

Iron Curtain Lifted at Angola Prison

Doors Shut to Press Are Opened by Kennon

By B. I. KREBS (The Times-Picayune Staff Correspondent) BATON ROUGE, La., July 19—Louisiana's iron curtain was lifted this week.

It was lowered a year ago at the state penitentiary farm at Angola by the Earl K. Long administration, when penitentiary officials found themselves "embarrassed" by newspaper stories on the shocking conditions at the institution.

New appointees of the Robert F. Kennon administration took charge a month ago, and Wednesday the gates were again opened to reporters. There is nothing now to hide at Angola except the wreckage of years of brutality, misrule and neglect.

Reporters toured the penal farm under the guidance of Reed Cozart, new superintendent and Sam A. Anderson, the new warden of the penitentiary, in company with Claude Harrison, chairman of the re-established board of institutions, which has supervision of the state's correctional institutions, mental hospitals, and all but two of the general hospitals.

All Doors Open All camps were visited, all doors opened at the request of reporters, full opportunity was given to talk with prisoners.

Physically Angola shows little change under the new management. There has been no time for that. And as warden Anderson remarked:

"It didn't get this way overnight, and it can't be cleaned up in a day."

The same personnel is on duty, as in general was operating the prison a year ago when an excess of brutality culminated in an orgy of "tendon-cutting" by prisoners—an ancient self-imposed crippling operation performed on the back of the heel with a razor blade.

Angola in the past has been operated more like a slave labor camp than like a modern penitentiary, built, equipped and staffed as an institution for the punishment, discipline and reformation of the prisoners. It cannot be changed over completely into the decent penal institution promised the people of the state by Gov. Kennon until its physical plant is almost entirely replaced.

Millions for Rebuilding The Legislature has provided \$4 million for this purpose, to which can be added several million more dollars representing the available labor of the convicts themselves in the business of rebuilding. Superintendent Cozart and institutions chairman Harrison already have their plans well under way for this expenditure.

But there are other things that can and are being done. The quality of the cooking is being gradually improved and the quantity of food increased. Wooden tables and benches in the eating quarters are being kept clean. Arrangements are under way to augment the shockingly inadequate toilet facilities, averaging in some camps only one stool for every 50 inmates.

Work committees have been set up to assign the prisoners to the duties for which they are best fitted. The labor day, which in the past has during certain seasons run up to as high as 18 hours, has been shortened for humanitarian reasons and also because, as Warden Anderson explains "you can get just as much work out of a man in a reasonable day, if you feed and handle him properly."

Plans are being made to rehabilitate the 60 or more prisoners now lodged in the penitentiary hospital, who have been driven temporarily insane through fear of their fellow convicts.

Camp captains and field managers have been directed to throw away the leather lash and the hickory club.

Warden Anderson called them into conference when he took charge of Angola in June.

"What do you do," he asked them, "when a prisoner refuses to follow your orders?"

There was a long silence. Then an Angola veteran sheepishly volunteered:

"Practice is stopped. I guess we uns lay into them with a hickory club."

"We can't fix everything at once," said the new warden, "but this business of head dusting with a hickory club is one practice that will be stopped right now."

Everybody at Angola is "waiting to see"—many of them, frankly, in cynical disbelief. It has happened before, at the penitentiary, that under a storm of public disapproval brought about through newspaper exposures, the brutal floggings and beatings have been suspended; only to be resumed when the heat was "off."

There is a difference this time, however. For the first time almost in the history of Angola, the penitentiary is in the hands of trained penologists who understand the use—and the effectiveness—of modern methods of discipline, instead of being run by a man who was appointed warden because he was a country sheriff with political connections, a chief of police, or the favored bodyguard of an exalted political personage.

Discipline at the penitentiary in the past has generally been in the hands of men who knew no method other than brute force for the control of their prisoners. When ordered to lay aside the lash, they had no substitute for it, and no desire to find one. This course extended down the line through the camp personnel.

Cozart, the new superintendent,

State Highway Safety Committee at First Meeting



A PROGRAM TO REDUCE FATALITIES on Louisiana highways was outlined at an organizational meeting in Baton Rouge last week of the governor's highway safety committee. Members of the committee at the meeting were (seated, from left) Shelby Jackson, state superintendent of education; Bernard J. McCloskey, New Orleans commissioner of safety and chairman of the committee; Francis Greenberg, state superintendent of police; (standing, from left) Chester Owen, state director of safety; J. Penrice, of the attorney general's office, and J. M. Semmes and W. T. Taylor, of the state highway department.

comes from the management of the federal correctional institution at Seagoville, Tex. Anderson's job, at the time he was assigned to Angola by the head of the federal prison system on the request of Gov. Kennon for a good man, was running the Washington city prisons, which are under the direction of a Congressional committee on affairs of the District of Columbia.

Not only has the old Angola been in charge of personnel untrained in modern prison management, but the whole physical layout and the theory of operation has been such as to make effective regeneration of the prisoners next to impossible.

In Isolated Area The prison is an isolated farm of some 18,000 acres, lying in a bend of the Mississippi river, and bordered by high bluffs on the land side. It was laid out in farm units in the horse and buggy days, in the form of half a dozen "camps," each with its two-story cell-house, surrounded by the quarters of the personnel.

