



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Department of Justice filed a civil antitrust suit today charging the Copper Development Association, Inc., and 11 copper fabricating companies with entering into an unlawful agreement to restrict the assignment and licensing of two United States patents relating to a special plumbing system.

Attorney General William B. Saxbe said that the complaint, which charges a violation of Section 1 of the Sherman Act, was filed in U.S. District Court in the Southern District of New York.

Named as defendants in the action were:

- Copper Development Association, Inc., New York, New York;
- Anaconda American Brass Company, Waterbury, Connecticut;
- National Distillers and Chemical Corporation, New York, New York;
- Cerro Corporation, New York, New York;
- Chase Brass and Copper Co., Incorporated, Cleveland, Ohio;
- Mueller Brass Co., Port Huron, Michigan;
- Nibco Inc., Elkhart, Indiana;
- Phelps Dodge Industries, Inc., New York, New York;
- Reading Industries, Inc., Fort Lee, New Jersey;
- Revere Copper and Brass, Incorporated, New York, New York;

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-- Scovill Manufacturing Company, Waterbury, Connecticut;

-- Triangle Industries, Inc., Holmdel, New Jersey.

The plumbing system is called the Sovent system, and is used primarily in high-rise office and residential buildings. Due to its unique design, the system eliminates the need for additional tubing required in conventional plumbing systems and therefore affords a cost-savings to the purchaser.

The complaint charges the 11 copper companies and their Association with conspiring to exclude manufacturers and sellers of noncopper plumbing materials from the market for the system, by jointly acquiring the United States patent rights to the system and thereafter restricting the assignment and licensing of the two patents to only those manufacturers who agreed to produce the system in copper or copper-based alloys.

The complaint charges that as a result of the unlawful agreement competition has been restricted in the manufacture and sale of the system, and in the manufacture and sale of plumbing pipe and tubing generally.

The complaint asks that the defendants be ordered to grant licenses, on reasonable terms and at nondiscriminatory rates, to all applicants for the system.

The complaint also asks that the defendants be enjoined from limiting in any way the licensing or assignment of the patents comprising the system.

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