

# EDITORIAL

## A Solid Gold Line

Perhaps what the Back Mountain needs more than anything else is a Solid Gold line right down the center of every single secondary road. Center lines need not be reserved exclusively for use in town. In fact a center line painted on most of our Back Mountain roads would serve two purposes. It would not only emphasize the narrowness of most country roads but would also indicate approaching curves and other hazards.

Certainly the plethora of motor vehicle accidents was climaxed last weekend with the unnecessary deaths of two 14-year old youths on our narrow country roads. Now the time has come for all Back Mountain drivers to consider some immediate and positive action that we can take to make our travels more safe. The paucity of caution signs is false economy. Shoulders on all roads should be widened and brought up to the level of the pavement. Far too many times the ruts along our roads, left over from last spring's thaw, are the cause of a driver losing control of his vehicle. Unmarked intersections and blind driveways are another source of concern. Street lights for major intersections could eliminate another hazard.

Perhaps the best way for us to accomplish these simple improvements would be to use the voice of the people. A few letters and phone calls to township supervisors and their road maintenance crews; a few more letters and phone calls to our county commissioners about the maintenance of county roads; finally letters and phone calls to the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation about problems on state roads would help to emphasize the need for basic improvements to area highways.

Meanwhile, let us not forget that each one of us can be more careful with our driving habits. "Slow Down and Live" has already proven most effective on super highways. But it also applies to our narrow, winding Back Mountain roads as well. Then perhaps we will not repeat the tragic losses of Dale Ide and Jeffrey Coolbaugh.

Millie Hogboom

## Campaign Reform

The moment of truth for campaign finance reform in the 93rd Congress has arrived. After months of delay the House Administration Committee has drafted a bill and will soon send it to the floor for a vote.

The Senate has already passed a comprehensive campaign reform bill which includes a mixed system of private financing for congressional and presidential elections and an independent election commission to enforce the law.

Regrettably, the House bill is a grossly inadequate response to the money-in-politics scandals which have been the underpinning of the Watergate story. For instance, enforcement of the law would be placed in the hands of a board of seven persons, six of whom would be members of Congress or their direct employees. This incestuous proposal means a continuation of the 50-year history of non-enforcement of campaign finance laws.

There is no provision in the House bill for public funds to supplement private donations in congressional races, only in presidential campaigns. The implication: Congress is ready to clean up presidential contests but not its own.

The need for a strong law has never been more clear. According to a Common Cause survey, available political funds from various special interest groups are on the rise. Money from health groups is up 223 percent from 1972 contributions; agriculture and dairy groups are up to 106 percent. Business groups are up 96 percent and labor funds are up 59 percent.

The message to the members of the House of Representatives couldn't be clearer. Unless Congress acts to provide for new clean sources of campaign funds, our current system, with all its corrupting consequences, will thrive and prosper.

--Larry Hertz

## Conservative View

by James J. Kilpatrick

The Senate performed an act of rough but regrettable justice June 24, when it voted 82-9 to provide emergency loan guarantees for livestock producers. This was a bad bill. It was also a necessary bill. Our governmental masters ought to learn something from this melancholy experience, but they probably won't.

The bill provides a federal guarantee for repayment of 90 percent of seven-year loans up to \$350,000 made during the coming year to bona fide livestock producers. No direct subsidies are involved; borrowers themselves must pay normal interest. It is impossible to predict what the guarantee may cost the taxpayers. If markets stabilize, losses may be small. If chaotic conditions continue, this could cost us a bundle.

The bill is a bad bill for all the reasons advanced by Senators James L. Buckley of New York and Jesse Helms of North Carolina. Both senators have large rural constituencies. Both demonstrated a rare political courage in speaking against the measure.

"I vote against the bill," said Sen. Buckley, "because it continues the precedent of government props that I believe to be dangerous and which I voted against in the case of Lockheed. Second, it will serve artificially to channel scarce credit to one sector of the economy at the expense of others, such as housing."

"There are several reasons," said Mr. Helms, "why in good conscience I cannot vote for this bill. The first, obviously, is the precedent it would set. Second, is the very real possibility that despite the best efforts to police its operation, this loan guarantee program could be misused and abused, thereby costing the taxpayers millions—perhaps billions—of dollars."

These are valid reasons. If it were not for other compelling circumstances, these would be convincing reasons. But a couple of pertinent proverbs come to mind: Who calls the tune must pay the piper. As you make your bed, so you must lie in it. Who sleeps with dogs wakes up with fleas.

