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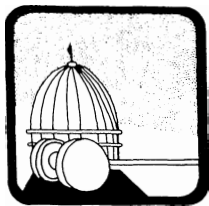
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## Consumer Legislation

During the last few months of the first session of the 95th Congress, because of the complexity of the Energy Bill, many other bills were set aside in order to concentrate on this bill.

The Consumer Protection Act of 1977 (HR 6805 and S 1262) was one of the bills set aside in each House. Beginning in the 87th Congress and during each of the last five Congresses, the Committee on Government Operations has reported a bill creating a consumer agency within the Federal Government, but not one has become law.

HR 6805 would establish a nonregulatory Agency for Consumer Protection (ACP) to represent the interests of consumers in Federal regulatory proceedings, to provide information to the public about consumer issues, and to serve as a clearing house for consumer complaints. The bill requires a reorganization plan which would bring together all consumer activities within the Federal Government that can be performed most efficiently by, or are duplicated by, the consumer agency. The ACP would have no power to regulate—it could only advocate the interest of consumers before other agencies and courts that make decisions affecting regulated parties.

HR 6805 has been granted a Rule. This means that, before it can be voted on by the House, stipulations or rules are established. For example, if it is a closed rule, no amendments can be introduced or added, or the number of

hours of debate will be determined. However, this bill will not go to the floor before the close of the first session. In the second session of this Congress, consideration is being given to introducing a substitute, which would then be voted on in lieu of HR 6805.

On October 4, 1977, S 1262 was transferred from the calendar for the remainder of the first session. Next year, the bill will be returned to the calendar.

The National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Amendments of 1977 (HR 1139 and S 1420) extend the summer food service program for children through fiscal year 1979. It also extends section 14 of the National School Lunch Act (commodity purchasing authority) through fiscal year 1982 and the reservation of funds under the nonfood assistance program. In addition, the bill revises these programs in order to make them more effective and contains a number of other improvements to the regular school lunch and breakfast programs.

The Secretary of Agriculture has been authorized to establish pilot programs in local school districts to study alternative food delivery systems. These pilot studies must include an all-cash approach to the commodities system, in contrast to a percentage of the value of foods used by the school coming from federally donated commodities. This is to test the efficiency and economics of the alternative of purchasing

those commodities which best suit the needs of the local school districts, including effects on elimination of waste and excessive storage costs.

The basic purpose of the National School Lunch Act is to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's Children and to encourage the domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural commodities and other foods, by assisting the States, through grant-in-aid and other means, in providing an adequate supply of foods and other facilities for the establishment, maintenance, operation, and expansion of nonprofit school lunch programs.

The amendments direct the Secretary of Agriculture to analyze periodically the various aspects of the programs and report his findings (including the nutritional, economic, and administrative benefits) and recommendations to Congress.

The meals must contain a combination of foods to meet prescribed nutritional standards. The amendments are many and varied but included are directives to provide for nutritional training of educational and food service personnel, to disseminate sound nutrition information to children and require each participating State to appoint a State coordinator on nutrition education.

The President signed HR 1139 on November 10, 1977. It is now Public law 95-166.