

MAR 13 1969

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1444 Ombudsmen Hiring Urged

Special to The News Leader
WILLIAMSBURG — Corporations should hire ombudsmen to advocate the interests of the consumer in the highest corporate councils, a public relations man said here today.

by the Richmond Public Relations Association, the Old Dominion Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America and the Virginia State Chamber of Commerce.

In a speech prepared for delivery to the 21st annual Virginia Public Relations Conference, Elias Buchwald, president of Burson-Marsteller, a public relations firm, said this corporate ombudsman would be "the anti-establishment partisan who expresses the voice of the consumer."

"He should have the authority to take up the cudgels for the safety engineers and the quality control people," Buchwald said. "He should be the watchdog against misrepresentation in advertising or publicity."

"If business doesn't appoint its own friendly skeptics, Washington might appoint a few who are not so friendly," he added.

UNREASONABLE RISK

Buchwald said the consumer law establishing the National Commission on Product Safety may have the greatest impact on industry among all the consumer legislation.

The commission investigates the effectiveness of industry standards, identifies household products that present an unreasonable risk to consumers and reviews existing federal, state and local consumer protection laws, he said.

In suggesting the corporate ombudsman, Buchwald said such a man "should have a voice in the executive committee room where important corporate policies are determined and where decisions are made."

Top management should remember that breaches of liability now often involve breaches of law, Buchwald told the conference.

About 150 persons are attending the two-day conference at the Cascades meeting Center.

Other speeches were to include "Why Nixon Was Elected President" by an official of Opinion Research Corp. of Princeton, N. J.

The conference is sponsored