

Penna. moves slowly on bill to curb lobbies

By RICH KIRKPATRICK
Associated Press

HARRISBURG — Common Cause, a key force behind the bill to open lobbying to more public scrutiny, says legislative leaders are not interested in moving the bill.

"They'd just as soon have it die," said David Hochner, state lobbyist for Common Cause.

Democratic floor leader Thomas Nolan indicated that the bill was not among his priorities for the remaining two weeks of business before the legislature breaks for the summer.

Asked if it would be moving at all, he said it was up to Sen. James R. Kelley, chairman of the conference committee that

must come up with a final version of the bill.

The measure has been winding its way through the legislature ever since the session opened in January 1975. It was sent into the House-Senate conference committee two weeks ago after the two chambers could not agree on a final product.

Kelley said he'll try to call the conference committee next Wednesday. But he made it clear he had other things on his mind.

"I'm diverting most of my efforts to the Volkswagen package," he said.

THE PACKAGE of bills will provide the extra financing needed to cinch the deal to bring a VW assembly plant to New Stanton, in Kelley's district.

In its present form, the lobbyists regulation bill would require sworn financial statements from persons paid to lobby for others or who are unpaid but spend more than \$300 a month on lobbying activities.

They would also have to report any amount over \$300 that they spend in a year's time on a legislator. This could be in the form of dinners or campaign contributions.

For the first time, registration would be required for persons who try to influence decisions of the executive branch such as the governor, the cabinet and various state agencies.

Lobbyists would be barred from accepting contingency fees, which are paid depending on the lobbyist's success.

Under current law, the nearly 300 lobbyists who work Capitol Hill must merely register their names and organizations with the secretary of the Senate and clerk of the House.

"FOR THE FIRST time in Pennsylvania, a person will be able to get an idea of the scope and the possible impact of professional lobbying in the state government," Hochner said.

If the price of milk rises, consumers will be able to see if the decision had been influenced by industry lobbying, he said.

Or if teachers' pensions are increased the public will get a glimpse of the behind-the-scenes pressure that influenced the decision, he said.

"It'll let them see the forces that are brought to bear on the system. The public will be in a better position to see if the legislature and the executive branch are acting in their interests or more in tune with special interests in the state," Hochner said.

He said he fears the leaders will just find another excuse to kill the bill if final action is postponed until fall.

Sen. John Stauffer, R-Chester, who originally sponsored the Senate version of the bill, said Kelley told him he wants to pursue the issue and settle it once and for all.

"The bill is not being killed or anything like that," Stauffer said.

It's Eastward . . . Ho!



Life inside a Conestoga may not be for the dogs, but it is for Pepper, the pet of Shawn Lavton of Titusville, in the official New Jersey wagon. Shawn's grandfather, Bill, is one of the wagon's teamsters.

After a busy encampment at the Flemington Fairgrounds yesterday, the northeastern segment of the Bicentennial Wagon Train moved to New Jersey's Washington Crossing State Park today for a two-day stay.

The train, made up of about 10 wagons from as far north as Maine, is heading toward Valley Forge, Pa., where it will join 50 more wagons on July 3 for a three-month stay.

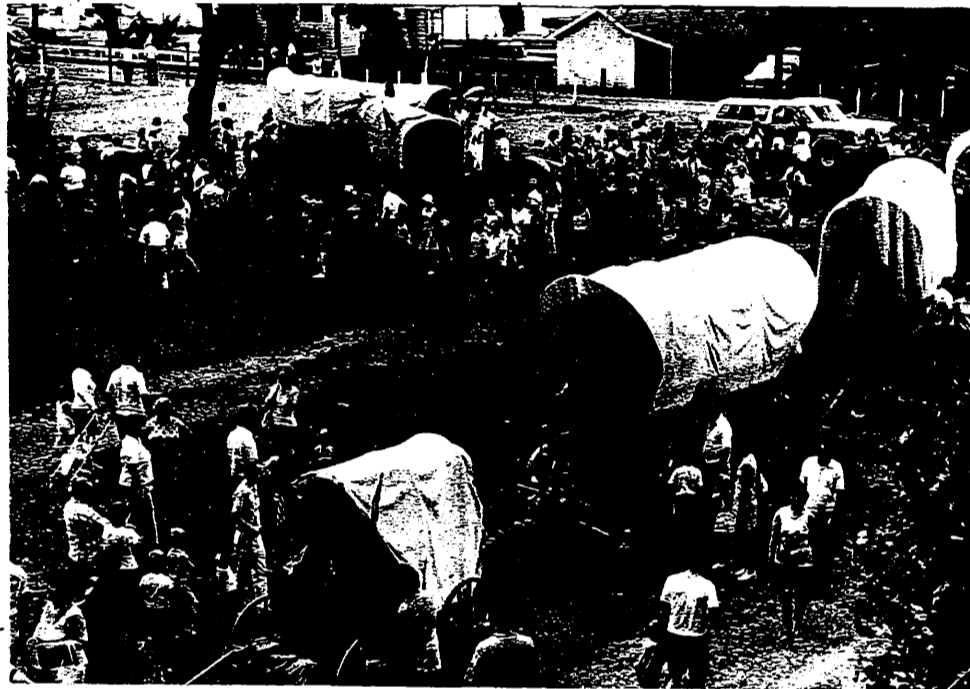
The troupe at Washington Crossing is scheduled to perform the Wagon Train Show, a musical skit, tonight and tomorrow night at about 7.

