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REGISTERING HIS PREFERENCES: Anthony Clark preparing to deposit his ballot at Attica, N. Y., prison.

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Attica Inmates Elect Committee To Meet Officials on Grievances

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ATTICA, N.Y., March 17—Attica Correctional Facility, where 43 lives were lost last September in a five-day revolt. The election of such an inmate liaison committee to meet with prison officials was one of the demands made by prisoners during the rioting.

The 1,163 men eligible to vote in Attica's first prison election trooped to 10 voting booths set up in various cell-blocks inside the riot-scarred

William Dickinson, program director at the prison, said today that the election was an exercise in civic responsibility and that additional elections

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would be held every six months. Monitors were counting the ballots late today, and the results were not yet known.

The prison superintendent, Ernest L. Montanye, said the 28-member committee would elect officers to meet with members of the prison administration "on matters relative to the general welfare" of the prisoners.

Today's election followed spirited campaigning during which the prisoner-candidates placed posters and lists of their platforms on cellblock bulletin boards. Volunteers from the Batavia chapter of Sertoma International, a men's service club, monitored each election booth.

The only prisoners excluded from the election were the 84 who have been in segregated housing. Many of them are believed to have been leaders in the riot.

For some, it was the first time they had voted for anything in many years. A few of them, unfamiliar with the concept of the secret ballot, asked the monitors whether they should sign their names to the ballot.

Privacy Is Provided

Wooden voting booths made in the prison shop provided privacy as the men marked their paper ballots.

At a typical polling place in Cellblock C, the prisoners stood in an orderly line in the corridor outside their tiny cells as they waited to cast their ballots. A stenciled sign hanging over the voting booths reminded them in Spanish and in English that "all inmates are required to make their beds and turn out the light when leaving cell."

One of the candidates, Robert Arcolino of Buffalo, was excused briefly from his work as a cook in the officer's mess hall so he could vote. He was ushered to the head of the line, so he could hurry back to his job. Other prisoners had the day off from work because it was their election day.

Mr. Arcolino, a blue-eyed, sandy-haired man who has served five years of his 7½-to-15-year sentence for burglary, said the selection of the Inmate Liaison Committee "is one way they can straighten things out — God knows the place needs a lot of changes."

Although white prisoners are in the minority at Attica, Mr. Arcolino said he thought he would be elected "because I am for the blacks as well as the whites—I am not one-sided." He added, however, that "after the riot I lost lots of friends — some were transferred out and some are dead."

He said he believed that the parole system should be improved and that prisoners should have more recreation and rehabilitation. Then he was excused so he could finish preparing the lunch. "I made a tuna casserole, being that it is Lent and today is Friday," he said.