

WASHINGTON REPORT

Congressman Edwin D. Eshleman

16th District—Pennsylvania



A spokesman for the Nixon Administration came before a Senate subcommittee recently to endorse lowering the voting age to eighteen. This is a proposal that has been around for some time, but now appears to be getting some serious consideration in the Congress. Personally, I have some enthusiasm as well as some reservations regarding any action taken toward changing the voting age requirements.

Congress has under consideration three different plans for eighteen-year-old voting. There is a plan which would allow younger voters to cast ballots only for presidential candidates. The reason for this rather narrow change is that presidential contests are the

only ones where the federal government has the power to set voting standards.

The other two plans would both require passage of a Constitutional amendment, since the power to set voting standards, traditionally reserved for the 50 states, would have to be revised. One amendment would allow eighteen-year olds to vote in congressional and presidential elections. The other would open all elections — national, state and local — to the younger voters.

Any reservations I have regarding any of these plans do not involve the pro and con arguments usually heard about changing the voting-age requirements. I am one who believes that most of our young people — through their knowledge of, awareness of, and concern for the great issues of our time — have demonstrated their capacity for casting an intelligent ballot. After all, the militant youth we see so often glamorized by the news media represent only a small part of the total picture. There are millions of young people in this country who are valuable citizens deserving of some way for making their opinions felt. Permitting them to vote would be one such way.

My reservations in this area involve the extent of the federal governments' role. Permitting eighteen-year olds to vote for the President and Vice-President would get no argument

State Expands Consumer Protection Plan

Weekends will become workdays for state food, fertilizer and seed inspectors in a consumer protection plan announced today by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

State Agriculture Secretary Leland H. Bull said the purpose of the plan is to "protect consumers from week-end specials that aren't bargains."

He said Department inspectors will make weekend purchases of meat, vegetables, can-

ned goods, seeds and fertilizers.

Food will be tested for freshness, purity and additives, Secretary Bull said. Seeds will be tested for growing qualities while fertilizer will be analyzed to determine if containers' labels and contents tally.

In the spring and summer seasons, stock sold in garden centers will be inspected for insects and diseases, Secretary Bull said, adding:

"There's nothing more disheartening than planting a tree or bush and then discovering a few months later that they didn't prosper because of an in-

● Corn Growers

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sect infestation or a disease condition."

Secretary Bull said inspectors, who normally work Mondays through Fridays, will be instructed to stagger their work schedules to include weekends.

My Neighbors



"Look what's emerging from that egg!"

from me. Such a change rests within the federal realm. But to go beyond that admittedly narrow revision is to tread into the area of state prerogatives. I am not convinced that the federal government should become the prime mover in adopting voting standards. I prefer to see voting regulations stay in their constitutional place as a reserved power of the individual states. Therefore, I would prefer to see any action aimed at allowing youth to vote in congressional, state and local elections adopted in each state. I realize that such a process is longer and more involved than getting federal approval, and probably is not befitting the impatience of youth. However, we should not let haste toward a worthy goal destroy well-founded government machinery.

There are many people with some very pointed and valuable arguments on this issue of lowering the voting age. If you feel so inclined, I would like to hear your views on this issue or have your comments on the three plans before the Congress.



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