

Two Prison Bills Vetoed

Sacramento

Governor Ronald Reagan announced yesterday he has vetoed legislation which would have created both a State Public Defender to assist indigent criminal defendants and a State Prison ombudsman to investigate prison grievances.

Reagan said he prefers to see appeals by impoverished criminal defendants handled by locally appointed attorneys rather than "spawn yet another expensive governmental agency."

And, said the governor, the State Department of Corrections "already has an effective procedure for handling grievances." Thus, Reagan said, he sees no need for a prison ombudsman, whose influence he said would be "devisive."

The vetoes thus killed two major proposals designed to unclutter courts of amateurish or poorly prepared criminal appeals and to establish an independent ombudsman with power to investigate complaints emanating from within the state's

Welfare 'Son' Is a Dog

San Bernardino

Peggy McGinnis, 32, pleaded guilty to welfare fraud Tuesday for collecting \$740 in benefits for her "son," Thomas.

Investigators said Thomas, entered on the welfare rolls under a false-birth-certificate, is a dog.

United Press

violence-ridden prison system.

Assemblyman Frank Murphy (Rep-Santa Cruz), author of the prison ombudsman bill, said he repeatedly had asked for a chance to talk to Reagan personally about the proposal but never had the opportunity.

Reagan said he vetoed the state public defender bill because he's "convinced that representation of the indigent defendants is best performed by locally appointed counsel,

preferably the one who represented him at the trial."

"Although it is true that there is a backlog of cases before the courts," said Reagan, "there is no compelling evidence to support the allegation that a public defender would speed up the judicial process. To the contrary, there is a very high probability that more cases built on new strained theories would be appealed as a new office holder sought to justify his existence and performance."

The bill was proposed by Assemblyman Charles Warren (Dem-L.A.). Reagan earlier had vetoed another public defender bill which varied only slightly from Warren's and he served notice that "I will continue to strongly oppose the enactment of such legislation."

The two vetoes topped a list of 29 more vetoes announced yesterday.

Other major Reagan vetoes killed bills to extend unemployment benefits to farm workers, to raise the minimum teacher's salary, and to allow conversion of food stamp bonuses into cash benefits for elderly, blind or dis-

abled persons on welfare.

Reagan said that while he supports the concept of unemployment insurance for farm workers "on a national basis" he vetoed the bill because the benefits payable "will exceed farm employer taxes by at least \$37 million which will have to be financed from taxes paid by non-farm employers."

In vetoing a proposal to raise the minimum annual salary for teachers, Reagan said the state's teachers "are among the highest paid in the country" with an average salary in 1970-71 of \$11,216 for 10 months' work.

And Reagan said he was killing a bill by San Francisco Assemblyman John Burton relating to food stamp bonuses to cash because the switch would be contingent on a federal law change which isn't likely.

Our Correspondent