

BLAKENHURST — JUDGE TUMIM REPORTS

The Home Office published HM Chief Inspector of Prisons Judge Tumim's report on Blakenhurst on 1 February 1995.

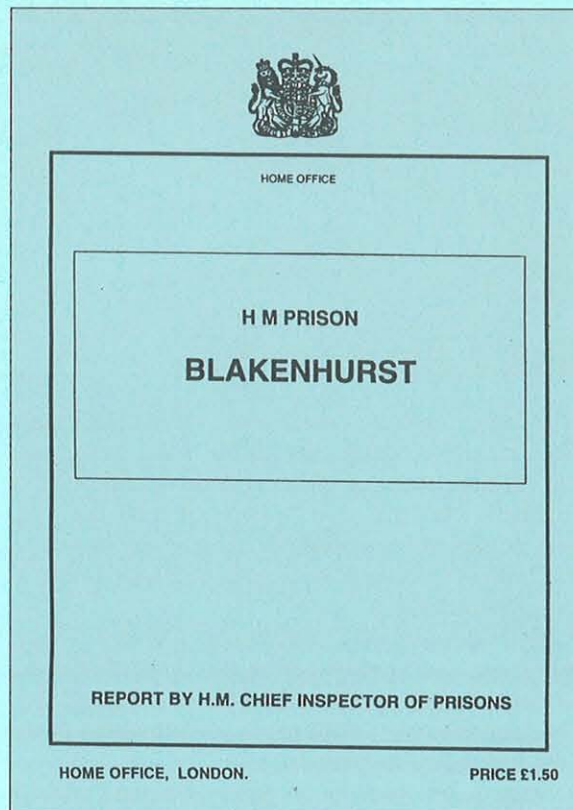
The inspector and his team visited the prison in May 1994, one year after it opened. Acknowledging that 12 months is a "relatively short time for any establishment to develop a balanced culture", Judge Tumim said that "after a shaky start the prison was beginning to stabilise" and that "the most impressive feature was the quality, enthusiasm and potential of staff: the most disappointing feature was the comparative shortage of innovation." He noted a number of positive aspects but made over 100 recommendations for improvement. Some highlights of the 109 page report are:

On the positive side:

- The quality, high motivation and enthusiasm of the prisoner custody officers was impressive and due to their good disposition the level of serious incidents had not been excessive.
- The building was clean and well maintained and the maintenance department was impressive.
- The education service was outstanding.
- The monitoring of the treatment of prisoners was effective.
- Excessive use of control and restraint techniques had been cut back.
- Staff working conditions were good.
- Staff/prisoner relationships were generally good with respect being shown on both sides.
- Three quarters of the population enjoyed an out of cell regime of 13-14 hours a day.
- Special diets were well catered for.
- A large proportion of the custody officers were female and undertook all appropriate tasks.
- Physical security was good.
- One of the most impressive aspects of the prison was the reception process; the computerised system recording every prisoner's photograph and custodial details was impressive. Each new reception was issued with an electronic wristband and the system had great potential.

On the negative side:

- The company was failing to deliver contracted services in several areas and the Home Office was not ensuring that the original tender submission or the contract were adhered to.
- The Home Office Controller did not have a current copy of the contract, limiting the ability to monitor contract compliance.
- Better systems need to be introduced "if the Secretary of State is to be satisfied that value for money is being achieved ..."
- An attempt to merge US and UK cultures had resulted in a lack of clarity between roles. The top



Stephen Nathan reports news and views on prison privatisation in the latest of his series of commentaries

management structure was complex and lacked clarity. The director had little scope for decision making. There was little evidence of clear policy planning within a strategic framework.

