

HARRISBURG MEMO . . .

To: *The People of Pennsylvania*

From: *Milton J. Shapp, Governor*



HARRISBURG — An elderly gent paused to talk with me during a campaign swing through Pittsburgh where I was attending a senior citizens' rally about three years ago.

What he said to me I had heard time and time again from senior citizens in Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, Hazleton, Erie,

Philadelphia — all over Pennsylvania.

"You know, governor, the worst thing about getting old is that no one seems to want you — no one cares."

The statement made a lasting impression on me. I was determined when I became governor that we could change the system.

I was sure we could slice through the red tape that alienated our elderly from society.

This year, I'm happy to report we have succeeded in changing the system. Pennsylvania this year for the first time will surpass all other states in its programs for the elderly.

We now lead the way in bringing major innovations to our senior citizens in the areas of tax relief, free transportation, economic assistance and social services.

It wasn't done overnight, however.

In 1971, we began passing on tax relief when we ripped out the six percent sales tax on gas, electric and telephone bills. We also abolished the six percent sales tax on non-prescription drugs and certain consumer items used by the elderly and others on fixed incomes.

We then started the state Lottery to give property tax relief for senior citizens. Our Lottery now is hailed as one of the best.

Now for the second year, we mailed property tax assistance checks averaging \$100 to 270,000 of our senior citizens.

I am pushing right now for passage of House Bill 924 which will extend this tax relief to renters and more homeowners. When this bill is passed, we will make tax relief available to another quarter of a million households to make our program, serving 800,000 persons, the most comprehensive in the nation.

This year I am asking for exemptions from the state income tax for the elderly, the poor, the infirm and the disabled as permitted by the Constitution.

We began our program of free transit for the elderly on July 1 using proceeds from the Lottery. Today, throughout Pennsylvania, senior citizens are riding free during off peak hours, thanks to this program.

Our free transit program is the only such statewide program in the nation and represents a real breakthrough in government assistance to the elderly.

I also am fighting for funds to add to federal assistance payments to the elderly, the blind and the disabled. The across-the-board increase in state funds of \$20 per month will bring single persons to \$150 and couples to \$215 per month.

After an investigation my administration found nursing home services for low and moderate income persons to be totally inadequate. I already have submitted legislation asking the voters to authorize a \$100 million bond issue for capital

improvements to nursing homes to make them conform with the federal life safety code.

We have upped payments for skilled nursing homes from \$11 a day (two years ago) to \$20 a day to assure a high standard of care and to make available more beds for medicaid patients. We also have appropriated \$59 million to repair state nursing home institutions.

We have started new programs such as Late Start Centers, the first of which my wife and I began in our own home — in the State Dining Room of the Governor's Mansion. I believe strongly that it's never too late to live a full and rewarding life when people know a little extra about services, health provisions and crafts.

The senior citizen in Pennsylvania is now aware that we care. Here in Harrisburg we intend to keep that concern high on our list of priorities.

Feeder Cattle Numbers Up

Pennsylvania cattle feeders had 53,000 cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market on October 1, 1973 according to the Crop Reporting Service. This was eight percent, or 4,000 head, more than were on feed a year earlier. Marketings of fed cattle during the July-September quarter at 31,000 were 11 percent or 4,000 head smaller than marketings during the same period in 1972.

There were 26,000 head placed during the quarter — down 13 percent or 4,000 head from a year ago. Expected marketings of fed cattle, if realized, during the October-December quarter at 24,000 would be 33 percent or 6,000 head greater than marketings during the same period in 1972.

What's Your View?

