

'Block Vote' Bill

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"blockvoting" will sometimes try to pass the procedure off with respectability by saying it is just the way your representatives work in Harrisburg. That is, our directors (elected representatives) are only voting for their members like you do at the state capital.

Anyone who tries to sell this cheap shot, either doesn't know how government works with its system of checks and balances, or is just trying to confuse the issue because that's not how our state government works. Our constitution sets safe guards as to how many votes it takes to carry an issue. It's not just a majority of those voting, but a constitutional majority.

There is a big difference, as any member of the House well knows. If you choose not to vote, your vote is recorded in the negative, and no one, not your country chairman, not your state chairman, not even your floor leader himself has the right to vote for you.

How did this miscarriage of justice come about? (block voting).

Power brokers in Washington when Capper-Volstead Act was passed in 1922 were able to insert the philosophy that when a producer joins a cooperative he

loses his right to individually decide some issues. In this case the block voting issue was important to one group only, the big milk cooperatives.

And why the big milk cooperatives?

Because, by being able to vote all the votes of their members or by block voting they had a better chance to succeed in obtaining marketing orders.

Under these marketing orders the United States Government would then set the wholesale prices and subsidize milk. What this legislature does with H. B. 767 will have no effect on federal law. So, contrary to some whole sale buyers of milk, national milk marketing orders are not decided by state statutes. So, that issue is mute.

What we are considering is, shall the Pennsylvania legislature allow this travesty to continue; where Pennsylvania commodities can tax their producers for a program they may not be in agreement with.

Aside from block voting this amendment covers several other issues. All are probably "OK" except one. Section 6 would change, under this proposal from a majority by number and a majority by volume — to 2/3 voting.

The volume part should be

State Grange

My name is Feryl Treichler. I am a dairy farmer from Berks County and am chairman of the Dairy Committee of the Pennsylvania State Grange.

First, I would like to state that the Pennsylvania State Grange opposes the amendments to the Pennsylvania Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act as recommended in House Bill 767 for three very basic reasons:

We are opposed to any crippling of the effectiveness of cooperative groups by prohibiting bloc voting on marketing order referendums.

We feel that efforts should be

retained under H.B. 767. As it is its a safeguard and returns it to its original language.

To use 2/3 of those voting could be very misleading and weakens the act, should it be passed. Under this proposal a 2/3 vote could be had by only three people voting. Some minimums or constitutional volume should be included as present law requires.

With the amendments I have suggested, if this Bill is passed into law, all farmers in Pennsylvania will be treated equally for the first time since the "Pennsylvania Commodities Act" became law. The end result of a successful referendum under the Pennsylvania Commodity Act can have a substantial effect on prices all people pay. Its effect penetrates into every corner of our society

concentrated instead on providing adequate time for individuals to vote on marketing orders and encouraging individuals to vote.

We feel that an empty vote in place of a bloc vote will not provide any better producer representation on marketing programs.

To my knowledge, members of the board of directors governing cooperatives are voted into office by the members of the cooperative. Members are, in essence, electing these individuals to represent them in making policy decisions for the cooperative as a whole.

In fact, the bargaining power that is gained in banding together is one of the advantages of joining a cooperative in the first place. By joining such a group, a producer imparts some authority to the directors to speak for him.

We believe in independent, equal rights for voting on all issues by the individual and the State Grange has long urged its members to discharge their duties as citizens by voting in all elections and referendums.

As stated in the present Act, "The Secretary shall consider the vote of a cooperative association as the votes of such members, providing the cooperative has first notified its members, in writing, of its intention to cast a representative vote. Such notice shall inform the producer of his right to cast his vote individually and shall include thereon the following words in bold face type: "Warning - if you do not exercise your right to vote, your cooperative has the right to vote for you."

We feel that this is sufficient notification. Our concern is that notification is given to the individual as least four weeks in advance so that he has adequate

time to make an intelligent decision.

We therefore urge that the amendments as stated in House Bill 767 not be made to the present Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act. Instead, let efforts be concentrated on allowing sufficient notification time for referendums and on encouraging individuals to express their views by voting for themselves.

PDA

I, Deputy Secretary J. Luther Snyder, am here this morning representing Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Penrose Hallowell, to testify concerning the current Pennsylvania Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act of 1968, and proposed amendments to the act included in House Bill 767.

We believe that the existing law has been working satisfactorily, not only in terms of procedures for creation of marketing programs and reviews of programs, but also in terms of the benefits provided to the producers who are included in the three current marketing programs.

The amendments to the act included in HB 767 appear to accomplish the end of insuring individual balloting, but in fact, the existing law also makes provisions which guarantee individual voting rights.

The current act provides that a simple majority by number of producers and by volume is needed to pass a proposed program. HB 767 would amend the Marketing act to require a two-thirds majority for passage. We believe that any amendment which would provide other than a simple

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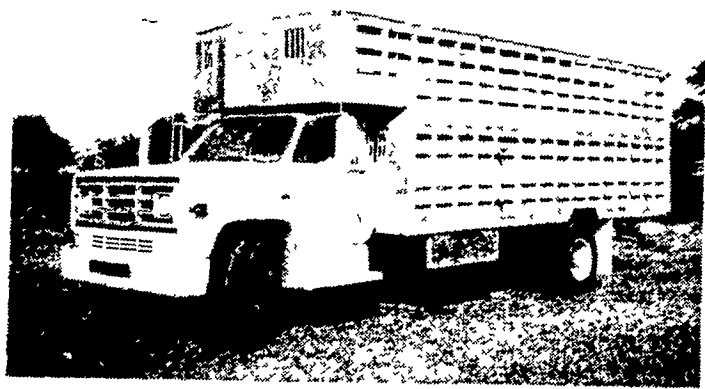
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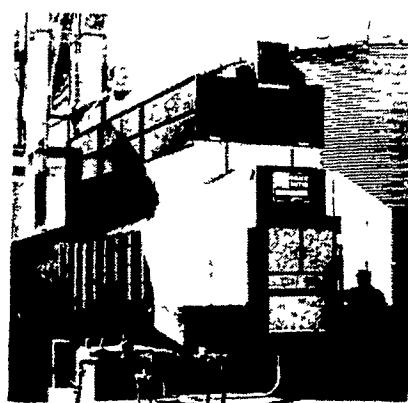
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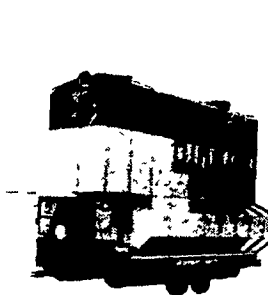
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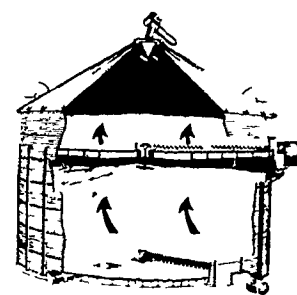
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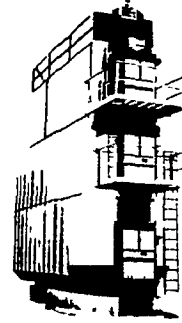
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