House, Prison Board Vote to Abolish Bat

**Physical Violence Can Be Used Against Escape or Revolt**

*Austin Bureau of The News, Feb. 11—Many members of the Texas House of Representatives Tuesday were in doubt about whether they had actually amended the use of the bat from state prison systems by their 109-16 approval of a representative Sam Hanna's modified antibat bill, but Hanna himself predicted the job would be done by time the bill cleared the Senate and a possible conference.*

Hanna amended his bill to allow striking to suppress revolt, to permit a turn to prevent escape, and for resisting any lawful command. He said a step toward victory was made. He said the present law allowing the baton for other purposes, and that use is now partially restricted.

*While the lawmakers are still free to consider how to finance social security, a big item being old-age pensions, Representatives Chote Moore of Bonham and Ben Sharpe of Paris proposed a constitutional amendment which, if adopted by the House and Senate and voted on by the people, would raise $200 a month state payments for the old-age assistance. This would match the top limit prescribed by the Federal Government under certain conditions.*

*Chairman Gene McNamara announced the second investigation by his House committee on alleged abuse of the old-age pension applicants by welfare department employees would be held at the courthouse in Waco Feb. 17 and 18. On Feb. 17 and 22 an investigation will be held in Fort Worth, home town of Marvin Simpson, one of the five House investigators. The first hearing will be at Nacogdoches Feb. 18 and 19. The home town of Jewett is still another investigator.*

*Clayton Bray was unsuccessful in his attempt to get Speaker Homer Leonard to appoint authors of the House's general investigation resolution to the committee authorize. Mr. Bray was a member of the resolutions committee which said that certain officials of the state government are corruptly administering their offices and are guilty of gross immorality in connection with the discharge of their duties.*

**Disciplinary System To Include Solitary Confinement in Cells**

*HOUSTON, Texas, Feb. 11 (AP).—The Texas Prison Board voted Tuesday to abolish corporal punishment of misbehaving convicts, substituting a broad disciplinary system ranging from deprivation of small privileges to incarceration in solitary cells.*

*Outlawed by the unanimous action was the use of the dreaded bat, a leather whip with a strip.*

*In the past, incorrigible convicts sentenced to a lashing were placed nude, face down on the floor. While their backs were lashed, a prison system official whipped the culprit across the buttocks.*

*As many as twenty lashes were administered while the man lay pinned to the floor by prison employees.*

*Ajituation against the use of the bat has rolled across the state for years. It was described as an antiquated, inhumane, vicious punishment which did not achieve its purpose.*

*Supporters of its use countered with the argument that it was the only effective means of quelling unruly prisoners.*

**Six States Retain Bat**

*O. S. J. Ellington, general manager of the prison system, said he believed proper discipline of convicts could be maintained under the substitute measures adopted by the board.*

*Dr. J. W. Butler Jr., chairman of the committee which drew up the resolution to abolish the bat, said only six states retained the legal power to use the instrument, and that only three actually employed it.*

*He reported the committee had studied disciplinary measures of virtually every prison in the nation, and that it had concluded abolition of the bat was necessary to maintain "our advanced progress in improving conditions in the Texas prison system.*

**Disciplinary Measures**

*Disciplinary measures which will be utilized instead of the bat are deprivation of privileges such as smoking, visiting, attending movies, picture shows and the prison recreation and athletic events; standing on a barrel; standing in the corner with the back to the audience; taking a white linen loss of trust; and the use of silver clothing and haberdashery.*

*More serious offenses will be punished with the use of strait jacket, handcuffs, isolation cells and dark cells.*

*The board also voted to adopt certain measures of assistance in the successful management of inmates, including more liberal use of the merit system, applied to employment and better classified and segregated of inmates, and physical and mental examination of all inmates subject to mental illness.*

*The Legislature will be asked to provide $5,000, or as much of that sum as is needed, to hire two trained and qualified teachers to instruct employees in modernized performance of their duties.*

*Compton Is Happy*  

*To C. V. Compton of Dallas, who recently offered sums ranging from $200 to $1,000 to anyone willing to submit to one of the bat-beatings, the abolition move Tuesday culminated his personally financed campaign of more than a year to end corporal punishment in Texas prisons.*

*"I am probably the happiest man in the State of Texas today," he said at his home, 4901 Overland, after learning of the action of the State Prison Board and the House of Representatives.*

*The Dallas Morning News deserves great credit for bringing to the public the truth about the conditions in our state prisons under the reign of the bat. Beginning last April in our personal survey of this matter, but it was The News which accepted the facts and gave them to the public.*

*By J. A. Inwood, secretary familiar with the workings of the Texas prison system, Compton began his campaign in February of 1940. He wrote letters to all members of the Legislature, the prison board, and talked with the men who had claimed they would "finish what is good" of the enterprise, and are more than rewarded now.*

*State of Texas can hold its head high.*