

Jones criticizes criminal aid bill

BY BEN J. PLASTINO
Post-Register political editor

Jim Jones, Jerome, Republican attorney general candidate, took a swing Friday at a bill sponsored by his primary opponent which he said was soft on criminals.

Jones said in a Post-Register interview here that Ada County Prosecutor Jim Harris sponsored

Sun Mar 21, 1982
a measure which he said should be labeled "The Criminal Relief Act".

Jones said he appeared before the Idaho Senate Judiciary and Rules Committee Wednesday to testify against it and it was tabled and killed for this session of the Legislature.

"It would have been a disaster in our legal system if there were

no changes to strike appeals and if it didn't tighten up language to prevent suits," said Jones. "This bill looked serious enough to pose a threat in favor of criminals."

Jones also said his bill on the State Pardon and Parole System called for the governor to have a voice on reduction of pardons but not paroles. He explained he has not been pushing for gubernatorial involvement in the parole system "because it may create more problems than it may solve."

Jones said a recent Post-Register editorial quoted him inaccurately on this piece of legislation and that his views on the pardon and parole system are different than those of Harris.

Harris bill, he explained, provided for an appeal for parole decisions so that the governor could change any parole decision. He said it would have allowed convicts to appeal parole decisions which he said "would be a disaster."

"You can bet every penitentiary inmate would appeal every decision and there would be a lot more paroles being granted, either by the State Parole Board or governor."

"It would give convicts the right to challenge in court. It would need court interpretation on the bill and that again would have opened a can of worms."

In other matters Jones said he likely would have done as Attorney General David H. Leroy did in instituting a reapportionment lawsuit in behalf of 21 Senate Republicans. Jones pointed out this is a majority of the senators and gives justification he is representing state government.

Williams raps Legislature for hampering his office

BY BEN J. PLASTINO
Post-Register political editor

State Auditor Joe Williams, who has served as an elected state official longer than anyone in the state's history, but who considers himself still young at 77, took time out Friday to rap the Idaho Legislature for what he said was taking away some of his duties.

Williams, a Democrat, has served 24 years and seeks his seventh four-year term against the announced challenge of State Sen. Dean Van Engelen, R-Burley.

Williams was in Idaho Falls Thursday and Friday to conduct sale of nine parcels of state land and the response he receives on them will determine if the state will continue these land sales during the present economic slump. He pointed out there have been plans for delaying these sales if there is a lack of demand.

Williams, who is one of the top vote getters in the state and won every county in the 1978 election, said the State Legislature established Legislative Auditor Office directed presently by John Balderson which largely duplicates what he does.

"It has added expenses of several hundreds of thousands of dollars," said Williams.

He said the Legislative Auditor is doing a post audit of all state directors which is really a statutory prerogative of the state auditor.

Williams said many of the legislative offices



Joe Williams

Sun Mar 21, 1982
under jurisdiction of the Joint Finance Appropriation Committee are duplications of state offices and unnecessary. He said about the only exception is the Legislative Council under Myran H. Schelechte.

Williams said he has asked the Legislature to consolidate all auditing functions of state government under his office. He asserted the state could save \$515,000 by merging the Legislative Auditor's Office with his own.

"I plan to take this issue to the voters," said Williams.

Williams labeled as unnecessary not only the Legislative Auditor but also the Legislative Fiscal Office under John Andreason which duplicates the budget setting of the governor's office.

Aside from this duplication, Williams said he thought the Idaho Legislature did well in financing the coming year's budget with the money available.

On land sales, Williams said it is much more profitable to sell the land than lease it because the state gets four or more times the amount of interest, plus the fact the land in place on the tax rolls.

Williams said the state has sold close to a million acres of land, much of it farmland, but still has some two million more to sell.

In other matters, Williams said the state has now virtually completed the acquisition from the federal government of land it has been due since Idaho became a state.

He said of some 38,000 acres, all except 8,000 acres have been given to the state. The others are held up because of mineral rights and other legal complications.

In addition to 24 years as state auditor, Williams also has served six years in addition as a deputy.