

Reform Program in Full Swing At Oregon State Penitentiary

By PAUL W. HARVEY Jr.
SALEM, (P)—Oregon's new prison warden, Virgil J. O'Malley, has been on the job only six weeks. But he already has made so many changes in the operation of the penitentiary that you wouldn't know the old place.

O'Malley, a humane, soft-spoken man who is extremely polite, is the easiest man in the world to talk to. He's tough, too.

People who used to be the severest critics of the prison now are enthusiastic.

O'Malley knows he has a long uphill task in giving Oregon a modern prison. It will take many months before the prison ranks at the top with those of New York, California and Illinois.

EXPENSE

It's going to cost money. But O'Malley thinks his program, designed to reform men, actually will save the state money in the long run.

The worst evil about the place has been lack of segregation of convicts. Sex perverts have been allowed to mingle with youths. Hardened prisoners have been able to teach their evil trades to young convicts, making it hard to reform them.

Convicts who wanted an education couldn't get much. There was little done about teaching the men how to earn a living when they get out.

The emphasis in the past has been on punishment.

While punishment still is a big factor, the major emphasis is on training the convicts so they won't want to come back, and so they can earn a decent living and won't return to crime.

"From the day a man enters the prison," O'Malley says, "we will prepare for his release."

TOUGH

All this doesn't mean the prison is going to become a country club. It's still going to be a tough place to do time, although O'Malley is doing away with a lot of silly customs.

The men can now talk in the dining room. They don't have to march with arms folded when they go to eat. They soon will have knives and forks. The gun guard is going to be removed from the dining room, because no man likes to eat with a gun pointed at him. O'Malley will rely on tear gas to quell any dining room disturbance.

New convicts no longer have their heads shaved. Visiting and mail privileges are increased, and the men now can write uncensored letters to the warden and the board of control.

The men will get increased education, recreation and vocational training.

Guards can't discipline prisoners any more, as this now is done by a discipline committee consisting of the deputy warden, sociologist and prison doctor.

The main form of discipline will be loss of privileges. No longer will men spend long periods in isolation for breaking minor rules.

RULES

O'Malley soon will give each prisoner a copy of prison rules. The rules always have been vague and unprinted, which left a lot of room for doubt when a prisoner broke a rule.

Some of the reforms, like segregation, won't be finished until new cell blocks are built next year. O'Malley's chief reform is his classification system, which is just getting started. Under it, each convict is studied thoroughly, and his prison life is outlined.

Members of the classification committee are the warden, deputy warden, sociologist, education director, the doctor and the two chaplains.

The committee writes to each convict's friends, former employers, police officers, pastor or priest

Schools Get State Funds

SALEM, (P)—Oregon school districts got \$13,914,038 in state basic school aid this month, the state department announced yesterday.

The funds are distributed twice a year on the basis of \$80 per year for each child between the ages of 4 and 20.

Amounts distributed to the school districts in counties included: Klamath \$405,168, Lake \$71,501.

MacArthur To Portland

SALEM, (P)—Gen. Douglas MacArthur will lead a parade in Portland November 15, Gov. McKay announced yesterday.

The governor made the announcement after United Airlines advised him it would hold the general's plane over in Portland from 8:15 to 9:45 a.m. on that day.

The general will be returning from Seattle to New York in a scheduled passenger plane, which normally stops in Portland only for a half hour.

Gen. MacArthur has to be back in New York that evening.

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and do odd jobs.

If the committee decides the man can be reformed, the man is kept away from veteran criminals.

The program is aimed mostly at youths and first timers, but it will be applied to all the 1500 convicts.

A third of the prisoners are under 25 years old. Half of the prisoners are first timers.

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