- Staff were not fully in control of the houseblocks.
- In their tendering document UKDS gave prominence to direct supervision but "few staff appeared to have much idea about ... the key elements ..."
- There was no formal policy to combat bullying.
- Blakenhurst was newly built but the maintenance department had to spend some £1m on construction defects, design defects or client briefing defects. The "repair" content was minimal.
- There were a number of serious design faults.
- The cost of repairing vandal damage was around £70,000.
- There were 33 reported fire incidents.
- Senior managers worked long hours and were clearly feeling the effects after 12 months of concentrated effort, bearing most of the pressure from UKDS and the Prison Service to comply with the contract.
- The staff consultation forum had been inconsistent and ineffective.
- Staff interviewed had a range of concerns including: training not equipping them for the job; staffing levels were too low; the major disturbance in February 1994 had been foreseen by staff but managers allegedly chose to ignore the warnings.
- The staff attendance system was disliked as it had an 'inbuilt debt'.
- Prisoners had a range of concerns including limited recreational facilities; instances of being produced at court although they were not required



to be there; uncooked meat being served (although most acknowledged the food was better at Blakenhurst than at other prisons); vulnerable prisoners were not given a copy of the rules and were unaware of the existence of compacts; relatives and friends were kept waiting a long time before a visit got underway.

- The Community Relations Officer (only appointed two months before the inspection) had no clear job description and had little training. The race relations policy statement was completed three days before the inspection.

- Nine major assaults on other prisoners and 54 technical assaults on staff had occurred.

- Between 13 January 1994 and 11 May 1994 there were 708 adjudications on 448 prisoners; "a high number." (They were dealt with competently and fairly.)

- The quality of throughcare for prisoners was poor.

- Sentence planning was under developed and inadequate.

RESPONDING TO THE CHIEF INSPECTOR

Since Judge Tumim's inspection, the company and the Home Office have had eight months to address the concerns and make improvements. According to a Home Office press release 1 February 1995, UKDS has:

- Redefined the responsibilities of middle managers and an experienced middle manager has been appointed to strengthen the team.

- Developed a comprehensive programme to help prisoners confront their offending behaviour.

- A sex-offender assessment course has been set up.

- A constructive anti-bullying strategy is being developed.

- Prisoners now have unrestricted access to a direct telephone line to the Samaritans.

Derek Lewis, director general of the Prison Service said that "Blakenhurst has made great strides in further improving the regime and the vast majority of the report's criticisms have been dealt with as staff have gained more experience and the prison regime has flourished." He also claimed that Blakenhurst would save the Prison Service £7.5m over the five years of the initial contract and that the

Government's prison privatisation programme was intact.

- The Chief Inspector's report is available price £1.50 from Home Office Library, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT.

THE GOVERNMENT SAYS

A Parliamentary Question asking the Home Secretary to substantiate the claims made for the benefits of market testing and contracting out brought a reply on 2 November 1994 from Derek Lewis.

Mr Lewis said the present rate of escapes from private court escort and custody services "is approximately half the estimated previous escape rate in Area 7 before it was contracted out and there have been only two escapes in five months ... in the Metropolitan Police District." New technology has been introduced and "98.7 per cent of prisoner deliveries in Area 7 have been within the contractual times compared with a contractual requirement of 98 per cent." The contracting out of court escort work has saved "24 per cent in Area 7 and 26 per cent in the Metropolitan Police District ... totalling £10m a year ..."

According to Mr Lewis, private sector involvement in the management of prisons has led to "higher and enforceable standards, clear lines of accountability and lower costs ... and helped ... stimulate higher standards throughout the Prison Service. Progress in the public sector has been rapid in recent years and there are now very many prisons providing excellent regimes and a high quality service. The spur of competition has been an important factor in this achievement."

"As well as high quality regimes, contracting out has brought with it lower costs. Wolds, Blakenhurst, Doncaster and Manchester (Prison-Service run) have costs per place per week of £340, £310, £295 and £350 including fees paid to the contractor and other costs incurred by the Prison Service. For Buckley Hall the cost of the first full year of operation is expected to be £296. These costs are 15-25 per cent below the costs of directly comparable public sector establishments."

Market testing of support services at the Prison Service College, Newbold Revel will save "17 per cent or about £200,000 a year compared to the previous cost." Market testing of warehousing and distribution saved "£1.2m per year" while

competitive tendering of education services has led to savings of "8 per cent or £2.8m a year."

Unfortunately, Mr Lewis' reply did not elaborate on how all these figures were arrived at. On 11 January 1995, in reply to another Parliamentary Question, Prisons Minister Michael Forsyth revealed the following about the costs and savings of Home Office market testing.

