

# 'Prisoners Want to Kill Ray'

NASHVILLE (Tenn.) — (AP) — Harry Avery, state commissioner of corrections, says fellow prisoners in the state penitentiary have threatened to kill James Earl Ray, the admitted slayer of Martin Luther King Jr.

Avery said yesterday that word of the threat, which came in a telephone call, "had a lot to do" with his decision to keep Ray in a maximum security cell after his normal six-week stay which finished at the end of April.

## Heard Nothing

W. E. Hopton, director of the Tennessee Bureau of Criminal Identification, said he had heard nothing about the threat. The TBI normally would be called to investigate any such incident, especially one involving the Tennessee state prison where Ray is serving a 99-year sentence.

Avery said he talked with the caller 20 minutes, traced the call and was able to identify the caller.

## Identity Known

A statement issued through his office said:

"The commissioner says he knows the identity of the caller but that he is not at liberty to divulge the name of the person. No investigation is being made."

Avery said the person who informed him of the conspiracy said Ray will be killed if he is ever taken from maximum security.