

M I N U T E S

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS

Kansas State Industrial Reformatory
Hutchinson, Kansas
September 16, 1977

Members Present

Representative Patrick J. Hurley, Chairman
Senator Paul Hess, Vice-Chairman
— Senator Wint Winter
Representative Phil Martin
Representative Jack Rodrock

Advisory Members Present

Loren Daggett
Perry Profitt

Staff Present

J. Russell Mills, Jr., Kansas Legislative Research Department
Louis Chabira, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Others Present

Gary D. Rayl, Director, Kansas State Industrial Reformatory
John C. Callison, Deputy Director, Operations, Kansas State Industrial Reformatory
Joseph A. Ruskowitz, Deputy Director, Programs, Kansas State Industrial Reformatory
Leo Taylor, Deputy Secretary, Kansas Department of Corrections
Other Kansas State Industrial Reformatory Staff Members

Morning Session

The Special Committee on Corrections met at the Kansas State Industrial Reformatory in Hutchinson at 10:00 a.m. Mr. Gary D. Rayl, Director, welcomed the Committee to KSIR and presented a summary of the institution's activities, programs, and goals. He noted that, for the last several years, KSIR has attempted to emphasize vocational, educational, and work programs as a means of developing good work and study habits. He stated that about 150-175 inmates are assigned to outside work details each day. These details are supervised by KSIR employees and largely engage in maintenance or landscape work at the institution and at the Kansas State Fair. Mr. Rayl discussed a number of capital improvement projects at the institution which had been accomplished through the use of inmate details operating under staff supervision.

Mr. Rayl stated the inmates are permitted one visit per week, usually on Saturday or Sunday. Minimum security inmates may join their families for picnics on the institution grounds and, in some cases, may be permitted to accompany their families to town for dinner. He stated that the inmate population on September 11, 1977, was 865, and that 480 visitors entered the institution on that day. Mr. Rayl stated that the inmate details have improved the appearance of KSIR and noted that he has requested four additional personnel positions to supervise an expanded work detail program. He briefly discussed a proposed book renovation program which could accommodate 12 inmates.

Mr. Rayl stated that KSIR has little difficulty recruiting personnel with the current salary structure; at present, there are only five vacant positions at KSIR, largely in the food service area. He also stated that nine additional correctional officer positions had been requested to permit improved security operations.

The Committee then toured various areas of the institution and discussed its operation with KSIR staff members.

Afternoon Session

Following lunch at the institution, the Committee resumed its tour of the various facilities and program areas of KSIR. The Committee then returned to the Administration Building for further discussion.

In response to a question by Senator Hess, Mr. Rayl stated that he sees the need for a new medium-security prison; that the ideal population for KSIR would be 650-700 inmates; and that KSIR does transfer inmates to the Kansas State Penitentiary, usually for disciplinary reasons or because the inmates are from northeastern Kansas and desire to be closer to their families. Senator Hess inquired whether any inmates could live outside the walls. Mr. Rayl replied that a certain number of inmates could live in an outside dormitory with minimum security. Mr. Rayl also noted that even some minor property offenders may require incarceration because of violent tendencies, although a certain number of inmates probably could function in a less-structured environment.

Senator Hess asked for an estimate of the number of inmates who could safely be transferred to a halfway house or community corrections program. Mr. Joseph A. Ruskowitz, Deputy Director of Programs, replied that he had recently conducted a study to locate inmates who should be considered for early parole: his study concluded that 60 to 70 inmates were eligible, on the basis of certain criteria, for early parole. Mr. Rayl commented that there are undoubtedly other inmates at KSIR who could be transferred to other, less-secure programs. He also noted that the Kansas Adult Authority normally grants parole to 85 percent of those recommended by his office and that, in two recent instances, the KAA had paroled all of those recommended by the director's office. Mr. Ruskowitz stated that his parole eligibility report initially identified 112 inmates who could be considered for parole; further refinement resulted in the 60-70 figure.

Senator Hess stated that apparently a number of inmates could be released on parole or transferred to other programs. He inquired whether there was still a need for a new medium-security prison. Mr. Rayl replied that the new prison was needed as an alternative to the maximum-security institutions and as a facility for medium-security inmates and those in protective custody. Mr. Rayl stated that an ideal program would include community corrections programs as well as minimum-, medium-, and maximum-security facilities.

Mr. Rayl stated that an outside dormitory at KSIR could be used for those inmates on outside work details and as an incentive for other inmates. He felt that this was a lower priority item than the new medium-security prison. Mr. Rayl stated that, at present, some 30 inmates are waiting to enter the Kansas Reception and Diagnostic Center for evaluations. He also noted that the KSIR inmate population contains about 30 individuals who require long-term psychiatric care.

In response to a question, Mr. Rayl stated that the Kansas Adult Authority monitors the recommendations of the unit teams and the director: if the unit teams and the director are doing their jobs, a high percentage of inmates should be paroled from each group recommended. Mr. Rayl discussed his clinical staff, which includes a psychiatrist, three psychologists, a medical doctor, and a dentist. He stated that KSIR had no problem recruiting nurses.

The Committee briefly discussed community corrections programs. Mr. Rayl expressed the concern that some communities in Kansas may not accept the release of a large number of inmates. He noted that the Warden's Residence at KSIR will be remodeled to provide housing for inmates on work release and that KSIR staff were discussing

the feasibility of acquiring an unused nursing home in Hutchinson to use for work release programs or as a halfway house.

Following further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Prepared by J. Russell Mills, Jr.

Approved by Committee on:

10-14-77
(Date)