



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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CONSUMER PROTECTION DEBATE PROCEEDS, TWO DOLE AMENDMENTS VOTED

WASHINGTON, D.C.--Continuing in the second day of debate on the controversial Consumer Protection Act, the Senate today considered two amendments introduced by Senator Bob Dole.

Dole indicated that he would likely propose several additional amendments to the bill tomorrow, Wednesday, including one to exempt agricultural production from inclusion under the act, an amendment which Dole termed "of critical importance to farmers."

The first amendment by Dole considered today was passed without change or objection. It provides for a delay in establishment of the Agency for Consumer Advocacy (ACA) until January 1, 1976. The bill previously called for establishment of the agency 90 days after enactment, but Dole explained that the delay until the first of next year would "reduce the strain on the Federal budget that already has a \$70 billion deficit."

Dole's second amendment was accepted in modified form. It addresses the technical question of the ACA Administrator's "interrogatory powers." The Consumer Protection Act vests direct interrogatory powers in the administrator, enabling him to demand, at his own initiative, information from private companies. Dole proposed to grant the administrator a "derivative interrogatory" authority instead, empowering ACA to seek information from private concerns through the existing agencies and departments of the government which have jurisdiction over the appropriate industry. This change, Dole explained, would "provide an additional safeguard to protect private enterprises from a possible flood of inquiries." The Senate did not accept the Dole proposal, but did adopt a requirement for review of all ACA interrogatories by the Congressional "watchdog agency," the General Accounting Office.

Dole said he was optimistic that controversial debate on consumer protection, which has been going on for several years in the Senate, would finally be resolved soon. Last year, for example, a similar bill was the subject of a practically unprecedented four cloture votes. On the last such vote it was Dole's compromise version which was being considered. Many of the amendments he is introducing this week follow in the spirit of that compromise effort.