

Fortune Society Seeks Fund to Aid Inmates' Relatives

The Fortune Society, which aids former convicts, made a public appeal yesterday for funds and facilities to enable poor relatives of inmates at the Attica Correction Facility to travel to the upstate prison.

Mrs. Fran Christman, a spokesman for the society, said its Manhattan office had been deluged with hundreds of telephone calls from inmates' relatives asking for the names of the inmates who had been killed.

"They are mothers, fathers, wives calling in," said Mrs. Christman. "They don't know if their men are alive or dead."

Mrs. Christman made the appeal during testimony at a hearing of the Legislature's ad hoc committee on victimless crimes. It was held at the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, at 42 West 44th Street.

Mrs. Christman said one inmate's anxious wife had held an all-night vigil at the Fortune Society's office at 1545 Broadway, hoping in vain for news of her husband. She pitched in and helped to answer the telephone calls.

The society, which is three and a half years old, is dedicated to making the country aware of its prison system and its effects. The group also conducts job counseling and tries to place former inmates in jobs.

Mrs. Christman, who says she served 18 months in a California prison for forgery, is

one of several former convicts on its staff. She testified about prostitution, which she said she formerly was engaged in, when she appeared before the committee.

The committee is considering possible reforms in state legislation concerning such so-called victimless crimes as prostitution, gambling and homosexuality.

Speaking to reporters after her testimony, Mrs. Christman said the society's office had been open round the clock for two days because of the Attica prison crisis.

She said the society hoped to borrow cars to transport inmates' relatives to Attica and to get contributions to hire a bus for relatives who lived in New York City and could not afford transportation to Attica, which is near the northeastern corner of the state.

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