

# Prisoner Release Pact With Cuba Seems Near

*Pat M. Williams*  
HAVANA, Dec. 19 (AP) — There were persistent reports here today that a Cuban-American agreement for the release of thousands of political prisoners may be in the making.

Highly informed sources said feelers have been put out by both sides, but formal negotiations are not in progress.

"There is conversation, but not negotiation," an authoritative source said, adding that he had hopes that official discussions would begin soon.

If an agreement is reached, these sources said, it would come as the result of long, se-

cret negotiations. There would be no fanfare such as accompanied the talks on the airlift now moving thousands of Cuban refugees to the United States.

The negotiations would be carried on by the Swiss ambassador here, who represents American interests and is also considered a personal friend of Prime Minister Castro.

The number of political prisoners here is variously estimated from 20,000 to 75,000 held in camps and prisons. There are more than 20 American prisoners.