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DEPT. OF PUBLIC WELFARE

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304 McKeeverding Rd  
New Castle, Pa. 16105.  
Apr. 27, 1973.

Mrs Helene Walgemuth  
Secretary of Welfare.

Madam Secretary -

May I ask a few questions?

First: What qualifications do you have for suggesting treatment of profoundly retarded persons?

Second: Have you ever had the responsibility of caring for, or housing just one such person over a prolonged period of time?

Third: What would you do if an enraged person, not mentally responsible for his own actions, attacked you, or someone else in your presence, intent upon getting you out of his way (no matter how!) and without the ability to realize the result of his action?

Fourth: Do you consider all parents, grandparents or paid child care attendants of NORMAL children simply cruel when they consider it necessary to use ANY method of disciplinary or safety measures?

Fifthly: Is it fair to convict a dedicated, conscientious person with such unfathomable integrity that he has spent his professional career in direct contact with thousands of unfortunate souls who need the type of compassion and devotion which Dr. McClelland possesses?

Some of the residents (or patients) at Peck never knew what tender loving care was until they were enclosed within the walls of Peck State School. Some parents of some patients do not admit, either, that they are responsible for some of Dr. McClelland's problems. Some, like one who accompanied you on your fateful tour of Apr. 67, "look in about 7 times in 10 yrs., yet feel qualified to sign a statement saying that "programming" at Peck State School is less than adequate.

Another question, lady! "Is a short period of privation such an extreme disciplinary measure?"

To be sure "sedation" would make it easier for the attendants? Or straight jackets could further enrage other patients.

One mother I know can testify to this. Her boy had surgery at Palk State School. To keep him from removing his bandages & dressings he had to be placed in a straight jacket type of restraints. He, with almost super human strength, flexed his muscles until he ripped the flesh on his arms & ~~the~~ legs. Of course this only added to his misery, but he didn't realize it.

By the way, this was the same boy who had "scratches" on the day of your last visit. His mother is not accusing the attendants nor Dr. McClelland of either neglect, or mal-practice.

The, who are parents of Palk State School residents, have only contempt for the attacks which have been levelled against Dr. Jas. H. McClelland, Jr.

First of all, he's a gentleman, -

else why would he have conducted  
that "fateful tour" by car since  
it was raining that day?  
Secondly, he's profoundly humane,  
and a Christian.

During his residency in Venango Co.  
he has won him a place in the  
hearts of his fellowmen. Can  
some of his "condemners" say as  
much? (Unless money can buy  
prestige & public respect!)

Another statement: Last Saturday  
a visitor going through the corridors  
of the Main building there was  
accosted by a boy (a resident)  
who caught him by the arm  
and asked, "Do you love me?"  
The man answered, "Of course.  
Why?" The boy replied, "Then,  
bring Dr. McClelland back."

And right now I want to commend  
Dr. McClelland for the type of staff  
he has placed in charge of the  
residents there. We who struggled

for years to keep our children at home, & finally had to face the decision to institutionalize them were more than happy that Pack State School was available. Now, while they're away from us we can feel confident that they're safe and well cared for, and even loved. Can we now?

They have come to love Dr. McClelland, their cottage attendants, their teachers & instructors, their religious chaplains, and even the "guards".

As for cottage life - to be sure, they're large buildings, but they're immaculately clean & airy, comfortable & cheery. Sure they sit on floors at times, but they're not forced to. Sure, they go to sleep while watching TV or listening to stereo - they even do this when they're home. Those who can manage it are taught simple household chores, personal grooming, clothing care, communal living and tolerance of the weaker (or even more aggressive),

They're exposed to many educational opportunities & social-oriented experiences). In short, they have a much more-rounded, broader environment than is possible in local communities in today's society.

The local hospitals and other community service organizations are not equipped to care for these people, nor do they care to cater to "this type of citizenry".

These kids are lonely & lost and frightened when cast out into today's complex society. God bless such men as Dr. McClelland. I do hereby go on record as opposing your recent action on his behalf (Hope you can sleep well these nights, 2800 children await his return).

I would also welcome your alternative to his plan.

Yours very bitterly  
Frances M. Bees.