

# McHale plowed under by Senate

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and his administration. The result is the the voice of Pennsylvania agriculture has not been accurately and fully heard in the councils of government here in Harrisburg. In my judgment, both the Pennsylvania farm community and the Governor have been ill-served by this secretary of agriculture. This is a situation we cannot permit to continue."

In a talk with Lancaster Farming, Secretary McHale defended his past actions and reiterated his intentions "to

carry out the Governor's program," claiming that "the Shapp administration is the advocate of the people and here to serve Pennsylvanians."

"McHale's major sin," Governor Shapp was quoted as saying in regard to the vote, "was to attempt to turn the Department of Agriculture away from the special interests of agribusiness of this state and toward the interests of the little farmer and all the rural people of Pennsylvania."

The senators, however, disagreed. "McHale was not a farmer's secretary of agriculture," Senator Snyder said, "he was a social-welfare secretary and he should have been paying attention to the land and the people on it." He added that "we had had a number of distinguished and excellent secretaries of agriculture in the past, but McHale just did not measure up."

Explaining that he had nothing against McHale personally, and that it hurts to vote against a man, Snyder noted he had voted for McHale's first term, but did not feel he could do so again after evaluating his record. "He had mistaken priorities - the farm wasn't first," he continued. "The social-welfare programs he worked for, which are fine in their way, were first - and there wasn't much for farming."

The majority of farmers contacted in recent weeks indicated similar dislikings for McHale's policies as what were mentioned by senators who spoke and voted against him. One Centre County dairyman, however, thought McHale to be one of the best secretaries of agriculture of all time.

"Some professors at Penn State tried to farm and couldn't make it, so why would you want to have then try to tell you how to farm and how to become more efficient?" the Penns Valley farmer said. He praised McHale for being a secretary of agriculture who was not just a mouthpiece for the University.

"He was the first non-Penn State man to be appointed secretary of agriculture," the farmer said, "and although I can't agree with all he has done, I can see more sense in his programs than a lot of others. I would sooner see \$30,000 spent for rural development in Pennsylvania than to have it go as a grant to Penn State for some professor to study the sex life of a lizard in Africa."

Senator Clarence F. Manbeck, who represents portions of Lancaster, Berks, and Lebanon counties, said "as a person I like him, but my constituents asked me to vote against him." He criticized McHale's behavior in office, citing his constant campaign against U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz as a major dissatisfaction.

Another main objection of his constituents was that McHale campaigned heavily for farmer's union. One thing that was extremely irritating to many of the farmers that he (Manbeck) represents was McHale's failure to appear at many of the functions he was scheduled to attend.

Two things Manbeck approved McHale for were setting up a transportation program for rural senior citizens and the gardening program for suburbanites.

"I feel the secretary has forgotten about food and fibre production - the bedrock of our economy," commented Senator Joseph S. Ammerman, spokesman for parts of four counties in Central Pennsylvania. "I think the secretary has been unfair in his dealings with activities at Penn State. In his remarks on the floor of the Senate, prior to the vote, Ammerman said: "... I submit to you that it is the experience of my constituents that they do not get a friendly response and reception on the day-to-day problems of the family farmer in Pennsylvania. The present secretary is interested in a number of programs which are certainly laudable but are within the province of other departments and other secretaries. If he aspires to be Secretary of Welfare, I think he should seek that appointment from the Governor, but let us have as Secretary of Agriculture someone whose interests are in the family farmer in Pennsylvania ... I am sure the U.S. Department of Agriculture and our foreign service can well represent us overseas."

McHale attacked those accusations, telling Lancaster Farming that "the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture rates as one of the best in the country and that he personally, as well as his staff have worked harder and longer than previous agriculture departments. "There

are three and a half million people in rural Pennsylvania without a spokesman," McHale said, "we started some new programs for their benefit and then turned them over to other agencies. We got things going."

"I won't take a back seat to anybody on my job," the controversial agriculture secretary said, "I don't mind working, and I stick to the same philosophy day after day." In making the remarks, McHale indicated that he had been approached by money men to sway his opinion or policies, but that he turned them all away.

