

# Spotless, Cramped Wards Hold State Prison's 27 Women Cons

By ELSIE SCHILLER  
Staff Writer, The Statesman

One steel-barred gate slides shut behind you before the one facing you cracks open.

The concrete steps lead upward into a long hall—and into a separate world secluded from the Oregon State Penitentiary's main business of 1,556 male prisoners.

Here, in these two wards above the prison's administration offices, bright curtains dance at the windows. Crocheted dollies decorate many of the narrow cots in the sleeping quarters. Lipsticks and hand lotions stand on the battered dressers.

Women in clean, tan uniforms bend over sewing machines in the cramped workroom, sit smoking in the small recreation room, hurry through the hall in pin-curls and jeans on a maintenance detail.

**Paying Debt to Society**

Tucked away in this corner of a man's prison world are 27 women currently paying their debts to society.

They include two lifers, one doing 60 years as an habitual criminal and one in for 10 years on a manslaughter charge. But the average stay of a woman at the state pen is two to three years.

And the criminal charges that put women behind bars are as varied as those for the male inmates, Warden Clarence T. Gladden says.

Yet the problems facing both the woman prisoner and the prison administration are very different.

The biggest problems in terms of housing, rehabilitation programs and general administration stem from the comparatively low number of women who are sentenced to the state prison.

**44 Top Number**

There has never been more than 44 women in the Oregon Penitentiary to Warden Gladden's knowledge. That top figure was reached in 1932 when women prisoners were housed upstairs in the old administration building before the present building was constructed in 1937.

The female prison population has swung erratically from 12 in 1922 (the first recorded figure available) to the 44 in 1932 to 10 in 1942 and up to 31 in 1956.

Because of these low population figures, the women prisoners are easily forgotten in the overall prison program. It is harder to justify time and money for rehabilitation programs. It is more difficult to acquire legislative funds to improve conditions for women prisoners.

**Combined Program**

Although no one advocates imprisoning more women to overcome this basic problem, House Bill 807 (now in the Ways and Means Committee) does propose that women serving 90-day sentences in county jails be lodged

## Quarters Crowded for Women Inmates



A six-room dormitory (room view above) at the Oregon State Penitentiary helped alleviate crowded conditions in the women's ward when it was reconverted recently from a matron's office. But the women inmates are still overcrowded in the two floors of the prison's administration building where lack of space adds to the problems of rehabilitation and prison administration. (Statesman Photo.)

in a separate state woman's institution with female prison inmates. That would bring the population up to around 100.

Gladden hesitates to endorse such a step because he hasn't studied the possible results of a combined program.

"But our biggest problem certainly is room," the warden says. "We just don't have room here to conduct much of a program."

So he's asked for \$850,000 in the upcoming prison budget to construct a separate cottage-type building on the prison grounds for women prisoners.

And the Women's Prison Council not only back up Gladden's request but strongly support another provision in the house bill. It would go one step further and locate the new institution off the prison grounds.

And the two groups have managed to gain the backing of some 20 organizations with a total membership of 44,000 for the new building.

"As long as you have men and women prisoners in the same area, you have problems," Claire Argov, executive director of OPA, points out. "Of course, they try to get in touch with each

other. They write notes. The women have to be closely supervised at all times—especially during the hour or so a day they are allowed out on the prison grounds for exercise."

**Small Recreation Area**

Unlike the men, who now have a large recreation yard, the women can only be allowed outdoors in a very small area of the prison grounds.

Constructive work to fill idle hours is harder to find. The women can mend clothing from Fairview Home—those who can handle the power sewing machines. Or

they can iron for other state institutions. They are paid small hourly wages for these chores.

And there are maintenance chores assigned daily—preparing meals, washing dishes, keeping halls and rooms spotless.

Some educational facilities are available. Six women are currently taking high school courses in the prison's education program, a couple are taking classes in group therapy.

## Scientists Search for Super Stink

LONDON (INS)—Research workers in Britain's gas industry are busy studying smells.

They are seeking a distinctive odor—something that smells like nothing on earth—in order to introduce into domestic gas to make it safer.

It's all part of a big research program being carried out by the Gas Council in line with the recommendations of the British Medical Association's special committee on gas poisoning.

A satisfactory method of measuring smells has been developed and the chemical industry is supplying different odors. But choice is the big problem.

The odor must be pungent—something that can be associated instantly with coal gas and nothing else—and yet it must not be too revolting or housewives will be sure to complain.

Once the unique smell is found and methods to introduce it into the gas supply discovered, the gas industry will try it out in a small area before launching a nationwide experiment.

## Title Restored

COLOGNE, Germany, April 20 (AP)—The title of Maha Uparaj (second king) of Laos has been restored to Prince Phetsarath, home from self-imposed exile. The Prince, eldest nephew of King Sisavang Vong, went into exile 12 years ago. Restoration of the title is viewed as bolstering Phetsarath's chances of becoming premier soon.

King Haakon was 33 years old when he was placed on the Norwegian throne in 1905. He demanded an election to see if the public approved his enthronement, and he has been reigning ever since.

Thirteen different tribes of Indians occupy reservations in Arizona.

But here again space is a problem. Several years ago, when the Women's Prison Council sponsored a square dance class for the women, the noise from the second floor almost drove the warden out of his downstairs office.

"Women prisoners aren't escape risks," Warden Gladden says. He recalls only one woman ever escaping from the state prison and none during the four years of his administration.

## Chinese Praise Tiger Hunter

HONG KONG (INS)—Tiger hunting in Red China ranks among the virtues of the Chinese Communists.

Sixty-nine-year-old Chen Chifeng, credited with bagging more than 200 tigers and leopards in southern Hunan Province, has been elected as a delegate to the provincial conference of Outstanding Peasants and Agricultural Workers, reports the Communist New China News Agency, which failed to state how many tigers were eliminated by Chen before the Communists came to power.

The Communist report added that Chen has been a professional tiger hunter since the age of 25. He now heads a group of 34 hunters including three of his sons. Chen, the report proudly claims, uses only the bow and arrow.

The length of the Panama Canal from deep water to deep water is fifty miles.

The bison, or buffalo herd, had wardens to stop illegal hunters has been killed off in Canada to about brought the herd back to about 200 in 1900. Strict patrols of game \$18,000.



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