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AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE - UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

November 12, 1971

Breakfast Skipped Frequently

Time: 0:20

The Market Research Corporation of America indicates that 36 percent of the U-S population skips breakfast at least once in two weeks. According to the menu census, 17 percent skip breakfast at least half the time. Furthermore, over one out of three breakfasts is nutritionally inadequate.

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Gullible Consumer Taken

Time: 0:24

Consumer illiteracy is disastrous, says Virginia Knauer, special assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs. The Food and Drug Administration estimates that about one-billion is spent annually on worthless items...quack devices, drugs, foods and cosmetics. All are worthless or extravagantly misrepresented ...and usually bought by senior citizens.

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Marriages Threatened By Economics

Time: 0:40

Statistics from the Census Bureau show that almost 50 percent of the marriages between 18 to 30 year olds end in divorce. The same data show, that the more income a family has, the less likely a divorce, says Virginia Knauer, special assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs.

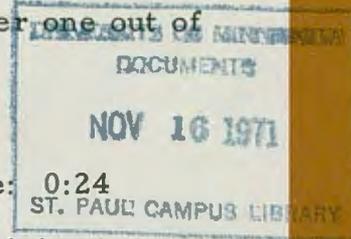
According to Mrs. Knauer, a major cause of marriage failure is economics. In these cases, Census Bureau experts indicate that adults don't know how to increase incomes or manage money properly.

A credit counselor indicates that 178-thousand non-business or family bankruptcies occurred in the United States last year.

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consumer radio briefs



Consumers Victimized

Time: 1:20

The effects of consumer illiteracy affect cultural and economic groups. Virginia Knauer, special assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs, knows of cases where Chicano's have gone into lifetime debt signing sales contracts they didn't understand. The rural poor have been exploited by salesmen. Low-income blacks are victimized by loan sharks and Indians lose their money to mail order firms that don't deliver the goods.

Actually middle and upper income classes are just as susceptible as less fortunate citizens, she says. Multi-level distributorships, shady franchise operations, and bait-switch tactics are aimed at more affluent consumers.

Mrs. Knauer asks what would happen if all consumers were knowledgeable, demanding and sensible? If consumers knew the law and how to utilize it to full advantage...knew various advertising techniques...knew how to act as a community to solve problems...then, we'd have a quality marketplace. Such a free enterprise system would eliminate unscrupulous and unresponsive businessmen.

Instead of the bitter fruits of swindle and exploitation, the harvest would be a utopia made possible by proper consumer education, she said.

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