Market Test	Cost	£
		Annual saving
Statistics data collection	236,009	182,962
Central training services	126,720	245,355
Central typing services	99,749	1,186,125
Reprographic, design, illustration	140,086	1,016,444
Departmental computer services	1,196,881	4,785,333
Immigration & Nationality Dept. security guards	107,940	304,973
Internal audit	163,735	245,355
Record storage & retrieval	105,251	186,442
Immigration & Nationality Dept. typing services	102,619	n/a

Mr Forsyth added: "information on individual Prison Service market tests is not available, but the overall estimated internal cost of managing the Prison Service's 'Competing For Quality' programme, which includes strategic contracting out from April 1992 to September 1994 was £3,134,000. The estimated annual savings are £15,062,854." (Hansard 11 January 1995).

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE REPORTS ON WOLDS

The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee reported in February following hearings last year into the costs of running Wolds prison (see **Prison Report 28**). The projected cost of the prison over the five year contract is now £29.87m, £8m more than the company's original tender price. The disparity resulted from the Home Office originally excluding utility costs and underestimating the costs of prisoner escorts. The Committee concluded: "... it is important that the full and true costs of running private sector prisons should be established and made known at the earliest opportunity so that direct and meaningful comparisons can be made with ... the public sector."

Commenting on Group 4's failure in a number of instances to perform under the terms of the contract without being penalised, the Committee looks ... "to the Prison Service to take a firm line with contractors, and to invoke the penalty clause whenever deficiencies persist beyond a reasonable time and no action is being taken to resolve them."

On Group 4 winning the contract despite its bid not being the lowest, the Committee concluded: "We are concerned ... that a full explanation was not available as to why ... " and "to avoid any question of impropriety, detailed reasons should always be recorded whenever a contract is not

awarded to a tenderer who submits the lowest bid and is judged capable of meeting the key performance criteria."

"Particular interest" was taken in the fact that Charles Erickson, a member of the tender evaluation panel, left the Prison Service to join Group 4 nine months after the contract was awarded but it was also noted that the move was cleared by the Cabinet Office. The Committee also found that "it is still too early to quantify the difference in value for money between Wolds and other prisons; although we are pleased to note that, though financial savings had not been expected, they were in fact, being achieved ... " and that the academic research currently being undertaken to evaluate Wolds should "be made publicly available and that the Prison Service should apply any general lessons learned from the private sector operation of Wolds and other prisons to the management of establishments in the public sector." The Prison Service's assurance that the National Audit Office will be given access to the operating records of any private sector contractors appointed to run prisons or associated services was welcomed by the Committee.

MARKET TESTING STILL DELAYED

An announcement has yet to be made on which of the first two existing prisons are to be market tested following a delay caused by a complaint from the Prison Officers Association (see **Prison Report 29**). Meanwhile, a Prison Service Area Manager's inquiry into the disturbances at Everthorpe prison on 2 and 3 January 1995, has revealed that as well as a range of other causes, privatisation was indirectly to blame. Ian Lockwood's report said that the failure of the Prison Service to decide whether Everthorpe should be market tested was "an ongoing source of concern and lowered morale" and that "a substantial proportion of management time had, in the months prior to the incidents, been directed towards a response to the establishment's inclusion in the market testing bid procedure."

FAZAKERLEY, BRIDGEND AND SALFORD

Some slick and costly public relations exercises are being used to stave off opposition from local authorities and residents living near the sites of the Prison Service's proposed new private prisons. But according to planners in all three authorities, the planning process which determines the prisons' progress, Circular 18/84, virtually rubber stamps all Government schemes.

At Salford the local authority, backed by strong local opinion, is opposed to the Agecroft site being used. So the Prison Service has offered to help build a new rugby stadium for Swinton Rugby League Club on land alongside the prison. A number of exhibitions, public meetings and photo-calls for journalists have been held to promote the plan.

