

Voorhis Assails Dies for Report On Consumers

Says Rest of Committee Did Not Know of Red Charges Till They Were Released

From the Herald Tribune Bureau

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11.—The publication of the report of J. B. Matthews, research director of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, regarding Communist activities in consumer organizations was bitterly assailed today as an "undemocratic" act by Representative H. Jerry Voorhis, Democrat, of California. Mr. Voorhis, who is also a member of the committee, disclaimed all knowledge of the document.

The report, made public this morning, charged that the Communists had used such organizations as the Consumers' National Federation, in which they held important offices, to create feeling against the capitalist system in the United States.

Mr. Voorhis issued a statement saying he was concerned with the circumstances surrounding the publication of the report, as well as its content, which he said he "bitterly resented." The Californian said that Representative Martin Dies, Democrat, of Texas, and chairman of the committee, had released the report to the press after constituting himself "a one-man subcommittee" before other members even knew the Matthews report was being prepared.

Mrs. Roosevelt was asked today at her press conference about the Dies Committee report and the charge that consumer organizations were being "used" by the Communists. She said that she had no evidence that the organizations were communistic and declined further comment on the ground that until such statements had been proved they required no comment.

The President's wife said that at present she was not affiliated with any of the organizations listed by Mr. Matthews, though she formerly was a member of the League of Women Shoppers, mentioned as a consumers group organized by Communists.

Montgomery Silent

Donald Montgomery, consumers' counsel at the Department of Agriculture, refused all comment on the apparent reference to him in the report. Mr. Matthews charged that a government official in the Department of Agriculture had used Works Progress Administration funds to investigate national advertising in "Good Housekeeping" magazine and was in close touch with the heads of the Communist-controlled consumer organizations.

Mr. Voorhis said that millions of persons knew that consumer organizations were the "very antithesis" of the whole philosophy of Communism and Fascism, and they had

been the foundation of the success of democracy in the Scandinavian countries now under threat of Soviet attack.

"Not a single hearing has been held on any of the matters contained in the report," Mr. Voorhis stated, adding that "none of the persons mentioned has ever been called to the stand, that committee members have done no work at all in this field and that the entire report is purely and simply the opinion of Mr. J. B. Matthews."

Asserting that Mr. Matthews had set himself up as "sole investigator, judge and juror" on the whole cooperative movement in America, Mr. Voorhis said that the only decent thing for the committee to do now, under the circumstances, was to hold full and complete hearings on the whole matter. He suggested that the facts developed in such hearings would speak for themselves.

Assails Advertising Defense

The report attempts to brand as "Communist intrigue" protests against high milk prices, the teaching of young women to be wise shoppers, or the efforts of consumers to effect the honesty in advertising, which every reputable merchant and business man in America desires as much as the consumers do, Mr. Voorhis said.

"I am utterly unable to see what business a committee on un-American activities has defending advertising as such, regardless of its merits, or attacking consumers counsels or casting discredit upon a properly filed complaint of the Federal Trade Commission against a powerful magazine," Mr. Voorhis continued.

Mr. Voorhis referred to the attack in the report on the activities of Mr. Montgomery, of the Department of Agriculture, in connection with an investigation of the advertising of "Good Housekeeping" magazine.

"This is especially unfortunate right at this time in view of the campaign already launched by powerful interests to destroy the consumers protective and cooperative movement as one of our democratic bulwarks," Mr. Voorhis said.

Denies League Has Red Links

Mr. Voorhis said that he was "extremely" fearful that the really important findings of the committee which had been made by "proper methods and procedure" would be of considerably less effectiveness as a result of "this unfortunate event."

Other members of the committee were not in Washington tonight, and could not be reached for comment on the report.

Mrs. Mordecai Ezekiel, president of the League of Women Shoppers of Washington and wife of the economic adviser to Henry A. Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture, stated today that the league had no connection with Communists or Fascists, and had nothing to conceal about its objectives or its program. The league was mentioned in the Matthews report as being one of the organizations founded by the Communist party in 1935.

"As far as I know there have been no Communists and no Communist influence in the organization since I was connected with it," Mrs. Ezekiel said.