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TWENTY CENTS

Under Home Rule

Drastic Government Change Urged in Kingston Township

Kingston Township is destined to almost change its system of government completely if a report on a proposed home rule charter study is adopted by voters in the May primary election. And that's what the home rule charter commission chairman John Hibbard suggested should happen when he addressed township supervisors Wednesday night.

The recommendations made by the commission were contained in a booklet, 2,000 copies of which will be distributed to residents in the township prior to the election.

Mr. Hibbard told supervisors that the first recommendation of the commission

was that the proposed charter be placed on the May 21 ballot for a yes or no vote of township residents. Secondly, he said that the commission recommends that the township government be changed to a council-manager form with a board of supervisors consisting of five members, to be elected to four-year terms. The township manager would be appointed by supervisors and would serve as head of the government.

Under the commission's plan, the manager would be responsible for the hiring and supervising of all township employees. Citizen initiative and referendum to initiate legislation or withdraw it

is included as a provision of the charter. It also contains a provision for a recall of elected officials.

Mr. Hibbard noted that the major change in the present form of government would be that the township would operate under its own administrative code rather than the one set by the state.

Members of the commission were Mr. Hibbard, chairman; William Clewell, vice-chairman; Joseph Purcell, secretary-treasurer; Ambrose Gavigan, Edward Richards (chairman of the present board of supervisors) David Phillips and William Pugh.

Mr. Hibbard requested that since the commission, which had begun work on the charter study in November of 1972, had completed their assignment it should now be discharged. The board of supervisors unanimously voted to dismiss the group.

The study will be submitted to the County Board of Elections for placement on the ballot in the primary election. Should the township residents vote in favor of the charter, it would become effective in January 1976.

Station Operators Have Gas, But Situation Unpredictable

by Kurt Weidner

Gasoline stations in the Dallas region are in slightly better shape this month than they were in February, according to a poll conducted by the Dallas Post Tuesday, with only one out of seven contacted out of gas. Some dealers said they have had their allotments refigured and are getting more gas; several said they are depending on the emergency hot line should they run out.

Arco station operators said their gas is so expensive that people simply aren't buying it.

None of the dealers polled said they would cooperate with a planned shutdown March 25, and none said they thought the Federal Energy Office was doing a good job with the new allocating system.

Rough estimates made by local station operators indicated vast inequities in the allocation system. Ken Martin, who was out of gas, said he was only doing about 40 percent of the business he was a year ago.

"I don't know how this thing could get any harder for me," he said. "My gas doesn't last anytime at all. I called up on the state hot line but there is no guarantee they will come through."

Don Hinkle, a Citgo dealer in Trucksville, who is getting 90 percent of the gas he received in 1972, said he isn't having any trouble at all. "I've been able to get just about all I need," he told the Post. "I cut my hours down a few times to make sure I wouldn't run out, but I haven't had much trouble getting gas. In fact, my company just cut their price to me by four cents a gallon."

An Arco dealer in Shavertown, Gerard Schmid, with an 80 percent allotment over last year, said he can sell only 70 percent of what he sold a year ago because of the price. "I have more gas in the ground than I can use. The people aren't buying it at these prices. Two weeks ago Arco put their price per gallon up four cents more than anybody else."

Most dealers said they did not expect the situation to get worse during April and May. They said under the allocation system they expect to be entitled to an increase in their allotment for the peak months.

Mr. Schmid seemed to sum up the group's sentiments of the FEO. "Once the government gets their hands on anything, they mess it up."

In nearby Lackawanna County, a Greenstreet News survey indicated almost an opposite viewpoint. "Any dealer who doesn't shut down is not being fair to his customers," James Summa, a Dunmore service station owner and head of the county Pennsylvania Service Station Dealers' Association, said. The PSSDA has set March 25 as the tentative date for a statewide shutdown in hopes of obtaining increased gasoline allocations and other concessions from the FEO and the oil companies.

Service station owners in the Abington area north of Scranton indicated the organized shutdown may be academic by Monday anyway, because they will virtually be out of gas by then.

(continued on PAGE EIGHTEEN)



The Giant (Conrad Gonzalez) and his wife (Helen Rudolph) prepare to go to sleep as the Harp (Kitty Chowske) plays a lullaby in this rehearsal scene from the Misericordia Players production of "Jack and the Beanstalk." The Children's Theatre presentation is nearly sold out. See story on Page 9.

Luzerne Judge Hears Cooper Case Testimony

by Russ Williams

Testimony was completed March 13 before Luzerne County Orphans Court Judge Edward Lopatto in the case of former Jackson Township police chief Robert Cooper, charged with contempt for allegedly making juvenile records of the current chief, Donald J. Jones, and constable Corey Askew, both of RD 5, Shavertown, public. A decision is expected after Judge Lopatto hears arguments from attorneys for both sides.

In their quasi-criminal action, Mr. Jones and Mr. Askew attempted to prove contempt by showing that Mr. Cooper, while Jackson Township police chief, acquired their private juvenile records and made them public to certain individuals. Mr. Cooper has since been relieved of his police chief duties by township supervisors (who offered him the position of assistant chief, which he refused) and replaced by Mr. Jones. Mr. Cooper, in a re-

lated case, is attempting to regain his chief position through legal action, based on his contention that his removal was invalid because supervisors gave him no formal reason as required in the Police Tenure Act.

