



Department of Justice

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The Department of Justice today filed a civil antitrust suit alleging that the South Water Market Credit Association of Chicago, Illinois, conspired to fix credit terms employed by its members in the sale of produce. The Department simultaneously filed a proposed consent decree which would terminate the suit.

Attorney General William French Smith said the complaint, which alleged a violation of Section 1 of the Sherman Act, and the proposed decree were filed in U.S. District Court in Chicago.

The Association is composed of approximately 25 wholesale produce firms which sell to hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, and distributors from the South Water Market in Chicago. The Association serves a number of functions for its members including the distribution of credit information on customers and potential customers.

J. Paul McGrath, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division, said the complaint alleged that the Association and co-conspirators have for many years, and continuing to the present, violated Section 1 of the Sherman Act by agreeing to fix the length of time for which Association members extended credit and to withhold credit from certain customers.

(MORE)

The proposed consent decree, which will become final upon approval by the Court, would enjoin the defendant from directly or indirectly restricting the freedom of its members to set their own credit terms for the sale of produce.

In accordance with the Antitrust Procedures and penalties Act of 1974, a Competitive Impact Statement regarding the proposed consent decree has been filed with the Court. Copies of this statement and of the proposed decree are available on request in the Legal Procedure Unit of the Antitrust Division, Room 7416, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C 20530. They are also available for inspection in the Office of the Clerk of the United States District Court in Chicago.

Comments to the Department and to the Court regarding the decree are invited from the public within the next 60 days. Comments should be directed to Alan L. Marx, Chief, General Litigation Section, Antitrust Division, Department of Justice, 10th & Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20530.

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