

16 HURT ON RIKERS IN INMATE BRAWL

Suit in Federal Court Scores Sing Sing Conditions as Unsafe

**Prisoners Smash Furniture
to Protest Dining Change**

By **JAMES M. MARKHAM**

Thirteen inmates and three guards were reportedly slightly injured yesterday afternoon when prisoners in the Adolescent Remand Shelter on Rikers Island went on a 20-minute furniture-smashing spree to protest dining conditions.

Sixty guards intervened and fired tear gas to break up the fracas, officials reported.

Agenor Castro, director of public affairs of the Department of Correction, said the disturbance had grown out of complaints by some inmates about a policy—initiated yesterday—of feeding them in the day rooms adjacent to their cellblocks. This was done to free the main dining room for renovation for recreational purposes.

Mr. Castro said that at about 2 P.M., after lunch had been served, a group of inmates in Cellblock 7, which houses about 300 19-year-old and 20-year-old men awaiting trial on felony charges, began breaking up toilet seats, chairs and tables and hurling pieces at the five or six guards in the ground-floor area.

"They pounced on one official and began to beat him up with sticks," reported Mr. Castro, who said he was leading a group of visitors through the prison at the time. The shelter houses over 2,000 inmates.

Mr. Castro said that 200 peaceable inmates were sep-

arated from the 100 who were participating in the fracas and that 60 guards from other sections of the old prison were called in to quell the disturbance. One cannister of tear gas was fired, Mr. Castro said.

Conditions for prisoners at the Ossining Correctional Facility were described in a Federal Court lawsuit here yesterday as "so shockingly unsanitary, unsafe, unhygienic, dehumanizing and punitive that they constitute an affront to basic human decency."

An injunction requiring state prison authorities to make the conditions safe and sanitary for prisoners was requested by the suit, which was filed by the Legal Aid Society for inmates at the Ossining Facility, formerly known as Sing Sing Prison.

"The prisoners of Sing Sing must eat in filthy mess halls, live in squalid cells, wear dirty, sweaty clothes and take their recreation in an ancient, unsafe recreation hall," according to the suit's 11-page complaint.

It contended that the alleged conditions "constitute cruel and unusual punishment," depriving the prisoners of due process of law in violation of their constitutional rights.

The suit calls on the court to order prison authorities to submit a plan within 30 days to specify actions that will be taken to make the Ossining facility "a decent, sanitary place for its prisoners."

In the prison's mess halls, the suit alleges, the windows are never clean, the floors are not properly swept, the rafters are covered with dust, the tables are dirty and the eating

utensils are not thoroughly washed after each meal.

A lack of adequate cleaning materials was said to require the prisoners to live in grimy cells, "creating a constant squalor which endangers their health and is an affront to their dignity as human beings."