

# U. S., I.B.M. URGED TO END TRUST SUIT

## Computer Industry Group in Plea for Consent Decree in 7-Year-Old Case

By WILLIAM D. SMITH

The president of the Computer Industry Association, a group of computer companies that does not include the major manufacturers of central processors, yesterday called on the Justice Department and the International Business Machines Corporation to reach a consent decree in the Government's antitrust action against the giant business equipment company.

A. G. W. Biddle, president of the association, which has sometimes been consulted by the Government in its action to break up I.B.M., said the case, which is already seven years old, could well drag on until 1985 before a final judgment is reached. "In the meantime," he said, "no one's interests are being served, unless perhaps it's the lawyers."

The case is being heard by Judge David N. Edelstein in Federal Court for the Southern District of New York. In the first year of the trial less than two dozen witnesses for the Government and I.B.M. have been heard out of a possible 300.

### Breakup Is Proposed

The Government is asking that I.B.M. be broken up into several totally separate elements. The case is considered the largest and most complex antitrust action ever contested.

"The true issues appear to have become lost in the adversary process. The lawyers argue about the computer industry that existed in the 1950's and 1960's while blithely ignoring the dynamic changes that are taking place in our industry every day," Mr. Biddle commented.

He listed six areas in which he thought compromises could be reached between I.B.M. and the Government:

¶ Full and early disclosure of specifications for connection between the company's various pieces of equipment so that I.B.M. would not be in the position to set defacto standards.

¶ Recycling I.B.M.'s excess capital back into the industry for use by everyone.

¶ I.B.M. must price and offer each hardware, firmware, software and service function separately.

¶ Elimination of "questionable business practices."

¶ Bar I.B.M. from participation in the data processing services business for 10 years.

¶ Bar I.B.M. completely from participation in the data communications business.

A spokesman for I.B.M. said he could not comment on Mr. Biddle's proposal because he had not yet seen a copy of it.

Industry analysts noted Mr. Biddle's initiative and suggested that the Justice Department may be possibly contemplating reaching some form of consent decree.