

Knife-or-Life

Sex Bill to Be Vetoed

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Warren Tells Decision After Opposition by Doctors and Lawyers

SACRAMENTO, July 17 (AP)—Gov. Warren announced today he will veto a sex crimes bill offering child molesters the option of life in prison or their freedom if they submit to surgery.

His decision came at the close of a hearing which brought unanimous objections from legal and medical experts called in to study the unique proposal.

The Governor endorsed other sections of the bill to permit sex offenders to be locked up for life—or until they are pronounced cured.

But he found fault with the prison-or-surgery provisions in cases involving acts against children under 14 years of age. He questioned particularly the fact that offenders choosing surgery would be entirely out of institutional confinements.

Proposes Re-drafted Bill

However, Warren told the co-authors, Assemblymen H. Allen Smith (R) Glendale, and Ralph M. Brown (D) Modesto, to re-draft the bill and he would be glad to place it before the Legislature's budget session next March.

The lawyers at the hearing didn't like the idea of letting a sex deviate in effect fix his own sentence.

And the doctors declared it was far from certain that surgery cures sex abnormality. It doesn't kill sex desire, contrary to common belief, they said. In fact, studies show some continue to commit crimes.

Subject to Examination

"I think you boys are losing a golden opportunity," Smith told the psychiatrists and other medical men.

Smith pointed out that offenders choosing surgery would be required to submit to medical examination and study for a period up to three years.

He contended that doctors and psychiatrists still don't know enough about the effects of the operation, and though some wording in the bill might be faulty, it merited a tryout. Something, he said, has to be done to curb sex crimes.

Dr. Frank F. Tallman, State Director of Mental Hygiene, testified medical literature was too inadequate as yet to be certain an individual would no longer be dangerous after surgery.

Will Repeat Offense

Dr. Karl M. Bowman, medical superintendent of the Langley Porter Clinic, said surgery may lessen the sexual drive but that an adult does not lose the desire.

"We know they will repeat," said Dr. Douglas M. Kelley, University of California professor of criminology. He added, "Someone other than the man himself should determine whether he should be turned loose."

Much of the sex drive comes from the brain rather than sexual organs, said Dr. George N. Thompson Jr., Los Angeles psychiatrist. He reported that some doctors advocate brain surgery in sex crime cases.