

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE

R E P O R T

OF THE

ATTORNEY GENERAL

for the calendar years

1949 - 1950

August 2, 1950

To Honorable Frederick G. Payne, Governor of Maine
Re: Letter from Former Inmate, State Prison

Pursuant to your request, I talked with Postmaster Weeks of the Augusta Post Office relative to postal regulations dealing with delivery of registered or insured mail to inmates of prisons. The only regulation Mr. Weeks could find was a regulation to the following effect, that if the sender does not restrict the delivery of registered or insured matter to the inmate of a prison, the officer in charge of the prison or some officer delegated to handle the mail may sign for the material. He was unable to find any regulation pertaining to delivery where the sender restricted delivery to the addressee only.

Following this conversation I talked with the Deputy Warden, Robbins, to inquire as to the procedure followed at the prison. Mr. Robbins is sending me a memorandum covering the subject, which I should receive in the very near future.

In the meantime I am told that if delivery is restricted by the sender to the addressee only, the mail is rejected at the prison and is returned to the sender.

All mail is read, which is a rather obvious precaution against improper material entering the prison or information relative to escape plans, etc.

No prisoner is permitted to correspond with a former inmate or with an inmate in any other penal institution. Mail received for a prisoner from a former inmate is not destroyed, but is held at the prison to be delivered to the inmate at the time of his release.

With respect to the writer of the letter to you, you are informed that he is a perpetual and habitual law violator, his record going back to the serving of time for a law violation as early as 1902. It is true that he has served three terms in our prison at Thomaston, having been released the last time in December of 1949. He has served a prison term in a Federal penitentiary for violation of postal laws. He has served several terms for breaking and entering, several terms for forging and uttering, and many, many terms for sex offenses. His record is such that it is amazing that having been out of prison for eight months he is still at large. He has written threatening letters to the Warden of the prison and to the Deputy Warden. The mail which he attempts to get into the prison at the present time is in the nature of endearing letters to friends whom he knew while he was in the prison. This type of letter is never delivered to an inmate. I confirmed the foregoing information with Mr. Gerald Murch, who went on to say that he hoped we never had the man back in Maine. Whether or not his letter to you constitutes a threat which would amount to a violation of postal regulations I do not know, as that would be a matter for Federal authorities. If you think it desirable we could send the letter to Mr. Tennyson Jefferson, Inspector in Charge, P. O. Department, Boston, Mass.

JOHN S. S. FESSENDEN
Deputy Attorney General