

FISHERIES, BREEDING STOCK

516. Mr BLOFFWITCH to the Minister for Fisheries:

- (1) Peter Rogers, Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Fisheries, stated that by early 1999 breeding stock had fallen to between 15% to 17% of virgin biomass. Will the Minister advise the source of this information?
- (2) Will the Minister advise -
  - (a) what tonnage the return to sea of all setose crayfish added to breeding stock each year from 1993 to 1999 inclusive;
  - (b) what tonnage of crayfish did the temporary 18% taking of pots for 2 years only (then extended until 1999) add to breeding stock each year;
  - (c) what tonnage did the return to the sea of large benale crayfish from 1993 to 1999 add to breeding stock each year;
  - (d) what did the increase of crayfish gauge from 76mm to 77mm from 15 November 1998 to 30 January 1999, add (in tonnes) to breeding stock;
  - (e) as Big Bank is late run of whites, why was the gauge not at 77mm to protect breeding stock;
  - (f) how many tonnes of crayfish to the breeding stock were added from 1993 to 1999 (inclusive) by the massive increase in the use of bait used each year;
  - (g) how many tonnes of crayfish were added to the breeding stock from 1993 to 1999 (inclusive) by the big decrease in the predator fish stocks of dhufish, schnapper, cod, blue bone groper, ordinary groper and other fish each year;
  - (h) in 1999 the Department of Fisheries claimed that breeding stock was 25% to 30% of the virgin biomass. What is the source of that information;
  - (i) the Department of Fisheries advised that the breeding stock is at safe levels ensuring sustainability, hence will the pots temporarily taken for 2 years be reinstated; and
  - (j) why have the pots not been returned to the crayfishermen?

Mr HOUSE replied:

- (1)-(2) Fisheries WA uses a number of sophisticated computer aided modelling tools which allow it to estimate the status of the breeding stock relative to historical levels and the estimated unfished virgin biomass. These models also allow it to evaluate the likely impact of various past and proposed management strategies and environmental factors on the breeding stock and annual catch. If the member and other members are interested, I will arrange a briefing by Fisheries WA senior rock lobster researchers to explain how these computer models work and how some of the factors that interest the mFember are dealt with in these models.