The Prison Service has negotiated to buy the land from National Power but Salford City Council wants the site — part of which is in Green Belt and earmarked for recreational purposes — for economic regeneration. It believes that the proposed 600 bed

category B prison, so close to Strangeways, would reinforce the area's negative image and deter the investors and developers that the council is trying to attract.

The council hopes that if it refuses planning permission, a public inquiry will find in its favour. But that is not how things turned out at Fazakerley where another private prison is to be built. Despite strong local opposition and Liverpool City Council's refusal to grant planning permission, a Department of Environment inspector ruled in favour of the Home Office last May.

Bridgend is the only authority to approve its proposed prison plan, albeit on condition that, due to the site's prominence, the prison blends in with the local landscape. The Prison Service held a public meeting in the area in September 1993 and the potential of 400 jobs helped sway public opinion. The local authority, recognising the need for a new prison in the region, also consulted vigorously. However, once the council had made its position clear, a local anti-prison campaign group was formed.

At Fazakerley and Bridgend, liaison committees comprising the Prison Service, local authority officials and the anti-prison campaign groups have been formed to try and smooth the way forward. The 'No To Fazakerley Prison' campaigners for example, believe that they will have a say in the design and running of the prison to "limit the damage it could do."

- At the time of writing, the Fazakerley and Bridgend contracts had not been awarded. Five companies submitted tenders: UK Detention Services Ltd and Premier (see *Prison Report* 29), Group 4 Tarmac Ltd, Securicor Seifert Atkins and Secure Care Services Ltd. Bidders for Salford have not yet been disclosed by the Prison Service.
- Of the five proposed privately financed, designed, built and run secure training centres for young offenders, one has so far received planning permission, another can be built without it while permission for the remaining three is being sought.

BUCKLEY HALL OPENS

The Group 4-run Buckley Hall prison near Rochdale opened last December to a phased intake of the first 90 adult Category C prisoners. A further 250 will be received when construction of phase two of the building is completed. According to Group 4 the company received some 5,000 applications for 150 jobs. Ninety per cent of the staff have been recruited from the Rochdale area.

On 14 December 1994, Group 4's Jim Harrower said "the nine weeks training has been intense and has prepared the staff well for their task." Eight of the staff have transferred from Group 4's other prison, Wolds, while the Buckley Hall staff complement also includes a number of ex-Prison Service employees. Last July, Mr Harrower said that the company would be implementing a "pioneering and positive regime."

However, conflicting figures for the value of the contract have been issued by the Prison Service and Group 4. According to Derek Lewis (see *Prison Report* 28) the "published contract price of £33m is for five years of the contract. It includes start-up costs and phase-in costs as well as inflation. The costs per place figure of £296 is the total cost per place to the Prison Service, including non-contractual costs such as the Prison Service controller, for the first year of operation."

According to a November 1994 Group 4 Fact Sheet on Buckley Hall, "the value of the contract for 5 years full operation is £25m. The cost per prisoner place during the first full year of operation will be £279, which compares with a state managed prison average cost of £357."

STOP AND GO ESCORTS

Plans to contract-out the prisoner escort service in the north of England suffered a setback in December when bids from four companies including Group 4 and Securicor came in higher than the existing costs of providing the service. The Prison Service is attempting to restructure the contract for the proposed area — which includes Northumberland, Cleveland, Durham, North Yorkshire and parts of Cumbria — to make contracting out possible.



Meanwhile, on 25 January 1995 Group 4 was awarded two new escort contracts worth £116m over five years to cover Area 4 (including Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Suffolk and part of the Thames Valley) and Area 6 (including Cheshire, Clwyd, Gwynedd (northern), North Yorkshire (south western) and West Yorkshire. The company beat off competition from four other companies to provide some 25,000 prisoner movements per month. The contracts will be phased in over eight months starting in July 1995. According to the Prison Service, contracting-out will save "£13m or 11 per cent, increasing to 15 per cent once the start-up costs have been recovered."

DONCASTER FIGURES

The number of assaults on staff by prisoners at Doncaster in its first six months of operation has already exceeded the number allowed in the contract for the whole year. The contract allows for 77 assaults on staff by the end of the first year — June 1995 — before the contract is breached and presumably, the company penalised. But by 31 December 1994 there had already been 93. There had also been 38 proven assaults by prisoners against other prisoners (the contract allows for 148 in the first year) and 546 resolved grievances in the first six months of operation.

