



Scranton, Pa. / one thousand wyoming avenue • 717-342-7634 CBS
18509

television

July 2, 1973

Mr. Downey Rice, Esquire
3244 Aberfoyle Place
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Rice:

At the request of George Martin, I am enclosing several editorials broadcast by this station which relate to the work of Representative Hepford's committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Tom Powell".

Tom Powell
News Director

TP/jm
Enclosures



A CBS Affiliate

A WDAU-TV EDITORIAL

CBS TELEVISION FOR NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

ONE THOUSAND WYOMING AVENUE, SCRANTON, PA. 18509

We're distressed that a member of the Legislature is unable to grasp the seriousness of the issue involved in state police pension fund solicitations.

But whatever Representative Joseph Rhodes may think of the special committee investigation of the matter, a worthwhile public service is being performed.

It is foolish to try to put a partisan label on the inquiry. The private pension fund was established more than 40 years ago and solicitations went on through both Democratic and Republican Administrations.

What is involved has nothing to do with politics -- it is public confidence in the ability of the state police to enforce the law fairly and impartially when trucking interests, coal companies, garages and others whose activities come under state police observations are being asked for contributions to the pension fund. There is also a question of the troopers own sense of integrity as evidenced today by the distaste for the assignment expressed by one officer sent out soliciting.

The long history of the practice indeed made it -- as one trooper testified today -- a way of life. But now that the unsettling details are out into the open there is no reason why that way of life can't be brought to an end.

Public confidence in the state police force has been shaken by the disclosures.

State Police Commissioner Barger has taken one step in the right direction by limiting solicitations to retired troopers. But the only action that can completely erase this blot on the state police escutcheon is to abolish the practice altogether.

-o-



A CBS Affiliate

A WDAU - TV EDITORIAL

CBS TELEVISION FOR NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
ONE THOUSAND WYOMING AVENUE, SCRANTON, PA. 18509

Yesterday's disclosure that Pennsylvania state policemen have been out soliciting contributions to a pension fund from crime-connected figures and special interests is absolutely appalling.

The troopers do get state retirement benefits but they set up the private side arrangement as a supplement. They've obviously been doing a pretty good job of beating the bushes for gifts because the nest egg is now worth some \$9 million dollars.

Among the disclosures made by a House Committee investigating the quality of law enforcement in Pennsylvania was that trucking-related companies put some \$20,000 into the fund in 1971 -- a fact that may come to mind next time you see one of those huge rigs roar past in obvious violation of the speed limit.

The possibility, indeed, the inevitability of abuse, in a scheme of this sort is so great as to fatally compromise the ability of the state police to enforce the law fairly and impartially. Imagine how the welkin would ring with cries of outrage if it were discovered that some broadcasting stations were providing for the retirement years of the federal officials whose job it is to regulate them.

The same principle applies to the state police situation. Anytime a law enforcement officer solicits a contribution, he is engaging in polite extortion. Those who give one are engaged in polite favor buying. Police integrity and the public are the victims.

(continued)

State Police Commissioner Barger has recognized the inherent evils in restricting the solicitation efforts to retired troopers. But we would imagine it doesn't take long for word to get around in the ranks as to who gave and who didn't.

This pernicious practice should be stopped altogether -- and promptly. At the same time, we urge that full public disclosure be made of past contributors and the amounts given.

Only in this way can the gross harm of this affair be somewhat blunted.

It also occurs to us that in a state with a pension system that gives some retired officials more money than they earned while at work, it should not be necessary for state policemen to debase their profession by putting themselves in the debt of the very elements they are supposed to police.

-0-



A CBS Affiliate

A WDAU-TV EDITORIAL

CBS TELEVISION FOR NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
ONE THOUSAND WYOMING AVENUE, SCRANTON, PA. 18509

The shocking disclosure that Pennsylvania state policemen are out begging pension contributions from trucking companies and elements that operate on the fringe of legality has turned a long overdue spotlight on the whole retirement system racket in the state.

The amount the troopers would get without the hat-in-hand act is sizeable when measured against private pension plans for the average working stiff. But it is paltry when compared with the bundle the big boys in Harrisburg have set up for themselves.

The higher echelon pension system in Pennsylvania is nothing less than a giant conspiracy to defraud the taxpayer.

Consider: Death benefits of \$433,000 dollars were just approved by the retirement system for the estate of a Philadelphia judge.

A member of the Legislature can retire after 16 years service with more than twice as much in pension benefits as he ever earned warming a seat in the General Assembly.

The Pennsylvania Economy League, which recently completed a study of the state pension set-up, found Pennsylvania's Santa Claus system "exceptionally generous" compared with benefits offered by the federal government and other state government systems. In another part of the report, P-E-L charged the benefits for legislators, judges and executive officials are "out of line with acceptable criteria."

(continued)

That's a euphemism for plain, old-fashioned robbery.

And get ready for the pay-off. They've been helping themselves to the goodies with such reckless abandon that the state pension fund is reported to be a billion dollars in the red.

Guess who is going to have to make up the deficit.

This outrage must be ended. The Commonwealth Compensation Commission went out of business before it got around to the only worthwhile thing it might have done -- attempt to bring some sanity to the pension system.

A special commission should be named with only one task -- to end the abuses of the state retirement program.

The taxpayer has been victimized long enough.

-0-