

MATTHEWS MEETS DENIALS, ATTACKS

Head of Shoppers League Says Red Link Charges Are 'Ridiculously Untrue'

SEES STRIKE 'RETALIATION'

Leader of Milk Users Group Also Alleges Reprisal—Union Head Offers Testimony

Mrs. Sophie Ames Boyer, president of the National League of Women Shoppers, in reply to the statement of the Dies committee, issued in New York last night the following official statement:

"Mr. Dies has never seen fit to allow the league representatives to testify directly before his committee about our organization, as we have several times requested. Instead he now permits to be made public the ridiculously untrue and unsubstantiated attack of Mr. J. B. Matthews. The only knowledge that Mr. Matthews has of the League of Women Shoppers dates back from 1935, when the New York League supported his striking employes at Consumers Research. Evidently we were effective enough in so doing to draw this retaliation now from Mr. Matthews.

Calls for Check on Date

"We could wish that the Dies committee would check on its information by asking any officer or any individual member of the league before publishing statements about the organization. We consider this statement as untrue and inaccurate as the testimony given by Matthews about the League of Women Shoppers previously. At an earlier session he stated that he, J. B. Matthews, was a member and active in the formation of the League of Women Shoppers and had access to our files.

"We showed in the press that this was absurdly untrue, as we had never until our convention in May, 1938, accepted male members into the organization, and he never was in our office at any time. We repudiated both his statements. The League of Women Shoppers is a non-political, non-profit consumers' organization, having as its purpose to use its consumer buying power to promote better conditions for workers. It was founded in New York in 1935 and became a national organization two years ago. There are now fifteen local leagues throughout the country."

Statement by Susan Jenkins

Susan Jenkins, one of those named by Mr. Matthews, is a member of the executive committee of the Milk Consumers Protective League. She said last night:

"If the rest of Mr. J. B. Matthews's statement on the consumer movement is as inaccurate as his references to my activities, then it is indeed a remarkably inaccurate statement. For instance, I had nothing to do with the organizing of the League of Women Shoppers. That organization has been in existence for many months before I had any contact with it.

"The most shocking aspect of Mr. Matthews's statement, in my opinion, is the use that he makes of his present ability to get publicity to injure those who have come in conflict with him in the past. Mr. Matthews as a head of Consumers Research of Washington, N. J., was formerly my employer.

"In 1935 I took part in a st.

of the majority of Consumers Research employes, who were fighting against a minimum wage of \$13.13 a week and frequent discharges without stated reason. An A. F. of L. union was formed, and Consumers Research immediately discharged three leading union members, one of them the president. A strike ensued. The National Labor Board decided in favor of the union, and Consumers Research was compelled to pay \$1,000 to union members for wages lost.

"Mr. Matthews gratuitously and erroneously promoted me to be the leader of the strike, and from that time on he has repeatedly attacked me.

"Mr. Matthews states that the objectives of a large section of the consumer movement are to destroy the private profit system. That is not the objective of the consumer movement with which I am connected. Any fair-minded person who looks into the programs and activities of these consumer organizations can see this for himself.

"I am not and have not been a communist or a fellow-traveler."

Consumers Union Defended

Arthur Kallet, the director of Consumers Union, commented as follows last night on the statement of Mr. Matthews:

"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.

"I want to state emphatically that neither Consumers Union, as an organization, nor myself as an individual, nor to the best of my knowledge any one 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."