On 1 January 1995 there were 410 full-time and 34 part-time staff employed at Doncaster. The total prisoner population at midnight on that day was 723: there were no prisoners on home leave at that time. Two prisoners have died within the prison and one at St James' Hospital, Leeds. Since the prison opened, 12 prisoners have required immediate hospital admission needing an overnight stay. The reasons for admission include acts of deliberate self-harm, drug related incidents and assaults by other prisoners, as well as sudden illness. (Hansard, 19 January 1995).

Doncaster is one of eight prisons (the others are Prison Service-run) which have been left without medical cover due to a crisis in recruiting and retaining prison doctors, according to a recent Home Office survey. The root of the problem is a two year dispute over doctors' fees. The lack of cover breaches Prisons Act obligations which must be met for the prisons to stay open.

NEW FACES

The ever-growing 'penal industrial complex' has been joined by Secure Care Services Ltd which has bid for the Fazakerley and Bridgend prison contracts. Officially incorporated in November 1994, the company's directors include Dr Richard Baldwin, a director of construction group Alfred McAlpine plc and Wilem Frischmann (of holding company Pel Frischmann) a structural engineer whose other directorships include 23 construction and associated companies. Alfred McAlpine built Wymott (opened in 1979) and High Down (opened August 1992) prisons. Mr Frischmann's work includes high buildings, leisure buildings, hotels and hospitals and

'Who's Who' lists his particular interests as tall, economic buildings, shear walls and diaphragm floors, large bored piles in London clay, deep basements, lightweight materials for large span bridges and monitoring and quality assurance procedures for offshore structures.

The consortium is backed by European capital and also includes BET, which owns Shorrock Guards and cleaning, catering and health care companies; EDM Architects which has designed prisons for the Home Office and is part of Capita, a rapidly expanding company providing a range of services previously run by the public sector; and Dumez, owned by French multinational Lyonnaise des Eaux which provides services to a number of French prisons.

Construction firms Wimpey (which built Mount and Belmarsh prisons) and AMEC (Lancaster Farms) have formed a UK joint venture with Corrections Partners Inc (CPI) of the US. A fourth company is also expected to be added to the consortium. CPI claims to be "a recognised leader in the field of corrections, providing offender management, facility planning, staff training and correctional programme development and evaluation services to 50 States and two US territories" and is also bidding for contracts in Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

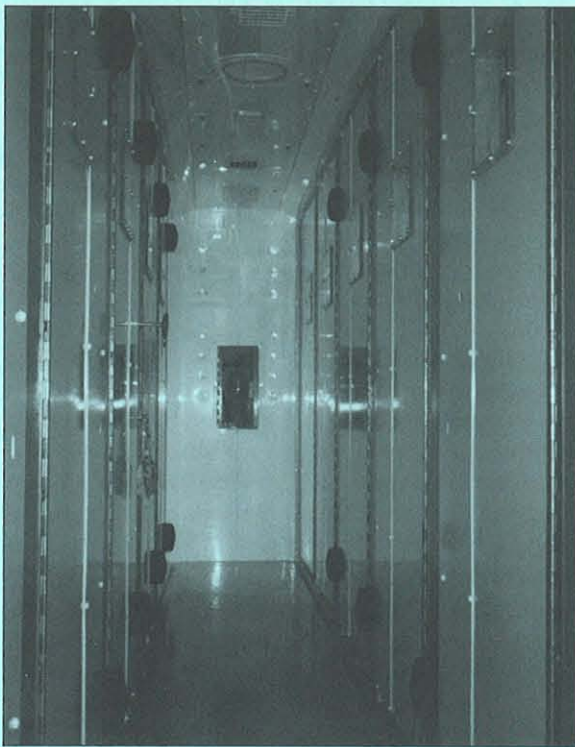
No strangers to the scene are Group 4 Tarmac Ltd, which officially incorporated their partnership venture in September 1994. Tarmac built Garth (opened July 1988) and Blakenhurst prisons.

