

# Patterson riles corrections head

Amidst accusations from Oakland County Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson that criminals are being released too early, the director of the Michigan Department of Corrections has taken Patterson to task.

Perry Johnson, the director of the department of corrections, feels that Patterson has no case against present prison policies.

Johnson says Patterson's findings are not accurate in terms of the "good time laws, repeat felonies by those who have been paroled early and cases cited.

Johnson says the law if rescinded would not affect the 13,300 prisoners currently in the system, as Patterson has said. The law if changed would only affect those criminals convicted under the new law.

Good time, a process of letting convicted criminals out early, is a reward for the prisoners who do not cause problems while in prison. This incentive plan, to help control behavior problems, is computed using a uniform scale applicable to all inmates.

However, prison officials do not release prisoners. A judge takes into consideration the crime committed, behavior while imprisoned and past experiences of the person, before paroling the prisoner using the good time law.

The Michigan law dealing with good time parole is an essential tool in prison management, Johnson adds. In fact, the Michigan law is more conservative than other states.

**ANOTHER PROBLEM** Patterson has criticized is the recidivism rate, the problem of being criminally assaulted by the same people over and over again.

Johnson contends this is also false. He says, "From 1973, when Patterson became prosecutor to 1976, there have been at least 600 forcible rapes, 6,200 robberies and 200 non-negligent homicides reported to police in Oakland County. Parolees can have committed only a small portion of these crimes (certainly less than 10 per cent). His statement also implies, falsely, that most parolees commit serious felonies."

Johnson says fewer than five per cent of parolees are convicted of new felonies and fewer than 13 per cent are convicted of any new felony while on parole.

**MOST CASES** cited by Patterson, added Johnson, are done in a "round-tune" fashion. Johnson says Patterson continually refers to nine or 10 cases, always says there is more, and yet never produces them.

In fact, Johnson says one of the cases Patterson uses as an example of good time violation and the committing of a felony after being paroled, was never imprisoned in Michigan.

Johnson charges that Patterson has continually misled the public with parole terminology. He says Patterson's usage of the terms "early parole" and "early release" imply that the prisoners were paroled before they were eli-

gible and "insinuates that somehow the activities of the Parole Board have been illicit or illegal. He continually implies that the Parole Board has something to do with handing out good time and that good time is an evasion of justice."

The real concern, says Johnson, is to continue to improve the ability of

the prison officials to identify a prisoner as high risk for future violence and keep him in the system longer. Johnson feels the department of corrections has done much to identify these prisoners, has made progress in this area and sees this as a more responsible way of dealing with the public's protection.

## Regional Roundup

### PARTYING DOWN

Angered by another in a series of raucous parties at a neighbor's home, residents of the Bloomfield Estates subdivision have asked Bloomfield Township to come to their aid.

The most recent party, on Friday, was attended by 1,500-2,000 teenagers, according to residents. It was held at the Ara Haitian residence, 5470 Brookdale, but spilled into neighboring yards.

The township board said they would investigate the complaint and try to put a stop to the parties.

### COUNCIL TO BE QUESTIONED

Five members of the Orchard Lake city council have been asked to ap-

pear at the Oakland County Prosecutor's office June 21 to answer questions of possible intent to violate the Open Meetings Act.

The questioning was scheduled following a resident's complaint that statements made in a citywide mailing may have been formulated at a closed meeting.

The five councilmen are also the target of a recall campaign, petitions for which were filed at city hall Monday.

A sixth person, Betty Macduff who recently resigned from the council, has also been asked to appear for questioning.

### TEACHER SUSPENSION

West Bloomfield High School teacher Ray Lams, former teachers' union president, will be suspended five days without pay when school starts next fall.

The sentence was handed down Monday by the school board following a hearing into charges of Lams' insubordination lodged by the administration and high school principal Ted Cavin.

The charges stemmed from Lams' refusal to meet with Cavin about his job review without another teacher being present.

### Irish changes

A number of northern Michigan counties originally were given Indian names which proved too hard to pronounce. Several were changed to names copied from counties in Ireland: Emmet, Roscommon and Clare are examples.

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