

Dies

December 11, 1939

Consumers Union of U.S., Inc.  
17 Union Square West, New York City

For Immediate Release

Arthur Kallet, director of Consumers Union, commented as follows last night on Mr. J. B. Matthews's statement to the Dies Committee:

Last April, a representative of Consumers Union testifying before the Temporary National Economic Committee stated plainly that Consumers Union would welcome and fully cooperate in any responsible investigation of the consumer movement and of itself. We repeat the offer now.

As Consumers Union has grown so have the attacks upon it increased in intensity and many of these new charges by Mr. Matthews are in fact old charges that have been used before in startling similarity by several trade associations. We cannot believe however that making comparative tests of consumer goods and reporting the test findings, which is the work we do, is in any way subversive or destructive. Mr. Matthews can find in our publications numerous objections to specific claims made by advertisers when these claims are at variance with the facts as disclosed by our chemists and engineers but he cannot find any general attacks upon advertising for they are not there to be found. The best proof that we believe advertising to be a valuable economic force is that we use it regularly ourselves.

We should be happy to present before any public body, including the Dies Committee sworn statements by Mr. Matthews himself which contradict testimony given by him later before the Dies Committee and which open the motivations of his present charges to serious question. In this connection Consumers Union's counsel, Mr. A. J. Isserman, officially presented to the Dies Committee sometime

ago, evidence of perjury by Mr. Matthews in his testimony before the committee. The committee has failed to take any cognizance of this.

I must point out my feeling that the elements of fairness and objectivity are prejudiced in such circumstances as these and doubly prejudiced when an ex-official of an organization that competes directly with Consumers Union (Mr. Matthews was vice-president of Consumers Research until he joined the Dies Committee) is chosen to supply a basis for charges against us and to formulate the statement of them as well--all of this without providing any opportunity for a hearing. I must point out further that these charges are altogether false. As one instance, Mr. Matthews says that Walter Trumbull was instrumental in the founding of Consumers Union. Mr. Trumbull, whom I do not recall ever having met, had absolutely nothing to do with the founding of Consumers Union nor has he ever had anything to do with the organization.

I want to state emphatically that neither Consumers Union as an organization, nor myself as an individual, nor, to the best of my knowledge, anyone else connected with Consumers Union has ever had any connection with the Communist Party or is even aware of any such broad destructive movement as Mr. Matthews seems to find in operation.