But ManCare, set up by Sodexo to bid for UK prison contracts, has been unsuccessful so far, and the company will no longer bid for finance, design, build and manage contracts. Sodexo now favours a partnership strategy for tendering whereby other companies in a consortium would finance, design and build the prison, with Sodexo providing services.

FEET IN THE DOOR

As a result of market testing, companies involved in bidding for (and already running) prisons have recently won a variety of government contracts, including:

- WS Atkins companies have a court building, management and maintenance contract from the Lord Chancellor's Department; a contract with the Department of Environment testing the durability of organically coated metal cladding; a coastguard property management contract for the Department of Transport, research and development for the Ministry of Agriculture and a buildings maintenance and new works contract for the Department of Employment.
- Serco Ltd has a contract from the Duchy of Lancaster at the Cabinet Office; estate services contracts for the Department of Employment and estates management services for the Employment Service, and Department of Social Security.
- Tarmac Construction Ltd has a facilities management contract with the Duchy of Lancaster.



- Group 4 has six contracts from the Department of Social Security.
- Wackenhut UK, ITSA Security guarding for the Dept of Social Security.
- Mowlem Facilities Management has a contract for the Department of Social Security
- Sodexo has acquired catering firm Gardner Merchant — and all its contracts — including recent contracts at the Duchy of Lancaster's Central Office of Information, the Department of Education's headquarters, the Department of Health and the Scottish Fire Service Training School.

INTEGRATED RESTRAINT TEAMS ON THE WAY

Legislation to come before Parliament will, if passed, enable Prison Officer restraint teams to operate at contracted out prisons and Prisoner Custody Officer teams from Blakenhurst and presumably Wolds, Doncaster and Buckley Hall — to be part of the Prison Service national contingency arrangements for directly managed establishments.

NORTHERN IRELAND

According to Northern Ireland Minister, Sir John Wheeler, none of the Northern Ireland Office's four prisons and one young offenders centre "are under consideration for privatisation." (Hansard 24 November 1994). This however, might be misleading as the parliamentary question asked only about "privatisation" whereas the Government does not regard 'contracting out' as privatisation.

ARIZONA RIOTS

Prisoners rioted twice within a month at a recently-opened private prison near Tucson, Arizona. The medium-security, 800 bed Eloy Detention Center opened in July 1994 to hold illegal aliens for the Immigration & Naturalisation Service, and also holds prisoners for crimes such as drug offences for the Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBP). Eloy is run by Concept Inc, the third largest prison firm in the US with eight contracts.

On October 23, the National Guard was on standby when 275 FBP prisoners refused to leave a recreation yard to go inside for a head count before the evening meal. Fires were started, windows broken and equipment vandalised. On 14 November however, more than 80 INS prisoners armed themselves with baseball bats, metal fence posts and homemade weapons. Five Concept Inc. staff were injured. This incident arose out of frustration with lengthy deportation proceedings and uncertainty over their future. A Mexican consul was called in to meet with the detainees who eventually agreed to remain calm if their cases were speeded up. The consul is monitoring progress.

Immigration lawyers expressed concern about Eloy and even foresaw trouble. Roger C. Wolf told the Arizona Daily Star (15 November 1994) that "it was a really wretched place to be, with nothing to do and very little in the way of programs." In addition to delays in deportation hearings, he said that prisoners complained of poor food. "The delays mean an inmate is sitting there two weeks soaking up taxpayers money waiting for the bureaucracy and paperwork to get him before a judge to say you can go." Gloria A. Goldman said that three days before the first disturbance she had remarked that the prison seemed ripe for a riot. She also told the newspaper that clients transferred to Eloy complained of bad food and nothing to do. "They know they are not on vacation, but it was just quite a contrast from where they'd been at the federal correctional facility in Safford."

In October the warden, JB Hopkins, tried to respond to prisoners' concerns by installing equipment to receive Spanish language television stations and offering more Mexican food.

