



Department of Justice

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The Department of Justice filed a civil antitrust suit today charging the National Society of Professional Engineers with eliminating price competition among its members in the sale of engineering services.

Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst said the complaint was filed in the U.S. District Court in Washington, D. C., where NSPE maintains its national office.

NSPE is a non-profit membership corporation made up of approximately 67,000 professional engineers who design and supervise the construction of roads, bridges, dams, industrial plants, and other structures located throughout the United States and in foreign countries.

Assistant Attorney General Thomas E. Kauper, in charge of the Antitrust Division, said the suit charged that NSPE and its members have for many years combined to violate Section 1 of the Sherman Act by agreeing that:

-- NSPE adopt, publish, and distribute a Code of Ethics containing a provision prohibiting its members from submitting competitive bids for engineering services; and

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-- NSPE and its members abide by such a provision and police the adherence to its terms.

As a result of these NSPE practices, the complaint charged that price competition among the member engineers in the sale of their services has been eliminated and customers requiring the engineering services offered by NSPE members have been deprived of the benefits of free and open competition.

The suit asked that the court cancel those provisions of the NSPE Code of Ethics which suppress competition among the members and requested that NSPE be permanently enjoined from adopting in the future any rules or resolutions which suppress or eliminate price competition among its members.