Keeping house to me is like threading beads on a string with no knot on the end



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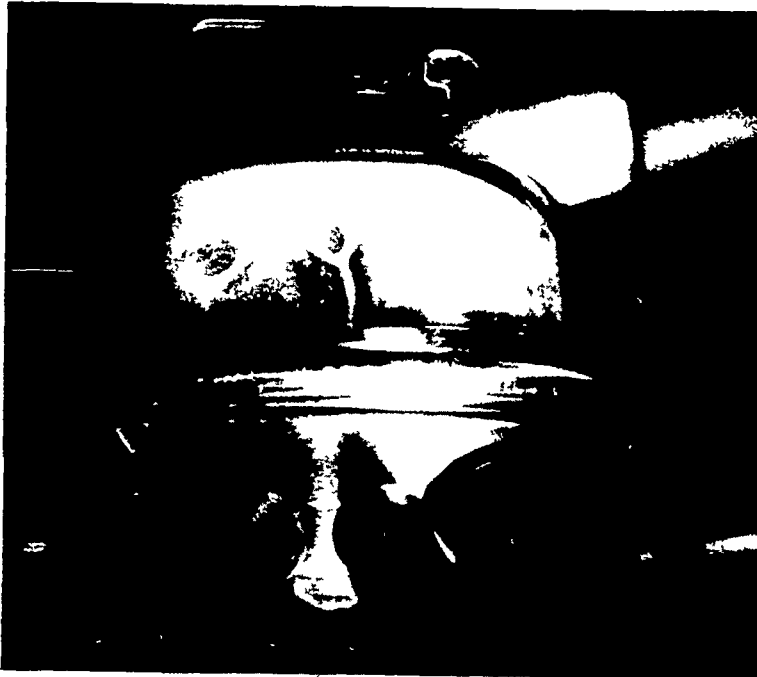
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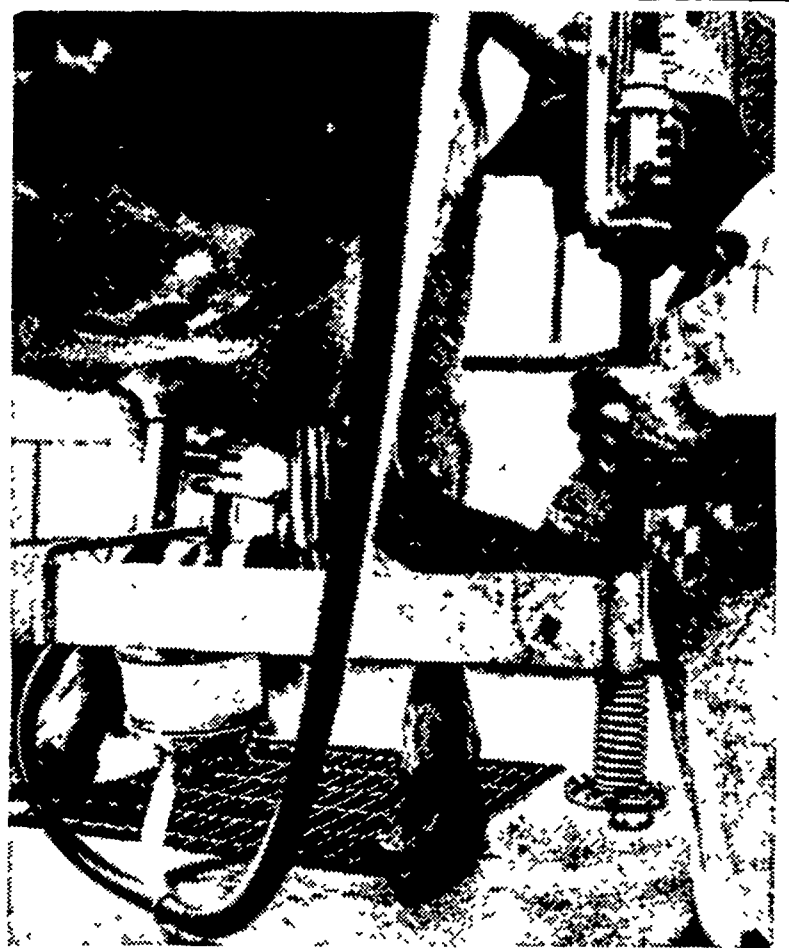
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