In criticizing previous agricultural departments, McHale mentioned sizable sums of money being wasted, including instances where checks were sent to Florida for dog law enforcement.

Senator Snyder, continuing with his remarks, said "McHale owed it to the ag industry to stick to the job the department was created for. His policies don't seem to be advancing the farm and family much. I felt obligated to speak against him, especially since my district is a leading agricultural area."

Senator Ammerman, in his statements against McHale, noted that he found the newsletter put out by him "not particularly informative in any matter of importance, but merely a puff sheet for him. It costs about \$55,000 per year to put out."

Evaluating the newsletter, and the mailing list for it, Ammerman said it is one of the most interesting he has ever examined. "Why are we sending these news letter, which are out of date a week or so after we receive them in Pennsylvania, to Iran and Egypt and India and Rome and Kuhnsville, New York, and to Hubert Humphrey and Adlai Stevenson and every member of the House and Senate?"

He also indicated that the Agriculture Department, "in policy, in this Commonwealth has, for the last four years, been run by the consultant paid \$30,000 per year ... If Mr. Patton is to be the Secretary of Agriculture, then let us appoint him."

Bill McLoughlin, Governor Shapp's legislative secretary, indicated that the reconfirmation vote could be considered again early next week, "but I don't believe anything will happen." Late reports from Harrisburg indicate that even if reconsideration takes place for the rejected Shapp Cabinet appointees, Secretary McHale is not likely to receive that privilege.

McLoughlin said the Governor was distressed over the decision, since "competent and capable people had been rejected and hopes something can be worked out." Shapp would be allowed to resubmit McHale's name, but it isn't certain whether he will.

## News from Your State Representative



By Nick Moehlmann  
102nd Legislative District

Do you think recodification of the school code, as it is now written, gives undue power to either local school boards or the state board and-or state secretary of education? Do you think the many objections raised during the hearings held throughout the state will cause legislators to make any changes in the present draft of the recodification?

M.S.H.  
Lititz

As it is now written (and that's the key phrase), the School Code Recodification greatly increases the power of both the State Board and the Secretary of Education in the following areas:

1. All authority over students will be given to the State Board. Most of these powers now reside in the local board;

2. Increased powers over curriculum will be given to the State Board. Under present law the legislature dictates the curriculum;

3. The power of the Secretary of Education will be enhanced because the State Board will no longer be required to approve regulations promulgated by the Secretary. Under the bill as presently written, if the State Board takes no action on the proposed regulation, the regulation will become effective. Presently, the failure of the State Board to approve a proposed regulation means the regulation does not take effect.

4. The Secretary will have increased power to withhold funds for noncompliance with department regulations by the school districts.

There will be strong attempts to amend the present draft of the bill in these areas. I certainly hope we will succeed because I believe these provisions do confer undue power on the State Board and the Secretary of Education.

Has there been any action taken on putting a "dangerous intersection" sign at the intersection of Millport Road and Route 501 in Warwick Township, Lancaster County? What must be done to convince PennDOT that such a sign is needed?

B.J.S.  
Lancaster

I talked to Robert Keller, the District Engineer for District 8. He told me his workmen have orders to install such a sign. He is expecting this to be done in the near future. The term "near future" means dif-

ferent things to different people, but the conversation indicated that this sign will be placed.

Is the state going to lower the drinking age? Do you think this would be a good or bad idea?

D.S.  
Lititz

On July 1, 1975, the Pennsylvania Senate, by a vote of 28-20, passed Senate Bill 710, which would reduce the minimum age for the purchase and consumption of beer and wine to nineteen. It would not affect the minimum age for the purchase and consumption of hard liquor.

I do not favor this legislation and I will not vote for it, but I think we'll have to face the probability that one of these years such legislation will pass both chambers of the legislature. Every year we come closer to it. When this happens, it will be up to the Governor to sign or veto the bill. I cannot predict how the Governor will react.

(Rep. Moehlmann will be happy to answer questions from readers. Please send any questions or comments to Rep. Nick Moehlmann, in care of the Lititz Record-Express, 22 E. Main St., Lititz, PA 17543.)



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