



adhered to by all district employees.

In Report P-861.2, OAG recommends that the district continue to minimize the extent of the budgeted deficit for fiscal year 1988-89 by continuing to develop documented estimates of revenues, subsidies, and expenses for future budgets, and ensuring that those estimates are reliable.

COMMISSION ON CALIFORNIA STATE GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION AND ECONOMY (LITTLE HOOVER COMMISSION)

Executive Director:

Jeannine L. English

Chairperson: Nathan Shapell
(916) 445-2125

The Little Hoover Commission was created by the legislature in 1961 and became operational in the spring of 1962. (Government Code sections 8501 *et seq.*) Although considered to be within the executive branch of state government for budgetary purposes, the law states that "the Commission shall not be subject to the control or direction of any officer or employee of the executive branch except in connection with the appropriation of funds approved by the Legislature." (Government Code section 8502.)

Statute provides that no more than seven of the thirteen members of the Commission may be from the same political party. The Governor appoints five citizen members, and the legislature appoints four citizen members. The balance of the membership is comprised of two Senators and two Assemblymembers.

This unique formulation enables the Commission to be California's only truly independent watchdog agency. However, in spite of its statutory independence, the Commission remains a purely advisory entity only empowered to make recommendations.

The purpose and duties of the Commission are set forth in Government Code section 8521. The Code states: "It is the purpose of the Legislature in creating the Commission, to secure assistance for the Governor and itself in promoting economy, efficiency and improved service in the transaction of the public business in the various departments, agencies, and instrumentalities of the executive branch of the state government, and in making the operation of all state departments, agencies, and instru-

mentalities and all expenditures of public funds, more directly responsive to the wishes of the people as expressed by their elected representatives...."

The Commission seeks to achieve these ends by conducting studies and making recommendations as to the adoption of methods and procedures to reduce government expenditures, the elimination of functional and service duplication, the abolition of unnecessary services, programs and functions, the definition or redefinition of public officials' duties and responsibilities, and the reorganization and or restructuring of state entities and programs.

MAJOR PROJECTS:

Reports in Progress. The Little Hoover Commission has undertaken the following studies and expects to release reports as indicated below:

-The Commission's report on the role and functions of the state's boards, commissions, and authorities, including an analysis of their efficiency, necessity, and effectiveness, was scheduled for release in June. (See CRLR Vol. 9, No. 2 (Spring 1989) p. 39 for background information.)

-No release date has been scheduled for the Commission's ongoing report on California's K-12 public school system. That report will focus on education funding (including monies generated from Proposition 98) and fiscal accountability of schools. Similarly, no release date has been announced for the Commission's separate report on special funds (as distinguished from state general funds) for education.

-On March 16, the Commission conducted a follow-up public hearing to review the state's management of real property and the progress made since the March 1986 release of its report entitled *California State Government's Management of Real Property*. No date has been scheduled for issuance of the follow-up report.

-Another follow-up public hearing was held on April 28 to review the state's telecommunication system and the newly proposed CALNET system, which will result in the state acting as its own long distance telephone company at a cost of up to \$150 million. A Commission spokesperson recently stated that information is still being gathered and that no release date has yet been set for the report.

-A study of the state's management of solid waste is also in progress, with no scheduled report date.

-The Commission recently began a new study to review the structure and

operations of the Department of Fish and Game, including regulatory aspects, and held its first related public hearing on May 15. No date has been set for this report's release.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Director: Michael Kelley
(916) 445-4465

In addition to its functions relating to its forty boards, bureaus and commissions, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) is charged with the responsibility of carrying out the provisions of the Consumer Affairs Act of 1970. In this regard, the Department educates consumers, assists them in complaint mediation, advocates their interests in the legislature, and represents them before the state's administrative agencies and courts.

MAJOR PROJECTS:

Statewide Inventory of Local Dispute Resolution Programs. The Institute for Judicial Administration (IJA), a national judicial research institute, is conducting statewide surveys of programs that provide alternative dispute resolution services directly or indirectly to the court systems in several states, including California.

As the oversight agency for the California Dispute Resolution Programs, DCA will assist the IJA in completing the survey. The California system consists of a network of informal and affordable county-based mediation centers throughout the state, based on the idea that an impartial mediator can often help adversaries reach a mutually satisfactory settlement. It is hoped that the program will defuse many disagreements which might otherwise end up in an already crowded state court system. (See CRLR Vol. 8, No. 2 (Spring 1988) p. 33.) Presently, seventeen counties participate in the program with a total of 21 funded programs.

DCA Reorganization. The Public Affairs, Complaints Assistance, and Correspondence Divisions of the DCA have been consolidated into one new division entitled the Division of Consumer Services. The new division will be headed up by John C. Lungren, Jr., whose official title is Deputy Director and Chief of Consumer Services.

Dispute Resolution Program. The Dispute Resolution Advisory Council has not yet submitted its final package of