



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Entertainment Partnership Initiative with Royal Caribbean
Cruise Lines
The Hon. Shawn Crockwell, JP, MP
Minister of Tourism Development & Transport
20th September 2013

Mr. Speaker, the creation of jobs and employment opportunities is a clearly stated goal for this Government and it is the view of this government that we will take the initiative to provide meaningful employment opportunities wherever possible and to think out of the box in creating these opportunities. Therefore, I am extremely pleased to report today on another employment opportunity initiative that will soon bear results.

Mr. Speaker, the plight of the local entertainers is very well chronicled, there is a dearth of employment opportunity on the island, and the opportunities that are available are very often for a limited period. Many of our seasoned and aspiring local entertainers seek the assistance of the Bermuda Department of Tourism to create and provide opportunities for them to perform and display their talents at various locations and venues throughout our Island.

Mr. Speaker, in support of our local entertainers the Ministry of Tourism Development and Transport has commenced an entertainment employment initiative working in partnership with Royal Caribbean International (RCI). This initiative will provide opportunities for local entertainers to work and perform onboard RCI ships whilst in port for the remainder of this cruise ship season, with the intent to continue this initiative in the 2014 cruise season and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Tourism hosted an open audition inviting all interested entertainers to perform at the Chewstick Headquarters and this event was held on Wednesday September 11th from 6pm to 9pm. The range of entertainers included musicians, vocalists, dancers, comedians, actors, magicians and cultural performers. Entertainers were requested to provide a photographic image, as well as their Entertainment Resume, and they were invited to perform for five (5) minutes. Following their performance a short list was created and those who were successfully shortlisted were invited back to participate in an Entertainment Showcase.

Mr. Speaker, the Entertainment Showcase saw twenty five (25) of our top local musicians and artists perform in front of the RCI Executives which was headed by Mr. Mike Ronan who is the RCI Vice President of Government Relations for the Caribbean, Latin America and Asia, and he was accompanied by Mr. Rob Waterfield who is the RCI Specialist for Contracted Musicians and Entertainers. The Showcase was held the following day on Thursday, September 12, at the Fairmont Hamilton Princess in the Gazebo Room. Mr. Ronan and Mr. Waterfield experienced, first-hand, Bermuda's remarkable talent and they were able to evaluate and determine how to amalgamate and include some of our local entertainers into their onboard entertainment programs.

Mr. Speaker, both Mr. Ronan and Mr. Waterfield of RCI were very pleased with the caliber of performances of our local entertainers, and indicated that they were optimistic in providing entertainment opportunities on board, prior to seasons end. Most importantly they considered the visit, and the viewing of the talent, to be excellent timing for their decision making in planning their entertainment schedules for the 2014 season.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to RCI's commitment to providing entertainment opportunities onboard their ships, we are also pleased to announce that for the remainder of the cruise ship season, RCI would also like to source local entertainers to provide a pier side "Departure Performance" for their passengers on the Explorer of the Sea and the Grandeur of the Seas.

Mr. Speaker, we consider these initiatives as positive steps to broaden the exposure of our local talent and also enhancing our local tourism product. I would like to thank the principals of RCI for working with us to develop and offer solutions that will assist our local entertainers by providing much needed employment in this sector.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the Department of Tourism staff for their role and efforts in organizing the auditioning and Entertainment Showcase that received rave reviews.

THANK YOU