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# 'Failure' in High-Voltage Fence Told

Petros, Tenn.

A report that someone cut two wires feeding 2300 volts of electricity into barbed wire atop the prison wall where James Earl Ray and five other inmates escaped will be investigated, Tennessee corrections commissioner C. Murray Henderson said yesterday.

"I've checked with everybody up there and nobody knows anything about it," Henderson told a news conference, "except that there was a momentary (power) failure after this whole thing happened."

Henderson was questioned by reporters after the Knoxville, (Tenn.) News-Sentinel reported that an unidentified prison trusty, who the paper said helped install the barbed wire, said that shears were used to snip the electric wires.

The high-voltage current, which one prison official said would turn any potential escaper "into cinders" if he touched the barbed wire, is conveyed by two wires from two transformers just inside the two-foot-thick rock wall.

Henderson, who is co-directing the expanding state and federal search for Ray, 49, the convicted

# King's Father 'Praying for Ray'

Knoxville

The father of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. said yesterday he is praying for his son's convicted killer, James Earl Ray—the object of a massive manhunt after escaping from an east Tennessee prison.

"Let's hope he doesn't get killed," Dr. Martin Luther King Sr. said as he visited a church in Knoxville, about 45 miles east of the Cumberland Plateau area where Ray and three other fugitives were being sought.

Dr. King, like his slain son a Baptist minister, was at Knoxville's Mt. Calvary Baptist Church to preach at the installation of a new pastor, the Rev. Harold Middlebrook. The event was scheduled last fall, Middlebrook said, and had no

connection with the manhunt.

Dr. King told reporters he would not discuss the Ray matter, nor refer to it in his sermon. "This is a worship service," he said.

But he dealt at some length with his own fears of personal peril stemming from the murder of his wife in their Atlanta church in 1973.

"The more well-known you are the more dangerous it is to live where you do. I stopped checking into hotels in my own name a long time ago," he said.

"So I go nowhere without someone traveling with me, without security at both ends," said Dr. King, who was accompanied by a police bodyguard here. "I've gotten used to it."

Associated Press

killer of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., said the power failure in parts of the maximum-security Brushy Mountain State Prison lasted "only seconds."

The penitentiary's telephone switch board also was reported out of order momentarily after the escape. Prison officials have attrib-

uted the breakdown to numerous local residents telephoning the prison at once when they heard the escape siren.

Henderson said, "We'll investigate everything from topto bottom and leave no rock unturned."

Los Angeles Times