In the case of the livestock producers, government made this mess. In simple jus-

tice, it is now up to the government to clean up the mess if it can. By interfering with normal marketing operations, through such fiascos as the Soviet wheat deal and the on-again, off-again price controls, government threw the market into turmoil. The government's purpose, presumably, was to improve foreign relations and to protect consumers from rising food prices. The purpose was fine, but the results were disastrous.

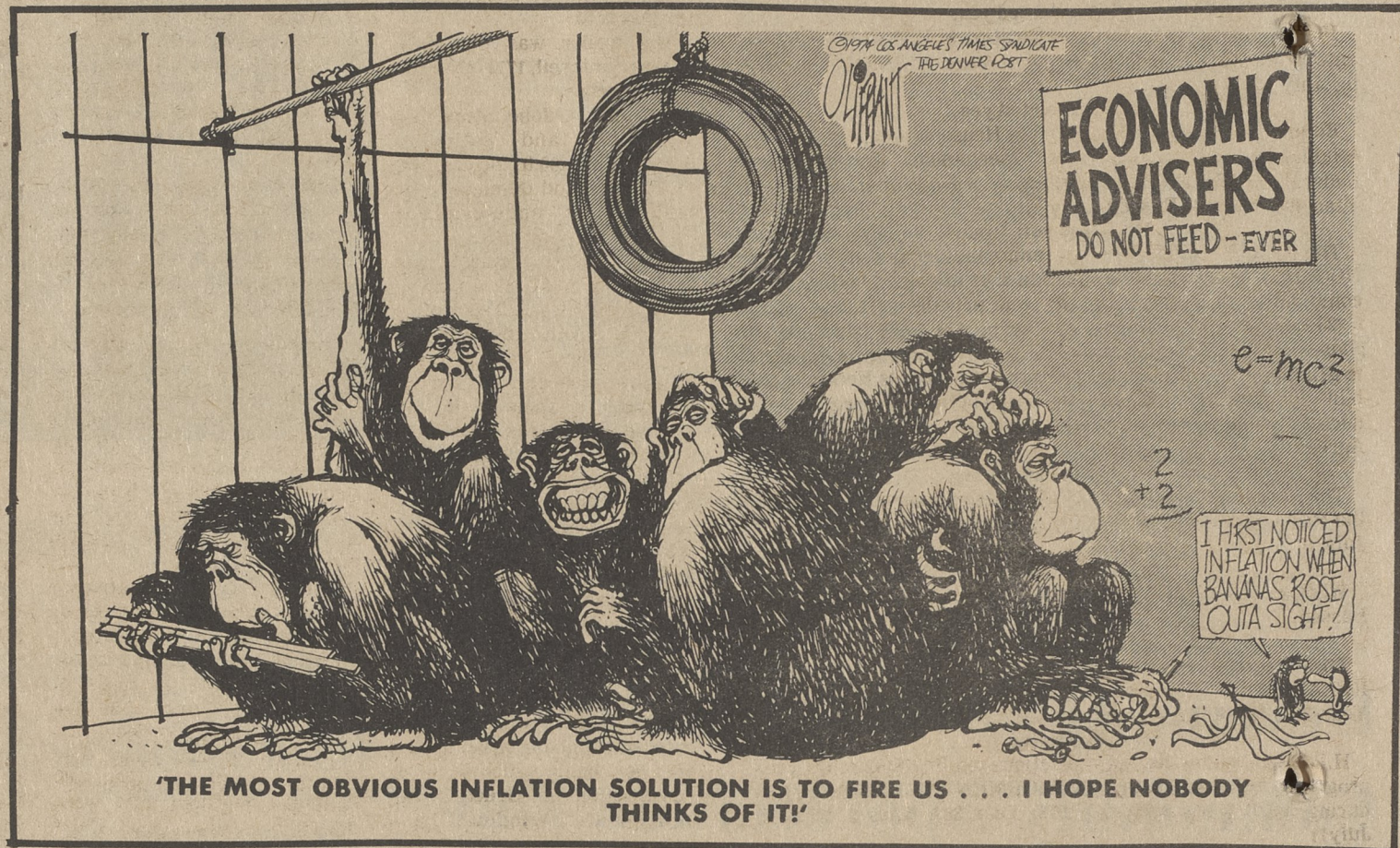
During the brief senate debate, Minnesota's Sen. Walter Mondale cited the entirely typical example of a cattle feeder from Blue Earth, Minn. He bought 44 steers last September at \$395 per head. He spent \$215 per head

on feed and labor, making a total investment of \$610. He sold the steers April 8 for \$471 per animal, for a net loss on each steer of \$139. Multiply that experience by several million head of cattle, and the sum is catastrophe. Wyoming's Sen. Gale McGee puts the loss to livestock feeders in the past 10 months at \$1.5 billion.

