently has been different. One of the things that is both interesting and frustrating—but understandable—is that, obviously, the new ones coming in have an awful lot to learn because they haven't been immersed in this for one, two, or three decades.

The other side of it is, it's great to see the enthusiasm that they bring into the organization and the establishment of these student chapters, which have a couple of meetings of their own when they are here. I have told some of my students in some of these summer workshops I teach at universities around the country that in the three days of the ACCI meeting, you probably will meet more people in consumer education, top level people. If you attend the meetings, you will get more information than you could any other way in a three day period, an invaluable experience.

In fact, I really think I should mention one item I will never forget, in 1959, when ACCI had its meeting in Washington, DC. I was a fledgling like I'm talking about these others, and after the evening meeting, I went outside in the hall. Colston Warne, the number one consumer leader in the United States, was out there. For a half hour or longer, just the two of us talked.

That was a real thrill! Here was someone just moving in, and here was the number one man in the country willing to give me a half hour or more of his time. That was Colston Warne! Graciousness to the 'nth degree!

That's another thing, when you look at those men—I keep mentioning them--Henry Harap, Ray Price, Leland Gordon, Arch Troelstrup, and Colston Warne. One of the things they had was a graciousness that was just wonderful.

Boy, you talk about precept upon precept, they certainly established a tone that I think has carried through. I think people like Ed Metzen, Dick Morse, Gordon Bivens, Bob McEwen, and myself—just to name a few—who, you might say, were in the second wave, benefit so much by that example they set for us.

NS: Do you think that ACCI can really help to define the consumer interest in America?

SL: I think it has helped. I probably have been bored more often in trying to get a definition for the consumer interest in consumer education than any other subject. I have heard this discussed time after time, year after year, because the umbrella has been made very vague as more and more things have been brought under it and we just don't have agreement what all should be under it. For example, I was just in Washington Monday, talking to the director and assistant director of the Consumer Information Center. They put out a consumer information catalogue.

I don't agree with a lot of the items they put in there, that they really are consumer items. As the one said, "But isn't health a consumer issue?" I think health is a personal issue, but I do not think it is automatically a consumer issue. I do think the buying of health care, fraudulent health items for sale, health insurance rates, are all consumer issues. I do not think that an appendectomy, in and of itself, is a consumer issue. The price of it is.

This is sort of an interesting area. The thing is, in the publication of their consumer information catalogue, many government agencies want to get their pamphlets out so they can get the bigger budgets, so they ship them to them and they twist their arm to get them listed.

In fact, one of the funnier things, when we had our ACCI conference in Atlanta, Georgia a few years ago, we were within walking distance of the U.S. Government Bookstore. I went in there, and on one wall, they had a lot of pamphlets and above it, a big sign, "Consumer Information." One of the booklets was on menopause. I think that's stretching the subject.

Then, you've seen the whole environmental issue move under the consumerism umbrella. Again, it is difficult to know just where you do draw the line, and we don't all draw the line in the same place.

NS: Does the inclusion of a topic at the conference lead to its adoption as a consumer issue? In other words, to what degree has the ACCI developed the ability to arouse the interest of its membership in a particular issue?

SL: I have no way of answering that question. I would say this, that probably "arousing people" has been done more by the advocacy groups. For example, I think there are some that believe the nuclear freeze is a consumer issue. I do not.

I think that nuclear energy is an interesting area because it definitely is a consumer issue in terms of costs of electricity, costs of building the tremendous nuclear plants. It also has tremendous ramifications in the question of "safety." Can you separate those two? It's difficult to separate them, but it seems to me you do have an interesting problem there.

NS: I guess one way of defining a scholarly community is by considering the degree to which

there is progressive interchange. In other words, the degree to which a problem is considered and reconsidered and then reconsidered by a group of working scholars, and hopefully, advanced towards resolution.

I'm wondering if you've been able to observe anything along those lines with respect to people working under the umbrella of ACCI?

SL: Probably one of the more interesting illustrations in the course of human events is not that significant, but in the market place it is. Back a number of years ago, when Senator Hart asked if he could speak at an ACCI conference, he came and he spoke and that was the kick-off for legislation he introduced on Truth in Packaging. This opened up a whole new area, where little attention had been paid in the past. It was a very interesting area. I think it is one that deserved a lot of attention; it got a lot of publicity.

