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SFC

S.F. Deputies Threaten Soledad Hearing Boycott

The president of the San Francisco Deputy Sheriff's Association, John Courtney, announced yesterday that its members will no longer serve in the courtroom during the explosive pre-trial hearings of the "Soledad Brothers."

Sheriff Matt Carberry promptly announced he will take disciplinary action against any deputy "who is so foolish" as to refuse to carry out his duty and said he plans to assign Courtney to the Soledad courtroom.

"I'm going to take him out of his shelter down at the San Bruno jail," the sheriff promised.

CONFERENCE

During the press conference that preceded his imminent transfer, Courtney said he was strongly aware of the implications of the association's plan to boycott duty at the Soledad trial.

But the association's five-member executive board took the action because five deputies were injured there Thursday, he said — and because after four years of trying, San Francisco's deputy sheriffs are still without proper disability and retirement benefits.

Courtney said the 104 deputies he claims are members of the association will continue to refuse duty at the hearings until all 225 of the city's deputy sheriffs are finally enrolled in the Public Safety Officers Program of the State Public Employees Retirement System. Then they will receive benefits enjoyed



JOHN COURTNEY
Association president



STEPHEN B. BLEY
Deputies' attorney

by other law enforcement officers, he noted.

ATTORNEY

Stephen B. Bley, the association's attorney, said San Francisco's voters authorized the city to begin negotiations to bring the deputy sheriffs into the State Public Employees Retirement System nearly four years ago when they passed Proposition G.

It took the city three years to get the negotiations going, he charged, and now the deputies are being "almost blackballed" by a state decision to refuse to acknowledge their right to status as peace officers before 1962.

"To me, it's just a matter of time before some deputy gets killed, stabbed, or gets his head bashed in," said Bley, charging that their current death and injury benefits are "a travesty."

THREAT

Sheriff Carberry—although obviously enraged by the association's boycott threat — said he is "100 per cent behind" the long battle for proper disability protection and retirement benefits for his men.

But his deputies swear to uphold the law, he said, and they knew what the disability and retirement conditions were when they took the oath to serve in his department.

"I think the association is just making statements," Carberry said. "As I know it, it's basically a social organization."

"Actually, it's a paper-mache organization."