

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 1973

Association Backs McClelland

State Bans Use Of Cages, Pens

Post-Gazette Harrisburg Bureau

HARRISBURG—The association of State Mental Hospital Physician's has called for the reinstatement of Dr. James McClelland as superintendent of the Polk State School and Hospital.

Meanwhile Welfare Secretary Helen Wohlgenuth issued an order banning the use of "locked cages or pens" for the incarceration of residents" at all other state institutions under her control or supervision. These institutions house some 40,000 residents.

The use of five feet by five feet by five feet pens at Polk led to the firing last week of Dr. McClelland. Mrs. Wohlgenuth said she first saw the pens in use at Polk during a surprise visit to the Venango County institution April 14.

The mental hospital physicians adopted a resolution supporting Dr. McClelland at a meeting here. The organization asked for a "complete impartial investigation of the case."

THE RESOLUTION, sent to Gov. Shapp, said the charges

that Dr. McClelland permitted "cruel, degrading and inhumane conditions at Polk are defaming of his known character, his personal and professional integrity, his well documented actions in his love and care of the retarded patients, and are in fact without substance."

The resolution was introduced by Dr. Albert G. Roode of the Polk staff. It was passed unanimously.

In her directive to top welfare department officials, Mrs. Wohlgenuth said she did not want the pens used in any institutions for which the department has operational, licensing, approval or supervisory powers.

The

Wohlgenuth Acted Too Hastily at Polk

I was disturbed by the hasty action on the part of Mrs. Wohlgenuth in dismissing Dr. James McClelland, Superintendent of Polk Institute, from a post that he has held for 15 years.

There may be areas in which the care of the patients could be improved. However, it would seem to me that one visit by Mrs. Wohlgenuth is scarcely enough to warrant such an upheaval.

Care of the very retarded is a very specialized procedure. Might I suggest that Mrs. Wohlgenuth spend one week as an attendant in the ward for very retarded persons before she makes such an important decision.

MARTHA S. BAIRD
Pittsburgh

This man is a "dead duck"

The same vindictive group that got McClelland will soon direct their vendetta towards him!

These comments are anonymous because I have a parent interest in Polk and I have no confidence in those who attacked Dr. McClelland. I fear they would take punitive action against me and my child.