The camps were almost as isolated within the penitentiary itself as Angola was from the outside world.

Into these camps were poured indiscriminately—except for the legal requirement of separation of the races—the best and the worst that came to Angola; the first offenders and the hardened criminals, the laborers and the professional men, the young and the old, the illiterate and the educated, the dope users, homosexuals and a mad miscellany of psychopaths.

They were crowded into large cell rooms in groups of 200 or more, with inadequate toilet facilities, bunks jammed together, and no facilities for diversion or recreation.

At most times the prevailing theory of discipline was that all were alike confirmed criminals for whom the lash was the only final means of control; the prevailing theory of management was that with so much "free" labor available the penitentiary should at least pay its way.

The formula for the attainment of this goal—never yet achieved in any part of the world with forced labor—was as much work as possible, and a minimum expenditure for food, clothing, shelter, and the barest decencies of life.

Now System Planned Within the camp the "captain" in charge was an uncrowned king; the slightest show of insubordination was high treason. And the ordinary means of discipline—such as the removal of privileges, segregation of the confirmed troublemakers, solitary confinement—were unavailable.

New construction planned at Angola will be based on the principle of segregation. In one cell-block will go the prisoners who have shown themselves to be intractable.

If all other means of control fail, they will be locked up and left to themselves without the benefit of participation in sports, games and other limited recreational facilities that are being planned, without the purchase of tobacco and other small luxuries, and without time off their sentence for good behavior, until they decide to conform.

In the second building will be the prisoners occasionally but not continuously turbulent and obstructive.

The third and largest building will be for the majority of the prisoners who want to conform to the rules, serve a minimum sentence without giving trouble to anyone, or having anyone make trouble for them, and get out on parole at the earliest possible moment.

They will have the status of trustees, and will require little supervision, aside from the necessary periodic daily checkups to see that they are all on hand at the appointed hours.

The construction of new buildings—with convict labor used wherever possible—the upgrading of personnel, the abolition of prison abuses and rackets, and the substitution of paid guards for the present system of "trusty" guards, will go hand in hand over a period of time.

Arrangements are being made to recruit a paid force of guards. Qualifications will be set up and a base training school established

where they will be taught the principles of scientific control of prisoners, how to handle themselves in a prison disturbance, and the general theories of discipline. It is expected that as time goes by the of the penitentiary personnel will develop from among the guard force.

For the present the official attitude of the new warden is that the way to do a good job is "to do what the boss wants done." In the past the boss wanted corporal punishment, and his orders were carried out. Now the boss doesn't want corporal punishment, and he expects to see his orders obeyed with equal fidelity.

Prisoners Have Knives "Have you taken up the knives the prisoners have made for themselves?" Anderson was asked by a reporter, on the tour of the penitentiary.

"No, they still have them," said the new warden. "If we collected their knives, the prisoners who want knives would make new ones, and we can use their time to better advantage."

Then in a more serious vein, he added: "The prisoners must have some kind of recreation for their leisure hours. It is up to us to provide it, or they will set up their own diversions, and they won't be harmless ones, either. You can't wipe out the use of narcotics, homosexuality and knife-fighting until you have something better to take its place."

The same holds true for gambling, he added. This can be stopped by taking the money away from the prisoners and substituting individual script, good only in the hands of the original holder. Word has already gone through Angola that this step is in the offing.

One gains the impression, talking with the new warden and making the rounds with him, of a man who knows exactly what he is doing and why he is doing it; of what results can be accomplished, and the best way to accomplish them, and of what can be done immediately and what will require time.

He doesn't regard the insubordinate action of any particular convict as a personal affront, because from experience he knows that a certain percentage of them will be insubordinate. None of them want to be in the prison. Some will give trouble, but the great majority will give no trouble at all if treated half way decently.

Board Hears Infractions This impersonal attitude is reflected in the functioning of the discipline board, existent for some time, but dormant until Cozart and Anderson took charge of the institution.

The camp captain no longer either metes out or enforces discipline. He reports infractions to the board, consisting of two security members, one of them himself, and of two nonsecurity, or operating members, with the warden, when needed to break a tie, as a fifth member.

The prisoner is called before the board to give his own explanation of his conduct, and if discipline is found justified, it is administered elsewhere than in the camp of the captain who brought the charge.

Cases now average one a day, which in a prison with the population of Angola—2700 at present—and with its turbulent past, is considered a fairly low figure.

Nothing Novel Procedures and routines that are being established at Angola have nothing of the novel in them, said Anderson. They are in effect in well managed penal institutions everywhere, and have been found to be generally workable. There isn't anything in the composition of the Angola prison population that in the new warden's opinion will make any of them unworkable in Louisiana.

Nor is there any particular type of crime that can be associated with unruliness in prisoners. Whatever the offense with which they have been charged, it is a matter of the individual himself whether he is going to go along with reasonable regulations, or whether he is going to be a troublemaker.

As the new warden explains, there are people who can't even get on with themselves. But of this type of prisoner, under modern

prison management, is not permitted to make trouble for the prison inmates who want to behave.