Governmental tinkering has staggered not only the livestock producers but other farmers also. Hog prices have dropped 43 percent since January. Chickens, turkey and egg producers face real threats of bankruptcy. A farmer in London, Ohio, recently wrote the Springfield Sun: "On Feb. 24, 1974,

wheat at our local elevator was \$6.62 per bushel. We were then paying 57 cents per loaf of cracked wheat bread. On May 24, the price of wheat was \$2.98 per bushel, a 60 percent decline, and we were still paying 57 cents a loaf. I wonder what it would cost if we gave the wheat away?"

Senators Buckley and Helms are right: The guaranteed loan bill is a bad bill. It sets a precedent—or at least adds to precedents—that no conservative can view with applause. But governments, like individuals, ought to be liable for the harm they do. When the roll was called up yonder, reluctantly and resentfully, I would have voted aye.



## TRB

from Washington

by Richard Strout

My social contacts with millionaire farmer Roswell Garst of Coon Rapids, Iowa, were never formal; the only time I met him was 15 years ago when he threw raw ensilage at me. He had visited Russia in 1955, and now in 1959, 300 reporters and photographers were traveling with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev around America and heading for the great Garst & Thomas hybrid corn showplace. Farmer Garst supplied the press with eight pages of advance information; "when corn is down to 30 percent moisture," he explained, "it has reached maximum dry weight" which was good to know but unlikely to grab a headline.

Mr. Garst hadn't reckoned with the self-defeating press mob that boiled about him like a herd of rampaging heifers and he vented his irritation with weapons of opportunity, including corn cobs and over-ripe vegetables while Mr. Nikita grinned. Dignified New York Timesman Harrison Salisbury got kicked. All of which indicates the difficulty of detente.

Farmer Garst still works for detente. Just before last week's Moscow summit Sen. William Fulbright inserted some letters into the Congressional Record written by Mr. Garst to the Soviet Embassy here, a continuation of a 19-year crusade: "You have fertilizer, we have food", he said. "Why don't we get together?" It sounds wonderfully simple and sensible. There are echoes of that in the message Messrs. Nixon-Kissinger bring back.

Mouth-watering American technical know-how, of course, in agriculture and industry is what Russia wants now. Russian fields are so

far north that only about 10 or 15 percent of the corn raised in the US can mature there. Even with special hybrid Garst strains the Russians won't be able to raise crops the way the American cornbelt does: there is a probable vast continuing Russian market for American grain.

And what American corn farmers want, farmer Garst points out to Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin just before last week's summit, is Russian nitrogen for fertilizer. The Soviets have an abundance of natural gas. Four-fifths of the air we breathe is nitrogen, but factories use natural gas to manufacture it, to "fix" it.

"Nitrogen fertilizers are the thing we need most in the USA," said old farmer Garst, reminding Mr. Dobrynin of the things he showed farmer Khrushchev in Coon Rapids in the 50's--fattening cattle, for example, with ground corn cobs and molasses, and the techniques of fertilizer, insecticides, herbicides, and the amazing American farm machinery...

To farmer Garst things are simple and direct; forget submarines and think of herbicides, push aside metaphysical MIRVs and contemplate the megatonnage of soybeans! That's the way you develop hybrid corn, and world peace. At least, that's today's message from Coon Rapids, Iowa.

How nice it sounds. Alas, Nixon-Kissinger return to a poisoned world. We are up for a third test of detente; perhaps the hardest. You remember that after the Khrushchev visit in 1959, Ike Eisenhower was scheduled for a return visit to Moscow; they had even built a golf course for him. But just before the Paris

Summit the visit was shot down with the American U-2 spy plane, and Ike never got to Russia. It delayed detente 15 years.

Next came Lyndon Johnson's proposed visit to Leningrad in 1968 when he was supposed to discuss limitations of strategic arms with Mr. Kosygin; he didn't go, the Czech issue came up.

That brings us down to today, with the temptation to oversimplify matters in the Garst formula. Actually, it's hard to think of a situation that is so confused or so likely to get more so. Here is a highly unpopular President urging us to be nice to a highly unpopular adversary at a moment when we must decide on impeachment which will be highly unpopular either way. Almost any expression of opinion is apt to be misinterpreted.

Readers know that this column can restrain its enthusiasm for Mr. Nixon without any great effort of will yet, in this instance, we support him. We expect he will exaggerate what he got from Moscow and to try to use it to his political advantage but, just the same, if there is a way to reduce tensions with Russia we're for it.

