

Employees Ask Change in Penal Policies After Guard's Death

A number of changes are being made in the policies and procedures of the penal institutions under Oregon's Corrections Division as the result of requests from employees who work in the institutions.

The employee requests stemmed from the death of Lt. Robert Geer, a correctional officer who died of stab wounds April 7 at the penitentiary.

The changes were outlined to OSEA representatives by Amos Reed, head of the Corrections Division, and the superintendents of the following institutions: Hoyt C. Cupp, Penitentiary; George E. Sullivan, Correctional Institution; and Genevieve Callaway, Women's Correctional Center.

Reed said although some of the changes were due to employee suggestions, others had been in the process of being initiated before Lt. Geer's death.

He said a new policy is in the process of being adopted by the Corrections Division which calls for a set of conduct standards to be established by each institution to govern inmate behavior. The standards will serve as the basis for inmate discipline in the future.

Reed also told OSEA that all future disciplinary reports submitted by the correctional officers will be acted upon by disciplinary committees and the action taken will be communicated back to the

officer who submitted the report.

In addition to changes in disciplinary procedures, the superintendent of each institution will establish monthly meetings with their staff for the purpose of improving communications.

A committee of employees has been established at the Penitentiary to hear and act upon employee complaints regarding security and other matters. In addition, periodic meetings between OSEA representatives and the superintendent of each institution will continue to be held for the purpose of communicating and acting upon employee suggestions regarding security, training and other matters.

Reed said the new policies are being developed in consultation with the attorney general's office and the Oregon Bar Association's Committee on Corrections.

A resolution calling for increased security at the three correctional institutions was adopted by employees following Lt. Geer's death last month.

It called for "the governor, the administrator of the Corrections Division and the superintendents of the correctional institutions be asked immediately to review existing security and inmate discipline procedures and take such actions as may be necessary to protect employee safety under existing conditions."

Membership Count Continues to Fall

Membership in OSEA continued to fall last month but at a slower rate than has been the case for the past three months.

According to the May 1-membership report, 266 new members joined the Association during April while 286 withdrew their membership. That left OSEA with a net loss of 20 members.

That's the lowest net loss since December when the Association recorded a decrease of 8 members. It lost 154 in January, 1971 in February and 118 in March.

Five of OSEA's nine districts recorded net gains last month. They were District One with 7, District Four with 1, District Five with 5, District Seven with 2 and District Eight with 2.

Those net gains were more than offset by the four districts that recorded net losses. They were District Two with 9, District Three with 4, District Six with 11 and District Nine with 13.

The membership report puts OSEA's total membership at 16,690. That's the lowest total since October 1, 1970.

McCall Orders Equal Opportunity Program

An "affirmative action" program to insure full equal employment opportunity in state government for women and minorities has been ordered by Gov. Tom McCall.

Although Oregon has a legal prohibition against discrimination in employment, McCall said, "our ethnic and sociological minorities are inadequately utilized. Women face and enduring lack of opportunity."

He issued an executive order inaugurating "a formal and continuing program of affirmative action to achieve appropriate distribution of minority and female employees at all levels and in all phases of the state employment structure—in classified, unclassified and academic positions."

The "affirmative action" concept will be applied to state agency programs as well as employment. McCall said each agency will review its policies to assure that none result in discrimination.

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