

CITY WATCH-HOUSE

The Hon. A.J. REDFORD: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation a question on the topic of police prisons.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A.J. REDFORD: I have been approached by a constituent concerning the imprisonment of a female offender. On 12 June this year she was convicted for drug related offences and sentenced to three years' imprisonment with a non-parole period of one year. Following her court appearance she was put in the cells in the Sir Samuel Way building at about 11 a.m. and at lunchtime was transferred to the city watch-house. She remained there for 13 days until Friday 20 June 2003.

During that same period, there were 11 female prisoners in the watch-house, and at least two of them spent 13 days there. During this period, one woman who was menstruating was not provided with any sanitary protection for a period of two days, there was one toilet for all of them, which was fully blocked for significant periods of time, and the 11 prisoners—two of whom had hepatitis C—had to share two toothbrushes. Some went without clean clothing for some days, and there were no showers for three or four days. In one case, the woman's lawyer purchased and delivered a new tracksuit so that she could have some clean clothing. They were also refused access to water other than at meal times.

Everyone knows that the city watch-house, a relatively new facility, was designed for overnight arrests and short remands. It was never equipped for long-term stays, and certainly not more than 48 hours. It is a police facility or a police prison, not a corrections facility or corrections prison under section 18 of the Correctional Services Act. Indeed it was only intervention by the Ombudsman that caused this shocking state of affairs to be fixed. Section 20 of the act requires the minister to regularly inspect police prisons to ensure that the act is being complied with. Furthermore, section 22.3 of the act provides:

Subject to this Act, a person who is sentenced to a term of imprisonment exceeding 15 days must not be imprisoned in a police prison.

There we have it—11 prima facie breaches of the act. The facility was described by my source as being worse than Camp X-ray. My questions are:

1. Does the minister agree that, just as this government expects prisoners to comply with the law, it should itself comply with the law?
2. Does the minister agree that these circumstances are a breach of the act; if not, why not?
3. Does the minister agree that the women in this case have been treated inhumanely?
4. What is the minister going to do while we wait three years for him to build the new womens' prison, other than the 11 new beds, and when will the 11 new beds come on line?
5. Given that the minister is aware that the watch-house has been illegally used, why has he not tried to ensure that the prisoners are treated properly?
6. When and how often is the city watch-house inspected pursuant to section 20 of the Corrections Act?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Correctional Services): I thank the honourable member for his questions and the responsible way in which he has placed them before this chamber. The circumstances are dire in relation to the way in which women prisoners who have been sentenced are kept in so-called temporary holding cells within the city

watch-house. It is not a circumstance the government would prefer but, because of the increased numbers of women being sentenced for crimes that used to be regarded as the domain of males, more women are unfortunately finding themselves being charged with a whole range of offences that are leading to longer sentences.

That, coupled with the circumstances in which we found ourselves—having all bases loaded in relation to women prisoners—has left the government in the situation of being unable to use the flexibility of other prisons for short-term holding. Some women, I understand, were moved to Port Augusta to overcome the difficulties in which the courts, police and Corrections found themselves in relation to the situation outlined by the honourable member. I agree that it is not a situation that the government should abide. We have to find alternatives to those holding cells, because I agree that they are not places where you can humanely treat people, because of the absence of facilities, as the honourable member has pointed out.

The Hon. A.J. Redford: You were going on in the paper about law and order and at the back end the Premier is doing nothing.

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS: I understand the honourable member's interjection. I will take up the question as to how often the cells are inspected. Certainly, with regard to the refusal of water, I will make inquiries into that. Even if the facilities are not appropriate, there is no reason why the services that are there are not made available to those people on request. I will make inquiries and bring back answers to the important questions that the honourable member has proffered.

MURRAY RIVER FISHERY

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries a question about Murray River fishers.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.W. RIDGWAY: The minister has offered six exclusive carp fishing licences to Murray River fishers. However, there is much consternation amongst those fishers because a proper management plan for the carp fishery has not been formulated. The minister's compensation package will be decreased if river fishers accept a carp licence. Furthermore, the minister has agreed to reinstate large mesh gill nets in backwaters where there is more wildlife than in the mainstream of the river. It has been suggested to me that this will markedly increase the incidence of by-catch, which is one of the reasons stated for eliminating the river fishery. My questions are:

1. Will the minister agree to an extension of time for acceptance of the compensation payment until—
 - (a) a management plan for the proposed carp fishery has been completed;
 - (b) community consultation regarding reinstating large mesh gill nets in backwaters has been undertaken; and
 - (c) the proposed carp fishery has been discussed and passed by the minister's fisheries management committee?
2. Has the Riverland community been informed that the new carp licences include access to the yabby fishery?

The Hon. P. HOLLOWAY (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries): A number of questions have been asked by the honourable member. In relation to the latter

question, it has been made clear in a number of public statements that I have made that yabbies and bony bream are to be part of the new river fishery. That was made clear when I first wrote to the river fishers in July last year, and it was certainly made clear after the October correspondence.

