

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS.

The meeting was called to order by Senator August "Gus" Bogina, Chairperson at 11:14 a.m. on January 31, 1991, in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:
Senator Allen, who was excused

Committee staff present:

Diane Duffy, Legislative Research Department
Gordon Self, Revisors' Office
Judy Bromich, Administrative Assistant
Ronda Miller, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Mr. Steven Davies, Secretary, Department of Corrections

The Chairman reminded committee members that Senate Ways and Means is to begin at 11:00 a.m. and that being late is an insult to conferees and guests in the audience.

Secretary Davies began his presentation by discussing inmate population growth. He told the Committee that the population has held stable for the last month, but has grown by 200 in the last year. The number of parolees, however, has grown by 700 this year. He stated that 900 persons reentered the prison system last year and one attributable factor is the excessively high caseload for each of the 74 parole officers.

Sec. Davies described some of the difficulties in prison, job and community placement for the mentally ill, mentally retarded, elderly, and brain damaged inmate population. He called the Committees' attention to two manuals: Community and Field Services which suggests programs that might be needed as more persons are diverted from prison, and Correctional Facility-Expansion/Conversion Option which outlines where the Department can expand, how more maximum security beds can be realized, and how minimum security units can be converted to medium security.

Senator Gaines asked whether another facility would be required to house the growing juvenile inmate population that cannot be managed by SRS or YCAT. Sec. Davies noted that once El Dorado is operational, beds in the Hutchinson or Ellsworth Correctional Facility would become available and would provide housing apart from the older inmate population.

In answer to a question regarding the elderly inmate population, the Secretary estimated that between 50 and 100 could be transferred to nursing homes, but because those with violent backgrounds are difficult to place, he added that a geriatrics unit is being designed by the Department. He stated that once the minimum security population has been reduced, there will be an opportunity to convert facilities for use by inmates who have been brain damaged by drugs, inmates who have been gang members, and inmates who have AIDS.

Secretary Davies advised the Committee of the security problems caused by high shrinkage for corrections officers. He noted that shrinkage will be a problem primarily for Topeka, Lansing and Hutchinson. He told members that by July 1, the Department will designate a number of posts per facility necessary for operation.

In discussing the progress of the El Dorado Correctional Facility, Secretary Davies noted that construction is ahead of schedule on housing and behind schedule on the Commons building. The plan to move inmates is being formulated. The Secretary stated that he has plans for the units which will be closed at Lansing and will seek the judge's permission to keep them in

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service in order to save money in the future. In answer to a question, Secretary Davies stated that \$200,000 and 55 FTEs were provided for El Dorado staff. He said that he is working out a plan to have "seasoned" staff provide training at El Dorado and to have "unseasoned" staff receive training at a correctional facility before El Dorado is functional.

The Chairman thanked the Secretary for his presentation and adjourned the meeting at 12:00 noon.

