

PRISONERS RETURNED TO SECURE CUSTODY

6. Mr M.J. BIRNEY to the Minister for Justice:

I advise members that I have provided ample notice to the minister in order that he might answer this question. I refer to the Department of Justice press release of 29 March 2005 announcing the return to secure custody of 14 long-term prisoners.

- (1) Which of these prisoners required the Governor's approval to be transferred to minimum security in the first place, and what was the nature of each of their offences?
- (2) Which ministers, including the Premier, signed any documentation supporting the transfer of these prisoners to minimum-security prisons.

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

Mr M.W. Trenorden: This is your first question!

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO: I thought that the first question I had to answer as minister would be deeper than this, but I thank the member nonetheless.

- (1) The department advises me that two prisoners required such approval. They are Gary John Edwards, whose offence was wilful murder and whose sentence of death was commuted to strict security life imprisonment; and Michael Godfrey Blunsdon, who was serving an indeterminate sentence, and whose offence was aggravated sexual assault and wilful murder of a child.
- (2) Documentation supporting the transfer of Gary John Edwards to a minimum-security prison was signed by His Excellency the Governor, Lieutenant General John Sanderson; the Premier, Dr G.I. Gallop; and the Minister for Justice, Mrs M.H. Roberts. Similar documentation for Michael Godfrey Blunsdon was signed in 1997 by the Lieutenant Governor, whose signature is undecipherable; the Acting Premier at the time, Hon Hendy Cowan, MLA; and the Attorney General at the time, Hon Peter Foss, QC.

I thank the member for the question.