

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

# Solitary Called Dangerous To Ray

NASHVILLE, Sept. 25. — (UPI) — Charging that James Earl Ray's health is declining because of his "solitary confinement," attorney J. B. Stoner said Thursday he would ask federal court next week to order Ray transferred from the maximum security unit at the state penitentiary.

"He's lost a lot of weight and his health will be ruined," Stoner said following a visit with Ray at the white-walled prison. "He's been in solitary confinement too long for his health not to suffer."

State Safety Commissioner Lake Russell said Ray had daily access to a doctor and he had heard no reports that the convicted killer of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was in failing health. "I think if there had

been some radical change in the man's health, I would have been told about it," he said.

Warden W. W. Neil said he would have no comment on Ray's complaint until he had seen the petition.

"It hasn't been brought to my attention that he has lost any weight," said Neil. "I haven't heard any personal complaints from him."

Neil added, however, that it was possible that Ray might have complained to one of the prison hospital workers who visit the maximum security area daily.

Stoner also charged that prison officials had built something in Ray's cell which prohibited the prisoner from taking proper exercise.

Neil said concrete was

poured around the toilets in all cells in the maximum security unit "because the men were tearing them apart."

Russell said recently that Ray would be retained in maximum security until his fights in the courts are exhausted.

Ray is appealing in state courts his murder conviction in the King assassination. He has also filed a federal court suit seeking to void contracts with two of his former attorneys and with Alabama author William Bradford Huie.

Ray has been housed in a six-by-nine-foot cell since March 11, the day after he pleaded guilty to murder at Memphis in exchange for a 99-year sentence.

Harry S. Avery, Russell's predecessor, said earlier this

year he thought it would be "unwise" to allow Ray to mingle with the general prison population. An unofficial count shows that at least 13 persons have been killed inside the prison since 1957.

Stoner told reporters Thursday that Ray was "not afraid" to mingle with other prisoners.

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