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AMA

It was expected to squeeze through.

The bill, actually introduced by Assemblyman Lester A. McMillan (D-Los Angeles) began its long trip through the California Legislature with a hearing before the Assembly Criminal Procedures Committee.

Would Close Doors

As it now stands the bill would close the doors of San Quentin's gas chamber to all but double killers, twice-convicted slayers, kidnap-murderers or prisoners who kill peace officers. It would not apply to prisoners now on death row.

This is substantially the same bill, also authored by McMillan, that lost on a nearly unprecedented 40-40 tie vote in the Assembly in 1961.

Brown, long an opponent

chance of Senate approval. Although the governor supports outright abolition, he pleaded in a special legislative message for a moratorium to "end our modern equivalent of the Roman circus."

Despite the advance head count which showed the bill would have little difficulty reaching the lower chamber floor, proponents called in some heavy artillery.

Announces Support

Late last week Richard A. McGee, administrator of the California Youth and Adult Corrections Agency, announced his support of the bill.

Then Brown's office made public a letter from Dr. Karl Menninger, director of the Menninger Foundation and clinic in Topeka, Kansas, calling the death penalty "a fruitless and barbaric relic from the past."

Dr. Thorsten Sellin, a University of Pennsylvania criminologist, told a news conference in the governor's council chamber yesterday that homicide rates have nothing to do with existence of a death penalty.

He said that a successful moratorium would show the people of California there was no close relation between the use of the death penalty and homicide rates. Sellin was among



AMERICAN GAS

WATER HEATER

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Sonja Investigation of her murder

those scheduled to testify this afternoon.

Opposition to the bill was being handled by freshman Assemblyman C. George Deukmejian (R-Long Beach), who introduced three bills early in the current legislative session to increase the use of the death penalty.

On List

Among his list of witnesses was J. Miller Levy, Los Angeles County deputy district attorney who prosecuted the sensational Caryl Chessman case.

Chessman, convicted of kidnaping and sex perversion, was executed in the gas chamber three years ago after a 12-year court battle to save his life. He was known as the convict-author because he wrote a best seller while in prison.

Other Action

Drugs — Sen. John A. Murdy (R-Santa Ana), said he would attempt to water down his bill to clamp strict controls on the drug chloromycetin in an attempt to boost it from committee and onto the Senate floor.

Education — The Senate voted final approval of a measure creating a new educational program for "culturally disadvantaged children." The bill was introduced by Sen. J. Eugene McAteer (D-San Francisco), at the request of Gov. Edmund G. Brown.

Automation — An administration bill to establish a state commission on manpower, automation and technology was approved by the Assembly Ways and Means Committee and sent to the lower chamber floor. The commission would study the impact of automation on employment in California.

Abortion — Assemblyman Anthony C. Beilenson (D-Beverly Hills), introduced legislation liberal-