

# Action over incest trial blunders

CLIFF BUDDLE

Disciplinary action will be taken against government lawyers responsible for blunders which led to an incest trial being aborted.

But the Legal Department says details of the action taken will be kept secret.

The Governor apologised on behalf of the Government when the trial collapsed after a girl, 14, had suffered the trauma of giving evidence against her father.

It was discovered that the teenager should not have been allowed to testify by TV link.

She will now have to give evidence again in a new trial.

The blunders sparked what has been described as a witch-hunt within the Legal Department.

A spokesman for the department said yesterday that the Attorney-General had considered a report on the affair prepared after an internal investigation.

He had discussed the report with the Director of Public Prosecutions and disciplinary action against officers concerned would follow shortly.

The spokesman said: "Internal disciplinary action will shortly be taken under civil service regulations."

He added that it was not the practice to disclose details of the action taken.

The trial was aborted because incest had been left off the list of offences where the

TV link could be used. The mistake was not spotted until after the girl had spent two days giving evidence.

The legislative oversight has since been put right.

When the trial collapsed in May the Attorney-General and the Director of Public Prosecutions added their apologies to those of the Governor. Prosecutor Paul Dinan, a private barrister to whom the case had been briefed out, took ultimate responsibility.