

Why Foe Won't Release POWs

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — A Teamsters Union official said today that North Vietnamese officials told him they have stopped releasing American prisoners of war because of the "propaganda" uses made of the last three who were freed.

Teamsters Vice President Harold Gibbons said the North Vietnamese indicated to him during a visit he made to Hanoi in March that the policy could be changed and some POWs released if North Vietnam was sure that the U.S. government would not promote what Hanoi felt were propaganda tours of the men.

Assurance

Appearing at the same news conference, Mrs. Evelyn Grubb, Colonial Heights, Va., national coordinator of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, said she was given assurances by the administration that an effort would be made to hold down the activities of ex-POWs in the interest of possibly securing further releases.

The league called the news conference to announce what Mrs. Grubb termed "an important breakthrough in the treat-

ment of POWs" — Hanoi's agreement to permit the delivery of up to 200 foreign language textbooks to the prisoners.

In Three Days

Gibbons said textbooks probably would be shipped out of New York today and he estimated they would arrive in North Vietnam in about three days.

The North Vietnamese complained, Gibbons said, of what they called the propaganda activities of the last three freed POWs — Navy Lt. Robert Frishman, former Navy Seaman Douglas Hegdahl, and Air Force Capt. Wesley Rumble. They were released in the fall of 1969.

He said the North Vietnamese told him they could understand a repatriated prisoner being returned to duty and resuming bombing missions over North Vietnam but what they could not understand were the Pentagon-sponsored tours at which an ex-POW would talk about "pulling out fingernails."

Ready to Travel

Gibbons said he was told he would be informed if there was any change in the North Vietnamese policy and that he would travel to Hanoi to pick up prisoners.