Bread and Water Complete segregation is not possible at Angola now, as it will be when the new buildings are completed. But the trouble-makers can be handled to a certain extent, and more effectively than under the old method of leather strap and hickory stick.

One such trouble-maker was called to the solid steel door of his sparsely furnished solitary confinement cell, while reporters were present inside.

"Doesn't want to work," the warden explained. "He gets six slices of bread and all the water he wants to drink, two days in succession, a full meal the third day, then back to bread and water."

"Does it work here?" the warden was asked. "Sure," he replied. "Why not? It works everywhere else in the world."

It may take a few days more for the method to work in Louisiana. But as living quarters are improved, and meals are bettered, and a reasonable amount of sports and entertainment are provided, come less and less attractive compared with life elsewhere in the prison, even when work is attached to the latter.

This will be the new formula at Angola. The prisoner has a debt to pay to society. His imprisonment under discipline is the payment of that debt. Society wants him regenerated if that can be accomplished. He will be given that opportunity.

There will be no coddling, but there will be no brutality. Aside from that, the prisoner will write his own ticket.

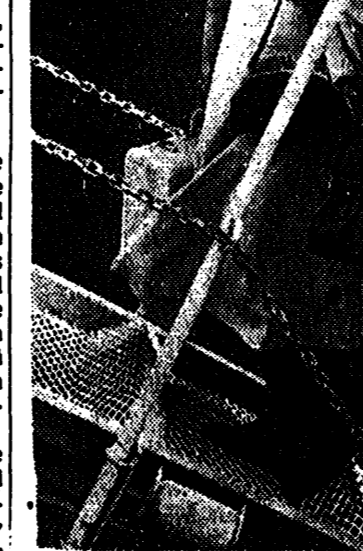
Invitation to Tea Accepted by 6000

SIREVEPORT, La., July 19 —They'd better have plenty of tea in Monroe when the Louisiana American Legion convention meets there July 26.

Mrs. E. A. Campbell of Homer, national legion auxiliary president, sent Lovo-McFarland Post 14 of Shreveport an invitation to attend a tea at the convention and asked commander W. C. Rasberry to RSVP.

He did, stating that the 6000 members of the local post—one of the largest in the nation—would be glad to attend.

There was no immediate reply from the probably stunted auxiliary president.



SOUTHWESTERN LOUISIANA INSTITUTE at Lafayette is the destination of Miss Wan Suk Kim (left), South Korean girl who boards a ship at Pusan, Korea with Miss Soong Lee Chin. Miss Kim will attend the University of Louisville. Both are recipients of music scholarships. Miss Kim's was donated by SLS and Miss Chin's by the University of Louisville and a Presbyterian church of Louisville. Their ship passage was paid for by American soldiers of the 328th Ordnance Battalion.

Real Estate Transfers of the Week

First District Mrs. John L. Masvoro, portion, 6530-32; \$12,000. Mrs. Lavinia to Joseph Nicolosi, portion, 1316 Washington ave.; \$2700. Mrs. and Mrs. James M. Kirchner to Mrs. and Mrs. John J. Pickett, Jr., 314-18 Mornis st.; \$2700. Mrs. and Mrs. John J. Pickett, Jr., portion, 1718 Sixth; \$2300. Mrs. and Mrs. John J. Pickett, Jr., portion, 1718 Sixth; \$2300. Mrs. and Mrs. John J. Pickett, Jr., portion, 1718 Sixth; \$2300. Mrs. and Mrs. John J. Pickett, Jr., portion, 1718 Sixth; \$2300.

Second District Mrs. Eva P. A. Pfeiffer to Guanyan Savings and Loan, portion, 2307 Lafayette; \$2800. Mrs. and Mrs. Benjamin Barbour Jr., same property, \$1800. Mrs. and Mrs. Benjamin Barbour Jr., same property, \$1800. Mrs. and Mrs. Benjamin Barbour Jr., same property, \$1800.

Third District Thomas R. Clavier to Winnie P. Duffour, portion, 2113-15 Conti; \$1,900. Mr. and Mrs. Emile J. Funck to Mr. and Mrs. John L. Masvoro, portion, 6530-32; \$12,000.

Fourth District Mrs. John L. Masvoro, portion, 6530-32; \$12,000. Mrs. Lavinia to Joseph Nicolosi, portion, 1316 Washington ave.; \$2700. Mrs. and Mrs. James M. Kirchner to Mrs. and Mrs. John J. Pickett, Jr., 314-18 Mornis st.; \$2700.

Fifth District Beharan, Inc. to Joseph A. Molaison, 1112 Marilla; \$7800. Mrs. and Mrs. John J. Pickett, Jr., portion, 1718 Sixth; \$2300. Mrs. and Mrs. John J. Pickett, Jr., portion, 1718 Sixth; \$2300.

SIXTH DISTRICT Joseph M. Bellotti et al to Guaranty Savings and Loan Association, portion, 430 E. 22nd; \$2000. Mrs. and Mrs. John J. Pickett, Jr., portion, 1718 Sixth; \$2300.