

# Panthers disrupt Portland prison meet

By DEAN WHEELER  
Of the Emerald

PORTLAND—A luncheon of the Oregon Correctional Association convention was disrupted briefly Wednesday by a group of nine Blacks one White who were protesting the luncheon speaker, Louis Nelson, San Quentin Prison warden.

The 10, who identified themselves as Black Panthers, carried signs and chanted throughout the room as conventioners were being served.

The protestors left the room briefly, and, when they tried to regain entrance, Bob Snider, Thunderbird Inn General Manager, locked the doors on them.

A customer of the motor inn was spat upon by the protestors when he tried to clear them from the hallway outside the luncheon room.

State police and Multnomah County officers responded to the complaint, but no one was arrested or charged.

The demonstrators left the Thunderbird Inn quietly after parading outside the building for a brief period of time.

Meanwhile, Warden Nelson began his speech, entitled, "Prison Riots."

Nelson opened by saying "In California we haven't seen an Attica. But we have been blessed—or plagued, depending on your point of view—by many minor disturbances."

He said he had predicted "disturbances" in America's prisons several years ago, but "nowhere were we led to believe there would be butchery, savage butchery." He was commenting on the recent Attica, N.Y. prison riot in which 42 persons died, and the Aug. 1, 1970 disturbance in San Quentin.

Nelson used a report by one of his assistants to document his own contention that prison disturbances and riots are caused by outside agitation rather than interior problems.

"It has become increasingly obvious that trouble can be started from the outside—and not the inside. The events of 1968 (San Quentin prisoner strike) showed that public pressure from the outside and the use of rock bands could ferment trouble."

He continued, "The people who were demonstrating on the outside were not there out of concern for conditions of the prisoners, but were a continuation of the campus demonstrators."

"Our prison disturbances—not revolution, not rebellion—but disturbances, were caused by the same persons who brought our great universities into the disrepute they are now in."

Nelson said San Quentin had made more changes "in prison reform in the last four years than it had in its history. I can't understand how we were so good in the eyes of the public two years ago, and now we are being constantly criticized."

The San Quentin warden, who described himself as a "non-circulation manager," said, "We must stop trying to isolate penal reform."

"I can remember the time when penal reform was giving the inmates an extra bath a week."



Louis Nelson, San Quentin Prison warden, gives speech before the Oregon Correctional Association convention at Portland Wednesday. Nelson's talk was delayed by a demonstration by 10 Black Panthers (below).

Photos by Phil Waldstein



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