Since the initial action by supervisors to replace Mr. Cooper, they have voted to demote him for reasons of inefficiency and conduct unbecoming an officer, stemming from the contempt proceedings. Mr. Jones was formerly a salaried patrolman under former chief Cooper.

Charles Adonizio, chief probation officer of Luzerne County, first witness in the case, told the court that he allowed then chief Cooper to look at the private file of Donald Jones because the chief told him that he was investigating the patrolman "because of numerous complaints that Jones had a record."

He also told the court that Mr. Cooper said he was especially concerned because it is unlawful for a man convicted of a felony to carry a gun.

Based on that, Mr. Adonizio said, he allowed his secretary to send a typed verbatim copy of the juvenile record to Mr. Cooper. He said he had no record of anyone forwarding the record of Mr. Askew, and he said several times that he reminded the chief that such records should not be "Passed around."

Mr. Cooper told the court that Mr. Adonizio handed the records to him.

Atty. Joseph Gale, representing the complainants, emphasized that juvenile offenses are not considered criminal offenses or felonies, and are therefore not affected by federal gun regulations.

Mr. Cooper was represented by his personal attorney Ben Jones III, and Joe Giebus, solicitor for the Luzerne County Police Chiefs Association. Several area police chiefs attended the two-day trial. The county association and the Back Mountain Policemen's Association have offered support to Mr. Cooper in his attempt to regain his former position.

Prosecution witness Frank Elenchik, a township supervisor, testified that he read a letter containing the juvenile re-

(continued on PAGE EIGHTEEN)

(continued on PAGE EIGHTEEN)

Lake-Lehman School Bids 11% Higher than Estimated

Evidence of skyrocketing building costs was apparent when bids were opened March 12 by the Lake-Lehman School Board for the renovation of the Lehman-Jackson Elementary School. The architect's estimate for the project, which will convert the elementary into a junior high school, called for expenditures of \$294,012; actual bids totaled \$331,066.

Noting this discrepancy, project architect John Gregorski of the firm of Lacy, Atherton & Davis observed that while the higher bids were not seriously out of line with estimated costs, "the so-called Taj Mahal Act requires that a public hearing be held if the bids exceed by eight percent the estimated costs." The bids opened Tuesday night were 11 percent higher than the architect's projected cost.

Two days after the meeting, however, Mr. Gregorski told the Post that he had

learned that no public meeting would be required inasmuch as the project was primarily renovative in nature rather than new construction.

Apparent low bids for the project were: General construction, Bilmar Enterprises—\$157,000; plumbing construction, Hughes Corporation—\$61,200; heating, ventilating and air conditioning—\$31,846; electrical construction, Brennan Electric—\$84,280.

The welcome news that the Pennsylvania Gas and Water Company has once again agreed to waive a penalty charge levied against the school district for excessive gas usage was reported by Atty. Charles D. Lemmond Jr. The solicitor informed the board that he was assured by a PG&W spokesman that penalties imposed in January and February would be

Local Vegetable Farmers Protest DER's Migrant-Camp Regulations

Unless the state Department of Environmental Resources and local vegetable growers can reach an agreement on new standards for migrant labor camps within "a matter of days," vegetables will be a scarce, and expensive, commodity this summer.

That sobering prediction was made last week by Keith Eckels, Schultsville, chief spokesman for a group of farmers who are protesting new regulations for migrant labor camps imposed this year by the state. Eckels, a member of the Pennsylvania Vegetable Growers' Association and the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association, will meet with state officials in Harrisburg today in an effort to iron out the problem. But he said it may already be too late for many farmers, who have decided to go out of business rather than comply with the DER directives.

The dispute, which may force 80 percent of the vegetable growers in the area out of business this year, stems from

several new regulations which the DER has established for the migrant labor camps. The regulations affect approximately 30 farms in the area which employ 900 migrants and produce more than \$3 million worth of vegetables for the Northeast, Eckels said.

The new regulations which the farmers are protesting include:

- mandatory central heating in all housing units in the camps;
- farmers must maintain clean bedding in all housing units in the camps;
- electrical wiring must conform to the National Electrical Code;
- camps must be ready for inspection 45 days prior to occupancy.

"We have no sympathy for operators of 'outlaw' camps," those that aren't licensed by the state," Eckels said. "But most camps in the area have always complied with state regulations, and now, all of a sudden, the DER steps in and changes the rules without warning."

"When the DER made its initial inspection of the camps," he explained, "it was after the growing season was over and the camps weren't occupied. So of course, they were run down, and many had been damaged by vandals, as are most vacant buildings. But they would have been cleaned up and repaired by next summer before the migrants came, just as they always were. Now they (the DER) want the camps ready for inspection 45 days prior to occupancy. That would mean the farmer would have to work on the buildings in June and early July, his busiest season. And even if the camps were ready then, what would be the point? They would naturally deteriorate some before the workers came. Certainly, the camps should be inspected, but not until about 15 days prior to occupancy (about August 1) as in the past," Eckels said.

(continued on PAGE FIFTEEN)



The famous "balloon man" of Georgetown, D.C. is a welcome harbinger of spring in the Nation's capital!