

Jail or community service, judge tells protesters

By Kathy Parrish
staff writer

Dean Abbott works in Day House, a Detroit soup kitchen and shelter for women and families.

So it came as a surprise when he was offered the choice of jail or community service for blocking traffic at a Commerce Township defense supplier's.

"Actually, he's already doing the kind of community service the judge imposed — only he's doing it 24 hours a day," said the Rev. Thomas Lumpkin, a priest who works with Abbott at the Catholic Worker House.

THE OFFER of a volunteer stint with the Salvation Army instead of a jail stay was a surprise turn of events Friday in the two-year battle between Williams International and anti-nuclear protesters. Past protesters have been jailed.

But while many of the 13 arrested last week regularly do community service, only one took the alternative sentence. David Fraum, an Ann Arbor farmer, was expected to be released from jail today.

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the controversial "open ended" sentences which are being opposed by eight other Williams activists in Michigan Court of Appeals.

RULING THE protesters were in "civil contempt" of a court order not to block Williams' driveway. Oakland County Circuit Court Chief Judge Francis X. O'Brien said punishment will stand until they "purge" themselves by pledging to obey the court order barring trespass.

O'Brien offered the community service because of jail overcrowding and his concern about using the facility as a "forum for political expression."

The chief judge also said he was im-

pressed with the defendants' "credibility and responsibility." The alternative sentence would allow the defendants to act on their convictions while assuring the rights of Williams International, its employees and the surrounding community.

"It would be a testament of their own sincere desire for peace," O'Brien said.

WHILE APPLAUDING the "creative alternative" offered by O'Brien, supporters of the activists deplored the open-ended sentence.

In protest of the sentence, they expect the prisoners to pursue some "creative alternatives" like fasting. A group jailed in April at Williams fasted to protest a similar sentence.

"Again it's a life sentence," said the Rev. Peter Dougherty, a Catholic priest who was jailed for civil disobedience during a week-long protest at Williams a year ago.

An organizer of the "action" last week, Dougherty believes the sentence will lead to a "critical showdown" between protesters and the courts.

"These people are being asked to violate their consciences by promising not to return. Nobody has promised so far and they're not about to now."

TAKING PART in the civil disobedience at Williams for the second time were: Dorothy Henderson-Whitmarsh, Ann Arbor nurse; Doug Hamm, Ann Arbor, teacher; the Rev. Carol Foltz, Pontiac, minister; and Braun. f

Also convicted of civil contempt were: Maria Ringo, Detroit, student; Barbara

Wetula, Ann Arbor, nurse; Carter Cortelyou, Ann Arbor, student; Jeff Smith, Grand Rapids; Dean Abbot, Detroit, a worker at Catholic Worker House; Ralph Townsend, Woodland; Robert B. Larkin, Ann Arbor, Michigan director of the nuclear arms control group SANE; Ken Jannet, Ann Arbor, student; and Mike O'Neill, Ann Arbor, student.

The sentence will spur a 'showdown,' one protester said.

MEA asks security funding

The Michigan Education Association is seeking state funding for school security needs.

State Rep. Perry Bullard, D-Ann Arbor, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, will sponsor the MEA's bill in January.

"This office is making school security a top priority for the next session," said Dan Sharp, a Bullard aide. "We still have a lot of details to iron out, but we expect to have a final document ready to go in the next couple of weeks."

THE MEASURE, to be called the Urban Safe Schools Act, would establish a fund to be used by Michigan school districts to enhance or initiate security programs. Money would be allocated via matching-fund grants based on need.

Bullard's action came in response to letters sent to all state legislators, Gov. James Blanchard and state Schools Superintendent Phillip Runkel by MEA President Larry Chunovich, a former Southfield teacher. The request came after three Detroit stu-

dents were shot on school property during a single week in October.

"Rep. Bullard is just one of several legislators who are behind us all the way in this effort," said MEA Government Affairs Director Elizabeth Baker. "There is every indication that, once this bill is in final form, it will be supported across the board."

Runkel, in a meeting Monday with Chunovich, also offered his full endorsement.

SEVERAL STATE lawmakers met with Blanchard recently to discuss the proposal and its inclusion in the governor's message to the Legislature.

MEA, an affiliate of the National Education Association, has some 95,000 members. It is widely considered one of the most powerful political forces in the state.

Jobless rate drops slightly

Michigan's November jobless rate rose by 0.6 percent to 10.7 percent.

The number of unemployed workers climbed by 25,000 in November to 463,000. In October, the jobless total was 438,000, 10.1 percent of the labor force. A year earlier, unemployment was 11.7 percent with 489,000 out of work.

Normally, unemployment in Michigan does increase from October to November. Michigan's total employment dropped by 30,000 in November to 3.9 million. The state's labor force also fell, slipping by 5,000 to 4.3 million.

Michigan's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in November increased as well, climbing to 11.4 percent from 10.9 percent in October. The number of jobless workers last month increased by 21,000 to 498,000.

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