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Prisons May Ask to Hire More Guards

Sacramento

The State Department of Corrections is considering asking Governor Ronald Reagan and the Legislature for another \$2 million to hire more guards this year for prisons, it was learned yesterday.

Although the proposal is in the discussion stage, a department spokesman said officials plan to "make an effort to convince the administration and legislature that we need the money in this year's budget."

The spokesman, Phil Guthrie, said that in the weeks since the bloody escape attempt last month at San Quentin, department officials have considered asking for another 200 to 300 guards.

As for money to hire the additional officers, Guthrie said, "we're talking statewide something about an ad-

ditional \$2 million or even more than that, but we realize that will be tough in view of the state's fiscal situation."

The current state budget is running in the red by an estimated \$300 million to \$350 million. Reagan has declared himself "unalterably" opposed to new state spending based on higher taxes.

The current budget for the department contains authorization for the hiring of 43 additional guards at San Quentin. A review also is under way to determine the need for more guards elsewhere.

Guthrie also reported that officials are studying whether to equip guards with additional security tools.

"We're looking into electronic warning devices that an officer can carry in his pocket," Guthrie said. "He can punch a button which activates a warning in a central location."

Officers have been experimenting with similar devices for the past few months at Soledad prison, he said.

United Press