



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

By

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REPORT ON A MEETING WITH OWNERS/OPERATORS OF LICENSED PREMISES 19TH JULY 2013

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will recall my statement to this Honourable House in which I indicated my intention to convene a meeting with the owners and operators of premises licensed to sell alcohol.

I am pleased to advise that this meeting did take place and with approximately 30 stakeholders connected with liquor licensed premises, we met on Wednesday afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, a cross section of this sector was represented including community club presidents, bar and restaurant owners as well as nightclub proprietors. The dialogue was open and direct and as I have indicated in the media, extremely productive.

Mr. Speaker, what emerged was a consensus on the need to keep the lines of communication open within the industry itself. There is a need for more effective information sharing to ensure that a silo mentality does not lead to the ruin of one business over another and more importantly, the promotion of venues that are unsafe for the enjoyment of patrons generally.

Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to be joined by my colleague the Junior Minister of Public Safety, Senator Baron, who sits in another place. The willingness to share experiences and suggest solutions on the part of those in attendance bodes well for our future plans.

Mr. Speaker, from the meeting the Ministry has determined that the following issues had general support and require some immediate attention:

- Implementing a “banned from one, banned from all” policy for some licensed premises,
- mandatory 10 checks at licensed premises

- Stronger enforcement of bans already in place (including more workable legislation apart from the Summary Offences Act 1926)
- Standardized training for security guards to ensure common standards across the industry, and
- Better sharing of information between businesses in conjunction with the Police

Mr. Speaker, the policies in this area require some work to ensure we get it right the first time and so during the recess the Ministry will be isolating best practice for the implementation of these and other initiatives. Where legislation is required, we expect to bring that for the consideration of this Honourable House in the fall Session.

Mr. Speaker, this engagement of the various sectors of the community is a deliberate policy objective of this Government. The success of things like the Inter-Agency Gang Task Force and the Gun Bounty Programme has come from the opening of clear lines of communication for community partners.

Mr. Speaker, this Government remains committed to engaging all relevant stakeholders in meaningful dialogue. The next phase of this

engagement will involve meeting with security service providers to work with them on a standardized programme of training for security guards promoting common standards across the industry.

Honourable Members will recall that the substantive Act was passed by the Legislature some time ago. The Regulations must now be addressed so that we can ensure that security guards are well trained and can themselves operate in safe environments.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will have seen the recent announcement of the Second Quarter Crime Statistics by the Commissioner of Police. Those numbers when taken with the increased feeling of neighbourhood safety in Bermuda are encouraging. Things are moving in the right direction.

As the Commissioner said:

"Bermuda's collaborative efforts over the past several years are bearing fruit now"

Mr. Speaker, we all have a part to play and we are all in this together.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.