



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

By

THE HON. MICHAEL H. DUNKLEY JP MP

DEPUTY PREMIER & MINISTER OF PUBLIC SAFETY

G.E.D. SUCCESSES – THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

28TH JUNE 2013

Mr. Speaker, the Mission Statement of the Department of Corrections includes a pledge to “**empower inmates to be responsible and productive citizens**”. The Department is also committed to ensuring that inmates on discharge lead useful lives.

Mr. Speaker, the most powerful tool in meeting the challenge of this Mission Statement is education.

Therefore it gives me great pride to advise this Honourable House and the public of the most recent successes in the GED Programme within the Department of Corrections.

Mr. Speaker, two GED graduation ceremonies were held on Wednesday, 26th June and I was pleased to attend both of them. At the Co-Ed facility, five inmates graduated, three of whom had been released. Of the graduates, a 20 year old female returned to the facility specifically to receive her certificate. Graduates spoke in moving terms of the positive impact the programme and the officers administering it have had on their lives.

At Westgate, **Mr. Speaker**, there were 16 graduates. Honourable Members will be interested to know that one of the Westgate graduates attained the Island's highest score in Mathematics.

Graduates ranged from 18 to 47 years of age. Those inmates who spoke shared their deep sense of achievement as a result of this milestone in their lives. Mr. Speaker, it was especially moving for me to see inmates sentenced for a wide variety of offences reduced to tears when receiving the certificate recognizing their success.

Mr. Speaker, for the information of Honourable Members, the programme is overseen by Ms. Shawnette Somner, the Department's Education Officer. At Westgate the course instructors are:

Mrs Erlor Dean – English

Dr Glen Bascome – GED English

Mark Trott – Maths and Language

Ms Daltonell Minors – Math and Language

At the Co-Ed:

Mrs Anita Monk – GED Reading/English/Maths

Ms Maxine Saunders – Maths and Science

Mr. Speaker, at Westgate I was joined by Junior Minister Senator Jeff Baron, Senator Lynn Woolridge and Senator Alexis Swan. Each of them was likewise inspired by the ceremonies and joined with me in congratulating the staff and the successful inmates.

Mr. Speaker, incarceration is a punishment. Administering the sentences imposed by the Courts is a fundamental component of the mission of the Department of Corrections. However, if we fail to rehabilitate inmates; if we fail to properly equip them for

a return to society, we are investing in further criminality and doing a disservice to the community at large.

Mr. Speaker, this Government supports the Commissioner of Corrections and his officers in the work that they do to renew lives and restore the men and women in their charge to productive citizens. The thriving GED programme represents the culmination of a year's hard work. The value in this is seen not only in the transformation of the inmates but in the resource they represent for this community on their release.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.