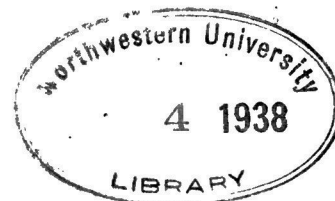


THE WORKS PROGRAM

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~~Works Progress Administration~~



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WPA Announces Marketing Laws Survey

Approval of a project to survey state marketing laws throughout the United States was announced today by Corrington Gill, Assistant Administrator of the Works Progress Administration. The survey is designed to obtain legal and economic data concerning laws on the state statute books and make it available in useful form to all Federal and State governmental agencies, trade associations, businessmen, lawyers, students and teachers of law and marketing.

Mr. Gill, who will supervise the survey, has appointed A. H. Martin as Director, and Dr. John H. Cover and Mark Merrell as Associate Directors. Headquarters of the administrative staff will be in Washington, D. C. As the survey progresses, special State relief projects to obtain economic data will be established under the sponsorship of State universities or other public agencies where recent State laws have been operated long enough to produce effects.

Field work to obtain legal information on the state marketing laws will be carried on in cooperation with the existing machinery of the WPA Historical Records Survey staff of workers, which is a federal project under Dr. Luther H. Evans, Director of the Historical Survey. The Historical Records

Survey operates in every state and is thoroughly familiar with the technique of obtaining legal material of the type called for in this Survey, Dr. Evans explained.

"Any legislative control designed to increase or curtail the flow of goods," said Mr. Gill, "is reflected in varying degrees in payrolls and employment. A knowledge of these controls is prerequisite to an effective study of unemployment. Legal and economic information is lacking not only on recently passed State marketing laws, but also on those State laws pertaining to the whole field of business controls which have been on the statute books for some time.

"Businessmen today are faced with a complicated system of State and Federal laws governing the marketing of goods. The recent trend among State legislatures to adopt laws of this nature together with the passage of the Federal Robinson-Patman and Tydings-Miller Acts make it necessary for them to adjust old merchandising policies to fit this new legislative pattern.

"To accomplish this difficult adjustment, businessmen must await a series of clarifying court decisions under these laws; they must understand the legal implications of the laws themselves, including the differences in terms as they vary from state to state; and also they must have adequate information as to the present and probable future economic impact of these laws upon trade and the consuming public.

"Many of these State laws are not in harmony with existing Federal statutes, nor with similar laws in neighboring States. Any proposal to revise either State or Federal laws affecting the marketing of goods to bring them abreast of modern business techniques must take into account the legal and economic implications found in all the State laws now on the books.

"This legal and economic information is also important to public and private agencies organized to protect interests of consumers. At present, such agencies without adequate data can only speculate as to the effect these laws may have on the consumer's pocketbook."

Cooperation and advice for both planning and execution of the survey will be sought from many trade and professional associations and individuals who are affected by these State marketing laws. To assist in the planning and execution of the Survey a federal advisory committee will be established on which representatives from the following bureaus and departments will be asked to serve:

Department of Commerce	Bureau of Agricultural Economics
Treasury Department	Consumers' Counsel of the AAA
Federal Trade Commission	Consumers' Counsel of the Coal Commission
Business Advisory Council	Department of Justice
Bureau of Labor Statistics	National Resources Board

The project is designed to utilize trained relief workers in their respective fields as well as to supply background material useful in many problems in the marketing field facing business and government today. It is expected to supply data for evaluating the conflicting claims on these marketing laws.

Laws to be examined include:

Group I--State anti-trust laws modelled after the Sherman Act, anti-price discrimination laws modelled after the Clayton and Robinson-Patman Acts, and those laws which set up State trade commissions. Under laws affecting consumer prices, those which place a mandatory floor level below which

prices cannot fall and resale price maintenance laws (fair trade laws) which permit producers to fix retail prices through price contracts. The enactment of the Federal Tydings-Miller Act has given this state price maintenance system national prominence. Price contracts issued under these laws will be collected for legal and economic analysis. Price series will be constructed showing the prices of contract products under former marketing conditions.

Group 2--Laws which affect miscellaneous marketing methods. State laws controlling advertising, trade-marks and trade names, cooperative marketing, protection of consumers, lotteries and premiums, food, drugs, and cosmetics, and chain tax laws, would be included. In addition State laws affecting the flow of commodities from other States and those governing in a general way unfair competitive practices.

Group 3--State Laws pertaining to the marketing of specific agricultural and industrial products.

For each of the State laws listed above, legal information will be assembled giving: (a) the text of the law with an explanation for the layman, (b) the digest of all court decisions, (c) the digests of all law review and legal articles that have been written about the law, (d) an analysis of the enforcement machinery, and (e) the legislative history, including related proposals. This will be correlated and published so that all information pertaining to similar laws in the various states can be obtained at one source.

Under each of the State laws chosen for study, economic data will be assembled. Through the cooperation of trade and consumers' associations and individual business organizations, information will be sought relative to the effects of these laws on trade and consumer price levels, and upon established advertising and other merchandising policies. In certain selected areas where these laws have been in operation long enough to indicate trends,

more detailed studies will be carried on as special State projects, under the sponsorship of local institutions.