

PRISONS DISPUTE ENDS IN BAY STATE

Inmates Agree to Work as Reform Talks Continue

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WALPOLE, Mass., Sept. 30 — A four-day-old strike for prison reform that spread through three state prisons here this week ended this afternoon when inmates at Norfolk Prison agreed to return to work. The 753 inmates at the

medium security institution, the last holdouts to the settlement, agreed to end their peaceful protest after receiving promises that officials and inmate committees would continue to negotiate changes in prison rules and regulations.

Earlier in the day, the 600 inmates at nearby Walpole Prison returned to their assigned tasks after similar promises. A strike at Concord Prison — which began the series of walkouts — was settled the same day it began, last Friday. The Norfolk Prison Superintendent, Theodore Riasino, announced the settlement shortly after 2 P.M. "The prisoners," he said,

"have agreed to return to work as a sign of good faith on their part, and we, in turn, have agreed to meet with 13 inmate committees to try to reach a solution on their list of grievances."

Later, at a news conference involving inmates and the press, Mr. Riasino assured the prisoners that no disciplinary action would be taken against any prisoner as a result of anything that had happened during the strike.

Praise for Peacefulness

"You have conducted yourselves peacefully and there is no word out on anyone right now for anything connected

with this affair," he told the elected inmate leaders of the grievance committees.

The settlement came after four tense days of negotiations that switched back and forth between Norfolk and Walpole prisons. Both prison officials and inmates, constantly referring to the Attica prison rebellion, took pains throughout the ordeal to avoid direct confrontations.

Prison administration officials, at the request of inmates, kept the negotiations open to the press throughout most of the conflict.

From the beginning, prison officials, including the Commis-

sioner of Corrections, John Fitzpatrick, agreed that there was definite need for prison reform. These officials supported their statements by announcing an immediate end to censorship of prison mail.

They also, through negotiations, agreed to end many restrictions on prison uniform requirements and to seek to upgrade rehabilitation programs and living conditions in the prisons.

Promises have also been made by some public officials to work toward reform in the state parole laws, especially for the repeal of a law that now limits the possibility of parole for persons convicted of violent crimes