

Mobilong Prison morale – June 7, 2007

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond): Will the Attorney-General clarify exactly what happened in a recent attempted break-out at Mobilong prison; and what he is doing to address procedural and morale matters raised by a staff member at the prison?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PEDERICK: It was reported in the local paper that, according to the unnamed prison officer, the sequence of events leading up to the recapture of a would-be escapee at Mobilong was substantially different from the official version. The same paper reported details of other matters of serious concern with security procedures at the gaol, and drew attention to a perceived problem with staff morale at the Murray Bridge facility (which is due for major expansion). The department's strong rejection of that claim implies that there will be no further investigation of this issue, notwithstanding the fact that a staff member has suggested that the problem is self-evident.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): I am answering in my capacity of representing the Minister for Correctional Services in another place. I have been pleased to visit the Mobilong prison. I am pleased to say that the government will be building a gigantic new prison—

The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: —yes, it is a term of art—at Mobilong. As soon as we announced it, the member for Hammond was quibbling and querying it in this chamber, but it will be—

Mr Pederick interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: So the member for Hammond says that we do not build a prison which this state needs because local government did not ask for it. I understand the member for Hammond now; I understand where he is coming from.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: I will get an answer on the question of the escaper—not the escapee—or the would-be escaper. I will get a reply for the member for Hammond. However, I want to say that this parliamentary Liberal Party opposite us has been screaming for a new prison, saying, 'Where's the new prison?'