



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Department of Justice filed an antitrust suit today charging that three real estate boards in the Portland, Oregon area, and a multiple listing service which they jointly operate, have conspired to fix commissions in connection with real estate sales and to limit access to real estate listings obtained by the boards' members.

Attorney General John N. Mitchell said the civil suit was filed in the U.S. District Court in Portland.

Named as defendants in the suit were: Portland Board of Realtors, Portland; Washington County Board of Realtors, Beaverton, Oregon; and Clackamas County Board of Realtors, Lake Oswego, Oregon. Also named was Multiple Listing Service of Portland.

The suit charged that the multiple listing service, the boards and their members have violated Section 1 of the Sherman Act by combining to establish a fixed minimum commission rate to be paid to the selling broker in connection with cooperative sales made through the listing service.

The defendants are also charged with having illegally required that all listings of certain types of properties obtained by members of the multiple listing

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service be listed exclusively with the service and not be made available to non-member real estate brokers.

The suit further alleged that as part of the conspiracy, arbitrary and unreasonably restrictive requirements were established for membership in the multiple listing service.

Assistant Attorney General Richard W. McLaren, in charge of the Antitrust Division, said that the effect of the conspiracy has been to raise commission rates for the sale of real estate in the three Oregon counties in which the defendant boards operate. Another effect was to deny real estate brokers licensed by the state a reasonable opportunity to compete in the sale of real estate listed with the listing service, McLaren said.

The suit asks that the defendants be permanently enjoined from adopting or suggesting any rate of commissions or fees to be charged in connection with the sale of real estate and from adhering or agreeing to adhere to any rule, agreement or understanding which would unreasonably exclude any licensed real estate broker from membership in the defendant real estate boards or the multiple listing service.

About \$124 million in property sales were transacted through the defendant listing service in 1969.