

McQuaker's term 10 years, 3 months

□ Found guilty of five armed robberies, escaping lawful custody

By JIM KELLY
Chronicle-Journal Staff

"See you in hell."

With those parting words, Barry James McQuaker was escorted out of the provincial division of Ontario Court here Monday to begin a prison term of 10 years and three months. He was earlier found guilty of five armed robberies and escaping lawful custody.

McQuaker's lawyer David MacKenzie pleaded with Judge F. A. Sargent to make rehabilitation a priority and not impose a harsh sentence. But the judge would have none of it.

"He's had many stays in penitentiary," said Sargent. "Rehabilitation is the last factor to be considered by this court"

The judge said McQuaker's convictions for five bank robberies — in Western Canada last April — and one escape "cry out for protection of the public and this means a lengthy jail term.

"I have very little hope of rehabilitation," said Sargent. "I have very little hope he can function as a member of society."

Crown counsel Buster Young outlined a criminal spree last spring that began with the armed robbery of a Toronto-Dominion Bank branch in Brandon, Man., on April 10 and ended with the armed robbery of a branch of the Bank of Montreal on Winnipeg's Portage Avenue on April 25.

Young said McQuaker, 35, also robbed Toronto-Dominion banks in Portage la Prairie, Man., and Calgary on April 12 and 16, respectively.

He also held up a Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce branch on

Vancouver's Granville Street on April 19.

According to Young, McQuaker escaped with about \$7,600 in total. He was nabbed after the Winnipeg robbery when he was spotted by police at a Portage Avenue bus depot.

McQuaker was in custody in Thunder Bay last October when he escaped from police as he was being taken to the Camelot Street district courthouse. He was caught a short while later on the grounds of the Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital.

Young said all of the bank robberies occurred when McQuaker walked up to a teller and handed over a note demanding money. He backed up this request by stating he was armed with a gun. No gun was ever produced.

MacKenzie argued there was no real reason to his client's behavior during the crime spree.

The lawyer said McQuaker's life — especially since June 1988 when his son Jason disappeared — has been one of hardship.

Continued on Page 14