



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

On Guard

Hurrah for Sears Roebuck & Co. Where smaller companies have always had to give in to stupid and impossible-to-keep government regulations, Sears has now dug in its heels, cried "No more!" and is, believe it or not, suing Uncle Sam. Defendants include the Departments of Justice, Labor, Commerce, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and six other agencies.

The government was trying to force Sears, which already employs 10 percent minority-group persons and 36 percent women in executive positions, to either hire more women and minorities or give their present workers extra pay to make up for "past discriminations."

Sears says this is stupid. They say the reason they have a larger number of white males on the payroll is that in the 60s the government demanded they hire war veterans rather than women and minorities. The government then passed a law prohibiting mandatory retirement before age 70. Now they are telling Sears they

have too many white male war veterans — who cannot be forced into retirement.

Sears maintains the government keeps changing its mind — depending on which block of angry people holds the most votes: veterans, old people, minorities or women. So, they are suing, saying the government is inconsistent. Hooray!

Until Sears filed its lawsuits on Jan. 24, only one other firm — a small plumbing contractor in Pocatello, Idaho, had ever successfully bucked Big Brother in court. In that case the Supreme Court ruled that the plumber had every right to refuse to let inspectors from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration inside his office without a search warrant. Because the plumber fought — and won — the OSHA had to scratch nearly 1,000 separate regulations.

But this time it isn't a little David who is taking on the Goliath of government regulations and agencies — it is mammoth Sears. As

George Orwell's "1984" concept of a government which controls every aspect of our lives comes ever closer to being prophecy rather than fiction, every person — including minorities and women — ought to applaud the action of Sears. When free enterprise, or free individuals, are at the mercy of dozens of government agencies which have the power to strangle out life with so many regulations that even the regulatory agency doesn't know what it is doing, it is time to fight back.

I may be upset that my Sears garden tractor developed ailments after only 18 months of normal use, but I'm even more upset that the IRS, OSHA, ECCO, SPIT, NOSENSE and a dozen other agencies have the power to harrass both big business and private individuals. And like the little kid who always had to run from the bully, I get excited when I see the big boy on the block rolling up his sleeves to wade into the fight.

Sic 'em, Sears!

