



O'Malley Reports Progress at State Prison

By PAUL W. HARVEY JR.
SALEM — Virgil O'Malley finished his first turbulent year as warden of the Oregon State Penitentiary this week, satisfied that he has made good progress toward changing the prison into a place where men are given a chance to build new lives.

But he knows it will take at least two more years to accomplish his goal.

When the 1951 Legislature, the Oregon Prison Association and many others turned the heat on because they believed the prison should become a place primarily for rehabilitation instead of punishment, the way was paved for prison reform. The convicts went on a hunger strike in August, 1951, and that brought matters to a head.

Because California is generally recognized as having the most advanced prison program in the country, the Board of Control went there to find a new warden. O'Malley was deputy warden of the California State Prison at Soledad, and he replaced George Alexander, who, in turn, was named superintendent in charge of business affairs.

Last July Lawrence O'Brien came up from Polson to be deputy warden, so now Oregon's prison definitely has a California-type administration. This fact, however, has brought criticism from proud Oregonians.

O'Malley has weathered much criticism, and he has a tough problem with some of his guards. Many of the guards like the way it was

done in the old days better. Some of the guards and parole officers believe a man can't be taught to go straight in prison.

But the convicts, by and large, have great admiration and respect for O'Malley. I know, because I talk with a lot of them. They are locked up just as much as they used to be, and they have to work just as hard.

They like O'Malley because he treats them like men, and because he's giving them a chance to make good. And they believe he's fair.

You hear lots of reports of impending riots at the prison, but it's been a calm place for the past year. True, there have been some escapes, but most of them have been trustees who have walked away.

The men like O'Malley's educational program in which they can take grade school, high school and college courses. He's getting a good vocational education program under way so men can learn trades.

He started a classification system in which every phase of every inmate's life is studied. This determines how much custody a man needs, and what kind of education he should have.

He has brought in trained sociologists and psychologists to help the men. And the food is a lot better.

O'Malley says his program will save money for the state because it will result in fewer discharged men going back into crime.

This doesn't mean the men are being pampered. O'Malley is a

strict man, and the hardened criminals who don't want help won't get much sympathy from him.

The men have more mail privileges, too, and a better place to visit. Prison discipline consists of loss of privileges or solitary confinement, and is meted out by a prison discipline board. There are no more beatings.

O'Malley wants more changes, but some will have to wait for legislative action or until the building program is finished.

He wants better segregation of different types of criminals. He'd like a decent building for women inmates, and a separate institution for the young men.

O'Malley thinks the state needs a full-time parole board, with power to fix sentences. This board would release a man whenever it thinks he's ready.

The warden would like to have every prisoner, when released, go out on parole, so he would be under supervision during his period of readjusting himself. The many convicts who now go out when their sentences expire are free to do what they please.

All these things will come slowly, if they do come. O'Malley will be plugging hard for them, with the backing of some of the best brains in the prison business over the nation.

These reforms were accomplished in California over the past few years. O'Malley knows he'll have trouble, but he isn't the kind of man who gives up easily.

Ike Backer Bills Talks

PORTLAND (AP) — Sen. James H. Duff (R-Pa.) will arrive here by plane Friday morning for a series of five talks.

An early backer of Gen. Eisenhower, he will speak at Newport Saturday noon, Coos Bay that evening and Portland that night. He will speak in Milwaukie Tuesday noon and at Oregon City that night.

Churches Plan Get-together

PORTLAND (AP) — Tentative approval was given Wednesday by the Oregon Council of Churches to a plan to combine with the Portland Council of Churches.

A joint committee will draw up a constitution for consideration at a Nov. 13 meeting. The Portland council approved the reorganization earlier.

KLAMATH FALLS MAN JOINS TAXPAYERS' GROUP URGING "NO" VOTE ON RACING BILL

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"(3) Oregon and its 36 counties receive more than eight (8) times as much as the track stockholders are paid in dividends. That's not unreasonable. In addition, official records and audits show that over 98% of every wagered dollar that produces this revenue, remains here in Oregon.

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