It was Sen. Fulbright who cited the Garst letters in a powerful speech on the floor the other day, and he noted that enemies of Mr. Nixon on this issue were not liberals but conservatives.

"With a flawless sense of timing," he charged, "the enemies of detente have chosen the moment of the President's departure for Moscow to fire a few broadsides at his policy."

Sen. Fulbright is hardly a friend of Mr. Nixon; he has just been defeated for re-

nomination and is probably bitter, yet he supports the Nixon-Kissinger detente policy. He detects something that looks like a GOP mutiny in the Pentagon. Paul Nitze, former deputy secretary of defense, member of the SALT negotiating team (and a sincere public servant) abruptly resigns just before the Summit, accusing Mr. Kissinger of softness; Defense Secretary Schlesinger, a friend of Nitze, talks tough about the Soviets' missile power; Sen. Henry Jackson (D. Washington) presidential aspirant who is liberal at home and a hawk abroad, attacks Mr. Kissinger, and skips over for a private summit in China.

It is almost as trying for us to support the Soviets as to support Mr. Nixon. One of the most shocking things we ever saw on television was the abrupt cut-off of U. S. commentators in Moscow by Communist officials last week as they tried to broadcast the results of the Summit. Wouldn't Spiro Agnew have loved that trick or the whole Watergate crew for that matter! We deplore the Communist emigration policy. Sen. Jackson's amendment would de-bar Moscow from getting non-discriminatory tariff treatment unless it permits unrestricted Jewish emigration. We fear the move is self-defeating. Sen. Fulbright's Foreign Relations Committee will thrash it out this month. "Stabilizing the peace is our own overriding interest," Sen. Fulbright warns bluntly, "and it is too important to be compromised by meddling-even humanitarian meddling-in internal Soviet affairs."

We missed detente in 1955, and again in 1968. Certainly we must not pay too high a price for it. But it's still the best hope in sight.

## Capitol Notes

by William Eckenberger

One of the timeliest and most important issues facing Pennsylvania today is the state teacher tenure law—should it be retained, abolished or modified?

At stake is what kind of individuals will be permitted to shape young minds in public school classrooms.

But despite an obvious need for review of the subject, not a word has been uttered in the proper forum for such discussions, the legislature.

Pennsylvania has one of the strongest teacher tenure laws in the nation. It says that once a teacher has a two-year probation period, he or she cannot be dismissed except for

the most egregious of reasons—immorality, mental derangement and worse.

So inflexible is the current arrangement that in the past 30 years less than 100 Pennsylvanians have been guillotined by the law.

The statute was passed in 1937, and it was very much needed at the time. Unscrupulous school boards would require under-the-table payments from job applicants, sexual favors were expected at rehiring time, and causes of dismissal could range from growing a mustache to flunking the quarterback.

The law today reads substantially as it was written 37 years ago, and recent events dictate a new look at it.

Since 1970 Pennsylvania teachers have had the right to bargain collectively with school boards and strike, if necessary, to support their demands for higher wages, job security and fringe benefits.

Moreover, teachers are no longer the fragile pawns manipulated by omnipotent school directors. They have organized the Pennsylvania State Education Association (PSEA) into one of Harrisburg's mightiest lobbies—far more powerful than its adversary, the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA).

A vintage teachers' complaint about school boards was that they were "political." That hasn't changed much, but now the

teachers also are up to their necks in politics. Many incumbent state legislators serve at the mercy of the PSEA.

Currently, there are about 110,000 public school teachers in Pennsylvania, and common sense tells us they're all not good. Many are mediocrities, which will exist in any profession. But we can also conclude that there are some downright incompetents in the classroom—chiefly due to the air-tight tenure law.

This takes on additional meaning right now in Pennsylvania, for there are more teachers than classrooms. While the tenure law is shielding incompetents, it is driving talented new graduates to seek employment in other fields because no jobs are available. Earlier this year a "Citizens Commission

on Basic Education" issued a report with 180 recommendations for improving public schools. One of them suggested a review of the tenure law.

Yet state legislators, many of whom cover before the PSEA, refuse to debate the issue. Legislation to loosen up the tenure law has sat on the shelf for 16 months.

Unquestionably, the tenure law has prevented a lot of good teachers from capricious firing. And unquestionably there is a need to protect them in the future.

But the legislature ought to be equally concerned with protecting children from incompetent teachers. This present tenure law fails to do. There is a middle ground somewhere, and it's the responsibility of the legislature to find it.

## THE DALLAS POST

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