But according to a recent report in the Christian Science Monitor, part of the problem lies in cost cutting. The company allegedly hires recent high school graduates as guards, trains them for about two weeks, and pays them \$5.87 an hour. Those with more experience earn \$8.46 an hour. (Guards in Arizona's state-run prisons earn \$10 an hour.) Present and former guards at Eloy also allege that in order to meet the budget — \$10 a day per prisoner less than comparable federal facilities — the company cuts corners on supplies.

CCA IN THE DOCK

Last year Clarence Manis, a prisoner at Corrections Corporation of America's South Central Correctional Centre in Nashville sued CCA and one of its employees alleging they were deliberately indifferent to his medical needs. The company claimed however, that the case could not be brought on the grounds that as CCA were acting on behalf of the state, they and its employee were protected by the qualified immunity enjoyed by public officials.

However, the US District Court in Tennessee, decided on 1 August 1994 that CCA and its employee could be sued and that immunity did not apply. In arriving at its decision the court decided partly on the basis that there is no precedent at common law and also because ... "In the case of a private for profit corporation hired to perform a public function, there is an increased risk that the corporation's actions will diverge from the public interest. Unlike public officials, corporate officers



and employees are hired to serve the interests of the corporation and, more specifically, its stockholders, whose principal interest is earning a financial return on their investment ... Especially when a private corporation is hired to operate a prison, there is an obvious temptation to skimp on civil rights whenever it would help to maximise shareholders' profits ... the threat of incurring money damages might provide the only incentive for a private corporation and its employees to respect the Constitution. Therefore the best policy is not to afford them any immunity ... "

The company and its employee are appealing against this decision.

- Shares in Corrections Corporation of America, a joint owner of UK Detention Services Ltd which runs Blakenhurst, can now be bought and sold on the New York Stock Exchange. In announcing the move on 20 December 1994, CCA's chairman Doctor R Crants said that "the private prison industry has gained substantial acceptance over the past year" and that "given our company's growth and global expansion, we believe this move is a natural one." Analysts have commented favourably on the company's potential particularly in the light of the \$7.9 billion being made available for new prisons in the US.

- On 3 January 1995, CCA announced it had acquired TransCor America Inc, the largest prisoner transportation company in the US, providing services to over 700 US governmental agencies.

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST PRIVATE WOMEN'S PRISON

On 16 December 1994, the Government of Victoria announced that the Corrections Corporation of Australia consortium had won a contract to finance, design, build and manage the state's first private prison and Australia's first private prison for women. It will be built by John Holland Construction, financed by Westpac Banking Corporation and run by CCA. It will replace the existing Fairlea prison and hold 125 prisoners. It is expected to open in June 1996.

Opponents of the proposal say that there has

been no independent research and evaluation of private prisons and that the chosen site in Melton is isolated, heavily contaminated and, if it has been deemed unfit for housing, it is unfit for a prison.

Victoria hopes to have three private prisons operating by 1997 and the Government claims that recent changes to the Corrections Act "strengthen safeguards to protect the public and ensure that the new prisons are accountable." However, according to a Cabinet document leaked last December, high security prisoners will not be housed in private prisons as this "would represent a severe embarrassment to the state if they were to escape," and that the Government should retain control of emergency support services, including those used after escapes.

- A privately run women's prison already exists in the US — the New Mexico Womens Correctional Facility opened in 1989, has 145 prisoners, and is run by Corrections Corporation of America.

CCA ESCORTS SERVICE UNDER FIRE AGAIN

Nursing staff at Melbourne's St Vincent's Hospital, fearing for their safety, turned away three Pentridge prisoners last December and refused to treat more than one prisoner at a time until Corrections Corporation of Australia (CCA) agreed to provide more guards. The hospital had understood that when CCA took over the government's role (see **Prison Report 29**) at the high security 10 bed ward last July, three guards would be on duty with an extra escort guard available between 8am and 4pm. CCA however, had initially removed the daytime escort and since then levels had fallen to two at times. CCA considered the staffing arrangement satisfactory.

NEW SOUTH WALES OMBUDSMAN — CONCERNS ABOUT JUNE PRISON

The New South Wales Government Ombudsman has raised concerns about the operation of Junee, a private prison run by Australasian Correctional Management (ACM). ACM's prison management expertise is provided by Wackenhut, which jointly runs Doncaster.