Eventually we had that emasculated Fair Package and Labeling Act instead of a good strong Truth in Packaging Act pass. There was a case where an issue was introduced.

I think it was a year or two later, I was talking to Senator Hart's administrative assistant. They never would have believed that his talk then would have generated so much notoriety—favorable and unfavorable, pro- and anti-business, pro- and anti-consumer—as that Truth in Packaging issue did. The thing is, from the naive consumer's side, why shouldn't we have Truth in Packaging? Why should there be a knock-down battle over it? But there was. A bill finally was passed, which was not satisfactory. What it included was fine, but what it omitted was of real significance.

NS: Do you think that is representative, or at least, are there other issues one could point to?

SL: In 1962, when I was president, I chaired a very interesting meeting when we met in Washington. Senator Estes Kefauver had just been involved in this big expose of drug pricing. That was another area where publicity was generated.

I think the people in the consumer area decided that this was an area in which to do a little more research and study. At the meeting, a subject comes up, a lot of us go home and then do some work on it in our little bailiwick, to see if something can be done. I think that is another kind of activity that can be done. I don't know if you will be talking to Dick Morse or not.

NS: I have.

SL: Then you know enough about his activity in the whole Truth in Lending area, and in his present activity in Truth in Savings, trying to get a dissemination of the problem and a workable solution to get Congress to act.

NS: In talking to people about ACCI, one of the recurrent themes that has emerged is the creation of a discipline where none existed before. One of the things I wonder if you could help me with is in sketching out the contours—just what is the discipline and how does one gauge it? Are the members of the ACCI, this college group, a secure profession in some sense?

SL: I call it a profession. I'm not sure I would call it a secure profession [laughter]. I hope that what has happened in the political realm won't happen in the professional educator's realm. In the political realm, as budget cutting has taken place at the local, state and national level, the consumer area seems to be the area cut almost first. I think that Rosella Bannister and some of her group have put together what is probably one of the best coverages in terms of what's under the umbrella, and it's pretty good coverage of what the discipline should include after they had checked a lot of bases. I think that would be a good thing to look at.

NS: Could you discuss the degree of respect that consumer economics has, relative to the

discipline of economics?

SL: Yes. First, I'll tell you a story about it. One of my good friends in the consumer area is Heinz Biesdorf. He and I were graduate students at the University of Pittsburgh together in the department of economics, both working on Ph.D.s in economics. We got our degrees. He continued teaching there. I went to Geneva College.

A few years later, there was a new chairman of the department at Pittsburgh, and I was at the American Economics Association convention. Heinz grabbed hold of me and he said, "Would you please come with me. I would like to introduce you to the new chairman of the department of economics at Pittsburgh, so that he will find out that there is another Ph.D. in economics who has a consumer interest beside himself."

I think that is illustrative that the whole consumer area is perceived by those of us as being much more than just micro economics of supply and demand, and the macro economics of aggregate consumption. There is much more to it, but you have a hard time finding that in principles of economics texts, the basic texts.

I have used George Leland Bach's economics text at Geneva for years and years. It is in its 10th edition. It wasn't until two editions back, that he had a chapter in it on consumer protection.

It was eight editions before he even recognized this, and he has been chairman and on the Economic Education Committee—for I don't know how many years—of the American Economics Association.

Take the Joint Council on Economic Education. It was a knock-down, drag-out battle over the years to persuade them to accept consumer economics in their broad coverage of economic subjects. Now they have John Clow, who is specifically there for consumer education, consumer economics. I think that is wonderful to see that, but it was a long, long time in coming.

I can remember Jim Mendenhall, who was a consumer education person at Consumers Union, battling with the former head of the Joint Council on Economic Education. That would have been in the '50s or '60s. He was trying to get the Joint Council to do something in the consumer area and they wouldn't. Whom do we have this year on our program? John Clow, Joint Council on Economic Education, with "Give and Take," a TV series and movie series on economic and consumer education. It was a long time in coming.

