Page 4-B THE CHOWAN HERALD Thursday, October 14, 1976

Report From Sen. Morgan

When the Congress passed and the President decided to sign the Hart-Scott-Rodino Anti-trust Bill, I felt that here were two real winners. They were the American people and the free enterprise system.

This new law, which will make Anti-trust laws more enforceable, caused a lot of mail, some of it highly critical of me, while it was being considered by the Senate. Most of the letters reflected a real concern of small businessmen and individuals who feared the passage of the bill would hurt small business.

Those who are familiar with my public record should know that I would do nothing to hurt the small businessman, but in this instance, big business, who bitterly opposed the bill, organized a campaign that deceived many people.

The new law will improve anti-trust enforcement primarily against those who have great economic power, and who abuse it by pricefixing. But the uniform misrepresentation among the big businesss groups who lobbied against the bill was that it would be used primarily against small businessmen. This is nonsense, but it did alarm many small businessmen and get a lot of mail coming to Wahington, which was the object.

Now, since the bill has become law, those who were misled by the distortions should know just what this new law will do.

The fact is there has been an Anti-trust Law in effect since 1890, when it was introduced by Senator John Sherman of Ohio, and it was made necessary by giant, growing corporations who were driving small, independent businessmen to the wall. The problem remains today--because of the Sherman Act was not being enforced and the enforcement agencies were very weak.

The situation in the states has not been any better than at the federal level. With few exceptions--and North Carolina is one--the states do little about enforcing Anti-trust laws within their boundaries. Michigan, home of General Motors and Ford, has no lawyer in the Attorney General's office who works full time on anti-trust matters.

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This new law will help the Attorney General fight unfair restraint of trade. It gives the Attorney General power to look at the records of a corporation suspected of violations, subject to court review. This is nothing new to North Carolina, where the Attorney General has had this power since 1913.

Another provision which is important to consumers will cause firms who are guilty of price fixing to think twice. Until now there was no way for consumers to sue those who sneaked a few extra cents onto the price of a gallon of gas or a can of shaving cream. Now the state Attorney General can bring suit on behalf of the consumer and collect triple damages from the company if he wins.

An amendment which I fought for will provide funds for states to develop antitrust enforcement departments in state Attorney General's offices, giving people somewhere to turn when their economic rights are violated--and that includes the consumer who is being "ripped off" and the small business being forced out of business by large corporations, in violation of this law.

Senator Hart, who is ill, asked me to lead the floor fight for this bill and I am glad that I did. In the free enterprise system, everyone is hurt, by those who would ruin that system. This will penalize those who cheat.

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