The Ombudsman's report was published on 31 October 1994, and noted that "as the largest jail in the nation, Junee is obviously an important element in the incarceration of prisoners in NSW."

The 32 complaints received by the Ombudsman were "little different" to those from other prisons and fewer in number than some other large prisons.

But staff turnover is "at a rate which puts it above most NSW gaols and rising" and "already the prison is having problems recruiting specialists, particularly psychologists and other non-custodial staff."

The lack of useful work "could mean that order will be more difficult to keep in the long term" and the number of assaults and other acts of violence "appear to be rising." The Ombudsman pointed out that the incidence of such acts is rising within the prison system as a whole but said that "whether the



current situation is related to the much publicised lower staff to inmate ratio at the gaol remains to be seen."

"The second full year of operation for Junee will be a very testing one indeed," he said. (Report of NSW Ombudsman 1993-1994)

QUEENSLAND COMPETITION

The Queensland Corrective Services Commission is competing with the private sector to win a contract to design, build and operate the new 400 cell high and medium security Woodford Correctional Centre — the state's largest — at a cost of A\$53m. The winner will be selected in June 1995 and the prison is expected to open in 1997. Queensland already has two private prisons.

NEW ZEALAND LEGISLATION PASSED

After lengthy delays, last November the New Zealand Government passed the Penal Institutions Amendment Bill (No. 3) enabling prison privatisation. Two private prisons are planned for Auckland, a 250 bed remand facility and a 350 bed medium security prison. Six firms are bidding for the contracts to finance, design, build and manage them. Decisions are not expected before June 1995 but the Government has high expectations that the successful bidder will be able to have the first facility open by the end of 1996.

NEW BRUNSWICK THE FIRST TO PRIVATISE IN CANADA?

Corrections Corporation of America and Sodexo have formed Corrections Corporation Canada and the company expects a Canadian contract to be awarded in 1995.

The first provincial government in Canada to privatise a facility could be New Brunswick. Last June, the Government decided to seek tenders to design, build and possibly run a new 120 bed young offenders secure custody institution. Fourteen companies initially expressed an interest. A shortlist of four was reduced to three: American companies, Corrections Corporation of America, Wackenhut and Youth Services International (based in Maryland) which have formed joint ventures with Canadian construction companies. The Government will evaluate whether to let a company run the facility after bids are received. A contract is expected

to be awarded on 1 April 1995 and the facility opened by early 1997.

Another province the company could have its eye on is Alberta where the Justice Department is currently reviewing the viability of privatisation as a cost cutting option. In August 1994, Alberta corrections officials visited privately run facilities in the US. If the Government decides to privatise then it is expected that just one of the 10 (but soon to be 9 through closure) existing adult correctional centres will be used as a trial.

US PRISON PRIVATISATION — SUCCESS NOT PROVEN

At a meeting of senior budget officials brought together by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) in Paris, May 1994, Harry S Havens former assistant comptroller general in the US General Accounting Office gave a paper entitled 'Private Sector Ownership and Operation Of Prisons: An Overview of US Experience'. In it he said:

"It is argued that private ownership and operation of prisons maximises efficiency and effectiveness ... a number of studies have been undertaken in an effort to establish whether or not the claimed savings, especially in the ongoing management of the facility, are real. None has succeeded in resolving the issue."

He concluded:

- "In the construction of prison facilities it is evident that there are advantages of extensive private sector involvement ...
- In the operation of prison facilities, the evidence on private sector involvement is considerably less convincing ...
- Contracting for the overall management and operation of a secure detention facility should be approached with caution, despite the apparently growing popularity of that approach in the US."

PARTNERS IN CRIME

Construction firm John Mowlem, which built Swaleside and Elmley prisons, built Wolds with Sir Robert McAlpine, and which jointly runs Blakenhurst with CCA and Sir Robert McAlpine, has a US subsidiary, Charter Builders. The company has just been awarded a \$15.3m contract to build a women's prison in Gatesville, Texas. The 1,000 bed prison is the sixth to be built for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.