

# Jury Raps City Prison Crowding

## Sees Health Peril To Farm Inmates

By RICHARD ASHWORTH

Atlanta's City Prison Farm is "exceedingly overcrowded" and as a result the health of prisoners is "jeopardized," the outgoing Fulton Grand Jury declared Friday.

The September - October term grand jury recommended in its

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*Text of grand jury presentments, Page 22.*

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term-end presentments that a city work camp should be established "to alleviate the crowded conditions."

It suggested that the camp could be set up at the old county warehouse on Rice Street, NW. "The establishment of a city work camp at this location would eliminate the necessity" of transporting prisoners across town in heavy traffic, the jury said.

While the jury found the prison farm on Key Road to "be in fair condition considering the age of its facilities," it said the farm's kitchen floor is in a deplorable state" and should be replaced with a new one.

It also said that rest room facilities at the prison "are inadequate and deplorable in both white and Negro wards.

On other subjects, the jury:

1. Said that it had declined to confirm the reappointment of Tax Commissioner Standish Thompson because of what the jury believed to be the "best interests of our county."

2. Called for establishing a separate voter registration office and asked that further consideration be given the idea of making voter

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# Overfilled City Prison Called Health Hazard

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registration possible in local municipalities.

3. Quoted Sheriff T. Ralph Grimes as saying half of 2,082 special deputies need their commissions because of the nature of their jobs. The jury said Grimes promised to screen more carefully special deputy applicants in 1961.

4. Said film censorship "is greatly needed and should be continued" because of what the jury termed a lowering of standards in film themes.

## BACKS CRIME PANEL

5. Wholeheartedly endorsed the recommendations of the July-August grand jury for the establishment of a state-wide crime study committee. The jury urged Gov. Ernest Vandiver to sponsor legislation in the next General Assembly session to create the committee.

The jury had commendatory remarks for Grady Hospital, the Bellwood Public Works Camp, Atlanta police, policing of county unincorporated areas, fire protection, the Atlanta and Fulton County airports, the city administration and its water, construction and sanitary departments.

Its presentments also touched on a number of recommendations that have been made by previous grand juries.

## TAX OFFICE FINDINGS

On its failure to confirm Thompson's reappointment, the jury said it "spent a great deal of time inquiring into the operation of the tax commissioner's office."

The presentments said the jury's action "would be more readily understood were we to detail all of the specific conditions which we found and which led to our conclusion." However, the jury said it was not practicable to do this.

"We can only state, therefore, that our responsibility was not taken lightly, and that we have

done what we sincerely believe to be in the best interests of our county."

## MUST CONFIRM

Under local law, the tax commissioner is appointed by the county manager, A. E. Fuller, subject to confirmation by the grand jury. If the jury fails to confirm an appointee, Fuller is required to make "successive appointments" to succeeding grand juries (one appointment each term) until an appointment is confirmed.

Meanwhile, Thompson continues to serve until a successor is appointed. Some courthouse sources interpret the law as not preventing the presentation of Thompson's name to the incoming November-December grand jury.

On voter registration, the jury said there is "no direct relationship between the functions" of the registrar's office and the tax commissioner's office, under which the former office now operates.

## REGISTRATION LOW

It said the number of registered voters here "is pitifully low" and said present facilities offer "no encouragement to prospective new voters to register." It said parking spaces are hard to find and the registration office is hard to locate.

Regarding special deputies, the jury said Sheriff Grimes told its members there "were reasons" for appointing about one-half of the 2,082 special deputies because of their jobs. In other cases, the jury said persons wanted special deputy commissions so they can carry guns.

It pointed out that the county ordinary issues "pistol-toting" permits for a small fee.

The grand jury said Grimes stated that deputy appointments in 1961 "would be more carefully screened to assure that such appointments were justified and in keeping with the intended purpose of the law which authorizes them."