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Mello Under Attack For EOC Takeover

5-22-68

By Don Righetti
Sentinel Staff Writer

Supervisor Henry Mello got called just about everything but a competent legislator at last night's meeting of the Santa Cruz County Economic Opportunity Commission.

It was the first meeting of the organization since the board

of supervisors voted to take over control of the EOC.

The commission and its supporters appeared to look on Mello as a turncoat. Mello, sitting as a member of EOC, had previously voted for an EOC motion to ask the supervisors to allow the commission to retain its autonomy. However, when the matter came before the supervisors, Mello reversed his field and initiated the vote for a county takeover of the organization.

EOC Chairman Phillip Rowe submitted his letter of resignation at last night's meeting.

"My conscience will not permit me to serve on any commission if Mr. Mello is a part of it," the letter read.

The commission, hoping the letter was a hasty action on Rowe's part, voted to send its executive committee to meet with him and ask his reconsideration of the move. Rowe was not present at last night's session.

Mello addressed the meeting to call Rowe's letter "disheartening." He said he hoped the commission's efforts to persuade him to retain his chairmanship would be successful.

The supervisors said the county had voted to take over the EOC because it thought it could better coordinate and carry out EOC programs.

He admitted that he had been "cast as the villain" in the county takeover.

Mello said he hoped all members of the commission would stay on and that he thought the commission should retain some decision-making powers.

He claimed he would fight any attempt to diminish or minimize any EOC programs already in effect.

Mello then defended himself against charges he had taken reports of misconduct by EOC staffers directly to county authorities instead of the commission. He noted that as early

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Long Hair' Dress Code

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The principal said Smiley was still "dirty and barefooted." On that day the boy was cited for being truant and out of parental control, Dr. Dameron said.

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Mello Under Attack By EOC For Takeover Vote

(Continued from Page 1.)

as January he had begun discussions on reports that two staff members had carried on "unlawful activities" in the EOC Santa Cruz Service Center.

District Attorney Peter Chang said this morning that the rumors investigated by his office were of two EOC staff members' smoking marijuana in the center and the fact that one of them had a long criminal record.

Chang said the marijuana in-

Consumer Credit Act Passes House

Washington (P) — The House passed today a sweeping consumer credit protection act, to require that full information be given borrowers and buyers on the cost of credit.

Criminal penalties would be provided for strong-arm loan shark methods.

The bill now goes to the Senate, where prompt approval of the compromise measure is expected.

cident still is under investigation, but the fact of the criminal record was verified.

Mello pointed out last night that one of the staff members in question had submitted his resignation, and noted merely that the other had "left EOC employment."

In support of his contention the county could better coordinate EOC programs, Mello charged that EOC workers had carried out a program of which the commission was not even informed.

He quoted a letter from County Welfare Director Ray Ansell noting that EOC workers had carried on a house-to-house canvass to inquire whether residents were in need of welfare services.

Ansell charged the EOC people misrepresented themselves as welfare workers and that several persons were disturbed by the EOCer's hippie-like appearance.

Mello was then questioned by an audience member who wanted to know how people who were unaware of welfare programs could receive their benefits if the EOC didn't go door-to-door to explain them.

By this time, the Martin Luther King Direct Action Committee had adjourned its own meeting and its members had arrived en masse at the EOC session. They roared their approval of the welfare question.

The same questioner then wanted to know if poor people would have as much of a say in EOC programs under county administration.

Mello replied it was not the intent of the supervisors to displace the poor persons working on EOC programs.

As the talk again turned to Mello's dissatisfaction with EOC staffers, EOC Executive Director Ismael Dieppa shouldered his way to the microphone in front of Mello and asked all the EOC staff members in the room to come forward. About a dozen responded, and Dieppa had them turn around to show how many were "without shoes and filthy dirty."

None were.

Dieppa, whose resignation will become effective the end of this month, then launched into an impassioned speech in which he said, "It's time this county realized its welfare department

is doubted and mistrusted by many, many thousands of persons.

"I believe that an EOC administered by the supervisors will be subjected to political manipulations. . . Mr. Mello has shown whose side he is on, and he is not on the side of the poor people."

Dieppa's address was greeted by a loud round of applause.

Bob Cotant, who will act as interim director until the county takeover, then took his shots. "You're an excellent politician, Henry," he told Mello. "You have the ability to straddle the fence and please both sides. You do it all the time. The only time you didn't is when you asked the county to take over the EOC."

As it turns out, the EOC might not be taken over by the county at all. The state has served notice it would like to be designated as the controlling action agency for all EOC activities in California.

A May 28 hearing has been scheduled on the matter in Fresno. Several persons at last night's session indicated they would attend the Fresno meeting.