Yesterday, hundreds of spectators watched the show and mingled with the travelers to study the wagonneers' life and the care of scores of mules and horses needed to pull the Conestogas and prairie schooners.

The Bicentennial Wagon Train was organized by the Pennsylvania Bicentennial Commission with the backing of 10 corporations. It has been covering five major national routes, with at least one wagon for each state. Some of the wagons have been travelling for more than 10 months to reach Valley Forge Park on time.

The northeast troupe will move to Tenney and the site of the battle of Monmouth Wednesday. Next Tuesday, it will reach Mount Holly, where two more wagons from New York and about 35 more riders will join the train.

The wagon train will carry scrolls signed by thousands of New Jerseyans to Valley Forge, where the documents will be microfilmed and preserved.



Visitors flock around part of the Bicentennial Wagon Train at the Flemington Fair Grounds yesterday, where the group of about 10 wagons spent the night before leaving for Washington Crossing State Park this morning.

Photos by Cathy Lane



Ronald Cerenzo, 5, of Flemington makes friends with one of the wagon train's stalwart beasts by the "Valley Forge or Bust" wagon, which is outfitted with rubber tires as a concession to some of the modern pioneer's travel conditions.



Roger Morse of Berwick, Maine, wagonmaster of the northeast segment of the national Bicentennial Wagon Train, carries one of the scores of horses that are pulling the train toward Valley Forge, Pa., for a three-month encampment.

State tourism boom credited to weather

By The Associated Press

Last March, Pennsylvania spent \$1 million for a slick 47-page ad in Reader's Digest to extol the virtues of the Keystone State and to increase tourism here this summer.

But even though the number of visitors will be up this year, the ad had little to do with it, say tourist officials around Pennsylvania.

State officials say the number of visitors, measured by counting inquiries at 11 information centers scattered around the state, has risen 22 per cent for the first five months of this year compared to 1975.

THE STATE attributes those increases to its ad campaign, but tourist officials cite a number of other factors.

"We expect we're going to be up about 10 per cent in visitors this summer," said Chryst

Groff, head of the Pennsylvania Dutch Tourist Bureau.

"I think the state's ad may have helped, but the biggest factor has been the weather. I also think the improved economy has a lot to do with the increase. People have more money to travel."

In the Poconos, the popular mountain resort, business is better. "I don't have any figures yet, but we're doing very well," said Bob Uguccioni of the Pocono Mountains Vacation Bureau.

LIKE GROFF, he suggested that factors other than the Bicentennial are at work. "Traditionally, we've been a popular vacation spot. We get a lot of people coming back to us year after year," he said.

Laurel Highlands, a southwestern Pennsylvania recreation area, is also expecting an increase this summer, but a spokesman

suggested local advertising was doing the job.

The weather was cited by an official in Bucks County, which numbers Washington Crossing State Park among its attractions.

"It's been a nice spring so far and we're getting a lot more people than this time last year. I don't have any specific figures, but I know it's higher," he said.

IN PHILADELPHIA, one of the national focal points of the Bicentennial, crowds are larger than normal but still less than the hordes that city officials had predicted last winter.

Philadelphia officials say many of the visitors are "day trippers," who live within driving distance and spend only a day in the city, not a week-long vacation.

Uguccioni agreed. "We're seeing a lot more day-trippers than in the past. People come in and stay for the day," he said.

Iowa department fines Pa. insurance company

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — A Pennsylvania-based insurance company has been fined \$5,000 by the Iowa Insurance Department for allegedly misleading its customers into believing that a company disability policy would pay benefits for the common cold.

In the complaint filed last week, the department said Pennsylvania Life Insurance Co. used other misleading tactics to sell policies. State officials also say some of the company's agents selling those policies passed their Iowa insurance examinations with the aid of tests stolen from the insurance department.

THE FIRM DOES nearly \$5 million worth of business annually in

Iowa. Penn Life has agreed to halt the alleged illegal practices and pay the \$5,000 fine.

Both the cease-and-desist order and the fine were imposed by outgoing State Insurance Commissioner William Huff after examining evidence compiled by his investigators.

By agreeing to Huff's findings, the company waived its right to a formal hearing.

The catch, state investigators say, was that the company required the policyholder to obtain a doctor's statement certifying the patient was "totally or partially disabled" due to the cold. The complaint said most doctors will not sign such a statement.