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THE DOLES
BY MARTHA COLE

WASHINGTON (AP) -- ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE, A FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSIONER, AND SEN. BOB DOLE, R-KAN., HER HUSBAND, PUBLICLY DISAGREED TODAY OVER THE PROPOSED FEDERAL CONSUMER PROTECTION AGENCY. THE SENATOR, WHO OPPOSES IT, SAID, "I FEEL WHEN I GO HOME TONIGHT I'M GOING TO BE IN SUCH HOT WATER THEY COULD NAME TEABAGS AFTER ME."

THE COMMISSIONER, WHO ADVOCATES THE AGENCY, QUIPPED THAT SHE FELT CONFIDENT OF WINNING THE DEBATE ON THE LEGISLATION.

"THE LAST PERSON BOB DEBATED WAS FRITZ MONDALE, AND LOOK AT WHAT HAPPENED TO FRITZ," SHE SAID, REFERRING TO DOLE'S UNSUCCESSFUL 1976 TRY FOR THE VICE PRESIDENCY, NOW HELD BY WALTER F. MONDALE.

THE DOLES SPOKE BEFORE A LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE 1977 CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN ADVERTISING FEDERATION.

"THIS IS THE FIRST TIME MY HUSBAND AND I HAVE DISAGREED, AT LEAST IN PUBLIC," MRS. DOLE SAID. BUT SHE ADDED THAT THEIR RELATIONSHIP WAS BASED ON MUTUAL TRUST -- "WE MAY BE THE ONLY TWO LAWYERS IN WASHINGTON WHO TRUST EACH OTHER."

LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH A FEDERAL AGENCY TO LOOK OUT FOR THE RIGHTS OF CONSUMERS IS SUPPORTED BY THE WHITE HOUSE BUT HAS RUN INTO TROUBLE IN CONGRESS. VARIOUS BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS HAVE LOBBIED HEAVILY AGAINST IT.

MRS. DOLE SAID THE PROPOSED AGENCY WOULD HAVE ONLY THE POWER TO PRESENT A CONSUMER VIEWPOINT BEFORE OTHER AGENCIES AND THE POWER TO SEEK COURT REVIEW OF AN ADVERSE RULING.

"RIGHT NOW," SHE SAID, "CONSUMER PROGRAMS ARE SCATTERED EVERYWHERE. WE NEED AN AGENCY WITH AN OVERVIEW TO SET PRIORITIES, GET THE INFORMATION, AND THEN BE FREE TO TALK ABOUT THE ISSUES."

SHE CALLED THE PROPOSED AGENCY "A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION TOWARD RESTORING CONSUMER CONFIDENCE THAT SOMEONE IN WASHINGTON IS LISTENING."

DOLE REITERATED PREVIOUS ARGUMENTS THAT THE AGENCY WOULD BE UNNECESSARY AND WOULD JUST ADD ANOTHER LAYER TO THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY.

HE SAID THERE ARE NUMEROUS CONSUMER PROTECTION AGENCIES SUCH AS THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND THE FEDERAL ENERGY ADMINISTRATION.

"WHY NOT INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE EXISTING AGENCIES RATHER THAN SUPERIMPOSE ON THEM A FURTHER LEVEL OF FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY?" HE ASKED.

IF THE AGENCIES ARE NOT PERFORMING THEIR MANDATE TO SERVE THE INTEREST, THEN CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT SHOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, HE SAID.

THE SENATOR SAID HE WAS SHAMELESSLY BIASED IN FAVOR OF COMMISSIONER DOLE. "SHE IS, I SUBMIT, LIVING REFUTATION OF HER OWN BELIEF THAT CONSUMERS ARE UNREPRESENTED IN OUR GOVERNMENT," HE SAID.

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