

# Massachusetts Prisoners Press 2 Work Strikes

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WALPOLE, Mass., Sept. 28—The two-day-old work strikes by prisoners at two state institutions near here showed no signs of ending today. Correction officials and prisoners committees continue to negotiate over the prisoners' demands.

The strikers, inmates of the Walpole maximum security prison and the Norfolk medium security prison, want changes in state parole laws and in administrative procedures at the prisons.

Officials have agreed to extensive negotiations, open to the press. They have acceded to a number of demands, such as improved food at Norfolk and extended hours of lighting there.

Both prison officials and prisoners agree that the nonviolent character of the strikes, in which there have been no confrontation or injuries, is the result of the officials' willingness to discuss inmate grievances publicly.

At Norfolk, representatives of over 700 inmates uncovered an apparent discrepancy in expenditures for the prison school. A committee of the protesting prisoners, in questioning the school principal and the prison budget officer, developed a sharp conflict.

The school principal complained that he was bound by a budget of \$1,900 a year, while the business manager insisted that over \$5,000 a year was being spent.

## Public Negotiations Are Held

—Stoppages Nonviolent—

### Concessions Made

The principal, Carlo B. Geromini, in support of his position, listed a whole series of items he said he was unable to purchase because of budget restraints.

The apparent discrepancy, amounting to over \$12,000 over the last four years, was dismissed by the budget officer, Archie E. Gordon, as simply "a lack of communication."

When the committee of prisoners at Norfolk took this complaint to the acting deputy superintendent, Theodore Ristaino, he promised to a further meeting between the two officials and the prisoners on Friday and added:

"If it is not answered to the satisfaction of Mr. Geromini and the prison committee, I certainly will ask the state auditors in."

Further meetings of the 15 inmate committees at Norfolk, each representing a specific area of disagreement, will be held through Friday. At each prison, talks are being held at various sites.

A public meeting between prisoners and prison officials is scheduled in the prison yard at Walpole at 8:30 A.M. tomorrow. The Walpole negotiations have tended to concentrate on parole laws, which af-

fect the inmates of the maximum security prison more than they do the inmates at Norfolk.

The main issue at Walpole is the so-called two-thirds law, which requires a prisoner convicted of a violent crime to serve two-thirds of his sentence before he can become eligible for parole. In many other states, that determination is left up to the parole boards. The striking prisoners want Massachusetts to follow the procedure.

The behavior of guards has not been an issue at either prison.

Though inmates at both prisons are refusing to work, some are performing the chores necessary to the routine operation of the prisons. At night, the inmates are retiring to their usual quarters. During the day, those not negotiating gather in groups in the prison yards, some carrying signs bearing such messages as "I Am a Human Being."

### Disturbance in Kansas

LANSING, Kan., Sept. 28 (AP)—Cooks returned to the kitchen at the Kansas State Penitentiary here today but some inmates refused to eat.

Some 100 food service workers began an unexplained 24-hour stoppage early yesterday and no food was served in the mess hall during the day.

The stoppage ended this morning, Warden R. J. Gaffney said, but some prisoners were refusing to eat.