

Only one

Prisons S.A.

'political

aspects

prisoner'

Political Correspondent

MAJOR - GENERAL J. C. STEYN, Commissioner of Prisons, pooh-poohs the idea that South Africa has a vast number of political prisoners in its jails.

He says in his annual report that possibly only one prisoner can be described as such — an obvious reference to Robert Sobukwe.

Apparently there is an impression in certain circles that in recent times 'political' detainees are in custody in South African prisons," he says.

MISAPPREHENSION

"To clear up this misapprehension, it is considered necessary to mention that, with the possible exception of one, the category of prisoners apparently so referred to, consists of persons tried in open court, convicted and sentenced for offences against public security.

"Certain sections of the foreign Press in particular refer to this group of saboteurs and perpetrators of violence as being 8,000 and more.

"This misrepresentation is apparently due to deliberate misquotations arising from interviews held with the Commissioner of Prisons during 1965.

"On no occasion were there more than 1,825 of this category of prisoners in custody, and on June 30, 1966, there were only 1,395."

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