

Business and Politics Don't Mix, Say Pa. Reps

Elimination of political contributions required of business firms seeking contracts with the State is the intent of a series of 15 bills introduced in the House last week.

The substance of these bills is based on testimony given during public hearings held by the Select House Committee on Contract Practices under the chairmanship of Rep. Patrick A. Gleason (R-Cambria).

The House resolution which created the Select Committee directed it to prepare remedial legislation, a responsibility which is now being partially discharged.

The proposed measures, which deal principally with alleged political malpractice in the awarding of contracts for road maintenance and public works, run parallel in their intent to a Republican-sponsored bill, HB 2363, passed July 10 and still held in Senate Committee.

That particular bill would protect architects and engineers from political shakedowns by creating a three-man Pennsylvania Public Works Professional Services Board.

Major bills in the new package would:

—Force county highway maintenance offices to lease equipment for any private contractors who wish to rent their equipment to the Department of Transportation.

Use of equipment must be

apportioned equally among all contractors rather than a few political favorites, a practice alleged by witnesses at the public hearings.

—Place all employees in the Department of Transportation under Civil Service, except the Secretary, his deputies and attorneys.

This would free about 10,000 highway maintenance workers from political peonage, under which they are now expected to contribute to the party in power as a price of holding their jobs.

—Establish a new Department of Building Construction and eliminate the General State Authority, which has long been tainted with reports of political shakedowns.

—Establish fair leasing procedures for real property and equipment leased through the Department of Property and Supplies, which has recently been charged with gross political favoritism in its operations.

—Create a State Bond Counsel to do legal work on State issues, replacing favored law firms which receive large fees just to help the State borrow money.

—Establish a Bureau of Risk Manager to prepare specifications for State insurance policies, and require at least three bids from different insurers specifying coverage, rates and commissions to be paid.

—Require more detailed disclosures of officers and directors of companies doing business with the State, especially companies created for this sole purpose under fictitious names.

—Provide that the Auditor General must receive copies of all contracts exceeding \$500 paid with State funds.

The Legislature still has time to consider and pass these bills which will go a long way to give Pennsylvanians the kind of clean State Government they deserve, a Government for which they will pay over \$4 billion in tax dollars this year.



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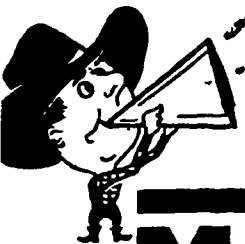
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September 20, 1859 — George B. Simpson granted patent for first electric hotplate.
September 21, 1784 — First daily paper — "Packet and Advertiser" — published in U.S.
September 22, 1926 — Gene Tunney defeated Jack Dempsey to become Heavyweight champion.
September 23, 1875 — Birthday of William Marconi, wireless inventor.
September 24, 1924 — China erupts in Civil War.
September 25, 1789 — Congress adopted the Bill of Rights.
September 26, 1938 — Munich Crisis is precipitated by Hitler's demand for Sudeten area of Czechoslovakia.

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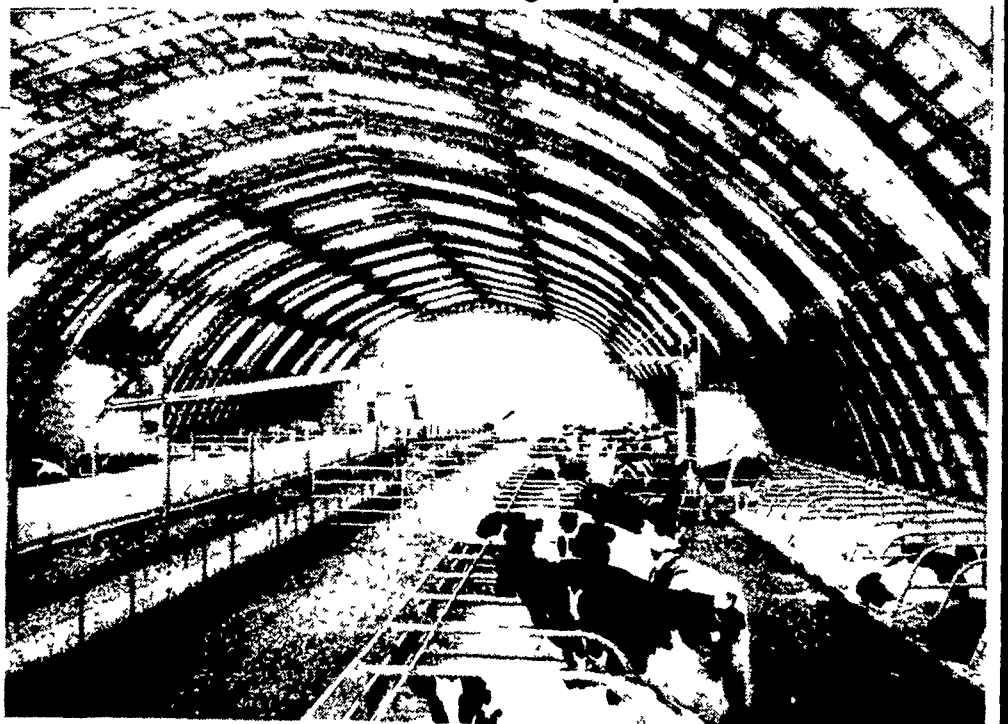
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