In relation to the development of the new arrangements for the river fishery, it would have been preferable if more time had been available to do that, but until the appeal had been ruled on by the Full Supreme Court, which occurred only a few weeks ago, it had not been possible to advance this issue. Obviously the river fishery arrangements were dependent on the outcome of that court decision. Now that that has been resolved, the government is keen to move as quickly as possible.

I wrote to all fishers earlier this week—the letter to which the Hon. Caroline Schaefer referred—and outlined the details of the new fishery. I indicated that there would be some risk in relation to the future continuity of this fishery. We know that the Murray Darling Basin Commission has been looking at projects such as the daughterless carp project, which will ultimately eradicate European carp from the river, so I think it is only fair that for those fishers who remain in the fishery there should be no expectation of licence continuity built into fishery licence values and, more importantly, that fishery licences should be nominal.

I indicated to the fishers that the government would be looking at a nominal fishery licence fee of only \$200 per year in relation to those fishers who wished to target carp. This reflects the fact that the continuity of the fishery in the longer term cannot be guaranteed. I did indicate the gear that could be used, and I also indicated that there would be no reaches in the new fishery. Essentially, that was a restatement of what the fishers were told last year—that there would be no reaches. In relation to backwaters, it has been put to me in discussions that I have had with the river fishers over a long period of time now that there would be problems in relation to the use of haul nets within the backwaters because of the snags that exist there.

It is my understanding that what is necessary for the future of this fishery is that there be some experimentation in relation to how carp in those backwaters can be best taken. During the last week or so, a fisher from Victoria who operates in that river fishery, following the removal of commercial fishing of native species, has visited the state and spoken to some of the fishers, as well as my department, in relation to current arrangements. I have indicated that the government is keen to trial a number of arrangements in relation to removing carp. It needs to be stated that the new river fishery essentially will be more like an environmental program in relation to carp eradication than the other sorts of fishery that have existed in the past. Obviously a number of undertakings were given in relation to the river fishers about how the department was keen to work with them in relation to resolving some of these issues.

My advice is that, during high river levels, native fish species tend to move to the backwaters to breed. As soon as the river level starts falling, those native fish immediately return to the main stem of the river. Therefore, any netting activities within the backwaters of the River Murray would be regulated to ensure minimal impact on native fish species. Obviously research will be undertaken in conjunction with those fishers who wish to remain to ensure that there is absolutely minimal by-catch in relation to the fishery. Obviously that has to be one of the objectives. In relation to the particular type of nets that will be used, the dimensions,

the lifting times, the location and so on would be dependent upon arrangements with the department to ensure that they had absolutely minimum by-catch and that there is interaction with native species, otherwise the whole purpose of this exercise would be defeated.

I must say I am rather disappointed that, having responded to the approaches made by river fishers to reconsider the matter, those fishers should then turn around and try to turn it against the government. They ask me to consider something, I agree, and then it comes back as a negative. In spite of that, I intend to move on. It is important that we have a viable carp eradication program operating within the Murray after 1 July. These carp can be a huge problem within the river, although at the moment there is some debate about whether or not the drought is impacting on their numbers. Nevertheless, at some stage in the future, carp numbers will increase and it is important that we have viable arrangements in place (such as they have in Victoria) to ensure that those fish are effectively removed. Of course, a useful by-product of that environmental program is that we believe it will also involve income for half a dozen or so fishers who may wish to be involved.

BUSH BREAKAWAY PROGRAM

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation a question about the bush breakaway program.

Leave granted.

The Hon. G.E. GAGO: I note that an allocation of \$180 000 has been provided for the continuation of the bush breakaway program at Ceduna. I understand that this program is credited with significantly reducing the crime rate in that area. Will the minister inform the council about this program and what impact it can have on young people in the community?

The Hon. T.G. ROBERTS (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): I thank the honourable member for her important question and continuing interest in those affairs, which, in this case, particularly impact on young Aboriginal people. This Labor government is backing Ceduna's bush breakaway youth action program. We have announced that we will contribute \$180 000 toward the crime prevention initiative over the next three years. While in Ceduna for a community cabinet meeting last month, I met with some of the dedicated group behind the concept. I understand that the Attorney-General also met with some of the people who have been involved in supporting this program in Ceduna. The bush breakaway's encouraging results have helped change the behaviour of many young people in Ceduna. There are ways in which young people are identified as being at risk and they are then approached to join these programs voluntarily.

Many young Aboriginal people have benefited from the early intervention approach that motivates 10 to 13 year olds and helps build self-esteem. The program was devised to counter antisocial behaviour and, in particular, the actions that lead to criminal offences. It has the support of the Aboriginal community, district council, SAPOL, schools and FAYS. Community mentors are also enlisted to offer support for the young people who have the opportunity to tackle a morale building educational camp. Ceduna's central Aboriginal agency, Tjutjunaku Worka Tjuta, will be responsible for the program and for the employment of the bush break-