

# Welfare Chief Backed On Polk

Press Harrisburg Bureau

HARRISBURG—Welfare Secretary Helene Wohlgemuth was aware of "excessive use of restraints," but didn't realize until recently that cages were used to confine mentally retarded patients, one of her top aides said today.

Edward Goldman, commissioner of mental retardation, said he had told Mrs. Wohlgemuth of cages used to restrain the severely retarded at Polk State School and Hospital following his inspection last fall.

"We talked about the dehumanization of patients but I don't recall, nor does Mrs. Wohlgemuth, whether the word

cages was brought into the discussion," Goldman said.

Mrs. Wohlgemuth, after receiving a report last week from the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) and her own inspection tour, fired Dr. James McClelland, superintendent of the Venango County institution, for "cruel and inhumane" treatment of patients.

Goldman said he believed Mrs. Wohlgemuth wanted to carefully study the conditions at Polk and document the findings before any action against McClelland was taken.

Noting the public support which has mounted in opposition to McClelland's dismissal, Goldman said:

"If Mrs. Wohlgemuth had enough guts to fire him now based on the information she received in the report and from her own personal inspection, she would have had the guts last fall to take the same action had she been aware of the conditions as she now knows them."

Goldman also noted the wood-slat cages used at Polk have replaced "rail and bar" enclosures which he found in his inspection last year.

"That's basically the only difference, but the two methods serve the same purpose and Mrs. Wohlgemuth considers both as excessive use of restraints," Goldman said.

why not?

Obviously  
a slavey!

Very convenient  
loss of memory!

"GUTS"?

Strange that  
"GUTS" should be the  
prime prerequisite  
One would think  
that intelligence,  
discretion, comp-  
assion, knowledge,  
expertise, and  
experience would  
be more important

SECRETARY'S OFFICE

APR 26 1973

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