NS: Are there consumer economists at the top institutions granting degrees in economics?

SL: I would definitely think not. The only kind of economist at the top level would be those who are involved in the macro-aggregate/consumer-expenditures type theory. I just cannot think there would be at that level, someone who is pragmatic, practical. It's beneath their dignity.

For example, when I was at graduate school and teaching there, one of my office mates was a graduate assistant. I had developed this interest in consumer economics. He said, "Oh, that's so much hooey. You buy this refrigerator, it doesn't work, you buy another one." That's the way he handled the problem [laughter].

Well, I happened to think there was economics involved in spending one's money so that you get full value, and an economy operates better when the products produced would serve the purpose for which they were made and to serve properly. It was sort of an extreme position he was taking.

NS: Why shouldn't a Paul Samuelson or a Walter Heller become the president of the American Council on Consumer Interests?

SL: First of all, it is too small for the real top names in economics to get involved. At the first conference I ever attended of ACCI, in St. Louis, one of the persons who spoke was a member of the President's Council of Economic Advisors. That was rather unusual.

NS: Who was that?

SL: Dr. Joseph Davis. I don't think you could get a member of the Council of Economic Advisors to attend a meeting now at all.

NS: Do you know the year it was?

SL: It would be 1957.

NS: Please include it when the transcript comes back.

SL: I would have that at home. I think I have every program from 1957 to the present. Also, I have a copy of every *Newsletter* from the first one to the present.

NS: I should have done my research at your home. It certainly raises a question. Thorstein Veblen, belatedly, was president of the American Economics Association. One wonders why it is that the consumer movement has not been accorded the kind of economic analysis and rigor that the labor movement, and certainly business drives, have had.

SL: Basically, it comes down to the fact that we are much more interested in protecting our income earning side and improving it than we are in protecting our income spending side and improving it. We don't think we need very much education to spend money but we need education if we want to earn more.

In my consumer classes, I'll ask how many in class—you, your parents, relatives or somebody—are a member of a trade association, a professional association or a union. Almost all hands go up. Why? Because all of those had to do with protecting their income earning side. I ask how many of you, your relatives, your parents, are members of a consumer organization. I hardly ever get a hand going up. They don't see the relevancy of it.

NS: When you first joined ACCI, wasn't one of its functions fostering increased identity or people as consumers?

SL: Absolutely.

NS: Is that still a function?

SL: Oh, I think so. I would say this. The professionalism of ACCI, as it has evolved, has removed a good deal from what I would call the practical. If you were to compare the titles of the pamphlets to the titles of *Journal* articles, you would see a difference there—from a rather pragmatic, practical thing to help consumers, to more research-oriented to help professionals. I think that is a pretty significant change.

One of the things that is too bad, is that in ACCI membership, you don't have enough individuals who are members. In other words, when you count in the library, when you count in the business members, the student members, I think maybe there are only about 800 professional educators as members. Of the professional educators, there are maybe only a hundred or so of secondary educators. Why? Maybe, for most of them, they want to join the American Home Economics Association, the National Business Education Association, the American Economics Association. They can't join many; they aren't going to be financed for very many, so again, it's a secondary responsibility.

NS: Do you think the political climate has changed such that interest in ACCI and the consumer movement generally has declined recently?

SL: There is no question the political climate has had a decline in the whole consumer movement. My hope is that the decline is such that it is going to make an awful lot of people realize they are going to have to work just that much harder. The negativism that we have seen in the present administration toward the consumer movement, I think, is most unfortunate. I would like to think it is going to get a reaction.

The item that I forgot to mention, is the resolution that will be brought into this conference. That will be, to be very strong in our support for the Consumer Information Center, to have the U.S. Department of Agriculture continue to make available, funds for free distribution of consumer materials.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture makes up about 20% of the mailing of the Consumer Information Center. That's about 3.4 million pamphlets a year. The USDA budget for this is \$800,000, and that is something like 27 ten thousandths of a percent of its total budget of 30 billion dollars, and they are cutting that out.

It also works out to 4/10 of one cent per person per year to make 3.4 million consumer pamphlets available. I hope ACCI will go on record supporting that resolution.

NS: Thank you very much.