

PRISON OFFICERS — RECRUITMENT

187. Mr J. NORBERGER to the Minister for Corrective Services:

Can the minister update the house on the recent graduation of prison officers?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

I thank the member very much. This is a good question. This is a good issue.

Last Thursday morning I attended the graduation ceremony at the Western Australian prison officers' academy when 57 new prison officers graduated. It was great to see the largest graduation ceremony on record of the three-class system. Of the three classes in the corrections system, two had brand-new intakes. One class had transfers from other jurisdictions, such as from Serco-run facilities, from other states and even from the United Kingdom. It was really pleasing to hear about the vast diversity of backgrounds that people came from. A couple of people had worked in the mining industry as drillers, a couple of people had worked in the police force, and there was even a submariner there. There were people from the military, from the Army and from the Navy. People from a gamut of backgrounds, and from a different range of age groups as well, put up their hand and said, "I want to be a prison officer." The position needs a certain type of person because it is a pretty difficult job. It was therefore great to see so very many people willing to undertake this task. Looking after the most dangerous people in society that we know of to make sure that the people of Western Australia are safe from these offenders is an essential service to the people of Western Australia.

It is interesting, the member for Joondalup might like to note, that at the moment the Department of Corrective Services is also looking to increase its numbers and to recruit more youth custodial officers. An advertisement was placed in *The West Australian* a couple of weekends ago. We are looking initially to start off with about 54 youth custodial officers. If any member knows anyone suitable for the position, this is a general advert for the government. For people who want to work with some of the most troubled kids in society, who want to put up their hand to try to make a difference and who think they have a certain type of personality to deal with some of these kids, it is a great opportunity.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I suggest that people consider the career of youth custodial officer because it would be a very rewarding job for the right kind of person.