



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

By

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THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS BOARD REPORT 2018 - 2019

11TH DECEMBER 2020

Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to introduce to the Legislature the Report of the Treatment of Offenders Board for 2018 – 2019. This report is in accordance with Section 8 (1) of the Treatment of Offenders Board Act 1979 and Rule 170 of the Correctional Rules 1980 as per 1989 Revision.

The Treatment of Offenders Board is governed by the Prison Rules 1980, The Prison Act 1979, The Prison Amendment 2013 and the Treatment of Offenders Act 1979.

Honorable members will be aware that **The Treatment of Offenders Board** was created to ensure the rights of inmates while incarcerated and that fair and adequate treatment is upheld within all corrections facilities.

Mr. Speaker, the responsibilities of the Board include being available to inmates that wish to discuss any on-going concerns and it is the Board's

duty to ensure guidance to inmates on how to best move forward with any processes that they may seek advice on.

The Board is also responsible for conducting adjudications regarding inmates that may contra ban the prison rules which are guided by the Prison Act 1979, and to hand down disciplinary sanctions on offending inmates.

Mr. Speaker, the Board meets on the First Wednesday of each Month at the Westgate Correctional Facility and on the Third Wednesday of each Month at the Co-Ed Correctional Facility, which includes the Farm Facility Right Living House.

Mr. Speaker, throughout 2018, there were many breaches of the perimeters at the corrections facilities including an escalation in both inmate and officer dissatisfaction with the overall operation and management of the facilities. The Board continues to adjudicate inmates for various forms of contra bans and have had to tighten awards in response to the escalations.

Mr. Speaker, please allow me to give the statistical breakdown of adjudications and interviews for infractions against Prison Rules and general concerns of inmates respectively. There were fifty-four adjudications at the Westgate Facility 15 related to cell phone infractions, 17 instances of assault and 22 general infractions against prison rules. There were seven adjudications at the Farm facility; two cell phone infractions and five general infractions against prison rules. There were no adjudications from the CO-ED facility.

Mr. Speaker, Rota visits are conducted in teams of two or more members at each facility. They allow for on location discussions and resolutions

with both inmates and Department of Correction administration and officers of ongoing concerns. There was a total of six visits to the Westgate Correctional Facility. There was 1 visit to the Co-Ed facility and five visits to the Farm Facility. During these visits, members spoke with inmates about the challenges at the facility and their overall well-being.

Mr. Speaker, the Board would like to acknowledge the effort of the inmates who have "given back" to society by speaking to selected groups and individuals and helping others to avoid the pits into which they fell.

The Board also wishes to acknowledge the results of the Right Living House program. The inmates that were interviewed have shown a huge improvement as a result of being enrolled in the Right Living House. The success rate for the program remains positive and the board commends the Right Living House staff on a job well done.

Mr. Speaker, throughout 2019 various facility visits and Interviews unveiled the harsh realities of life in prison. Inmates and Administration both noted that the environment at the facilities began to be of grave concern – physical and otherwise. Levels of tension at Westgate continued to rise as the demographics of the inmate populace shifted. Westgate is home to younger ‘men’ with long-term sentences.

Mr. Speaker, the physical condition of the facilities is understandably poor, given their age. Each facility continues to record its restorative needs with the government Works and Engineering department. The 2019 hurricane season added to the deterioration and destruction of the facilities and the perimeters. Thus, security breaches are still of grave concern.

The Board continues to adjudicate inmates for various forms of prison rule violations. The following is a statistical breakdown of adjudications

and interviews for infractions against Prison Rules and general concerns of inmates, respectively.

Mr. Speaker, in total there were four adjudications at the Farm facility. There were fifty-three adjudications at the Westgate Facility. The level of contention at the Westgate facility worsened over the year as inmates struggled to conform to life at the facility. Approximately 35% of prison rule infractions involve mobile phones and related parts. The ever-increasing number of mobile phones and offenses is a battle for the Department of Corrections team. They continue to combat this issue.

Mr. Speaker, the frequency of Rota visits decreased during 2019 as security concerns arose for members of the board, partly due to industrial action. The Department of Correction's administration and the Treatment of Offenders Board worked together to ensure that confidence was restored.

There was a total of two visits to the Westgate Correctional Facility and 23 inmate interviews. During these visits, members spoke with inmates about the challenges at the facility and their overall well-being.

There were five visits made to the Farm Facility and five interviews were conducted. The main concerns at the Farm facility with both inmates and the Department of Corrections officers are with the condition of the facility.

Mr. Speaker, there were three visits to the Co-Ed Facility and one inmate was interviewed. The Right Living House program shifted to the Co-Ed facility after the program at the Farm closed due to the building being deemed uninhabitable. The program itself continues to benefit inmates

immensely. The success rate remains positive and the Board commends the inmates and staff on a job well done.

Overall **Mr. Speaker**, the main issues expressed by inmates at Co-Ed are relative to the overall physical state of the facility.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hard work and dedication of the Treatment of Offenders Board members. The work they provide and the commitment to our Corrections community is paramount. I also wish to thank all other agencies involved who work together to ensure that the Board is able to carry out its mandate safely and effectively. Our cooperation and collaboration will ensure that we conduct the work of the government together and strive to improve the health and wellbeing of the Corrections community. Only together we can succeed.

Thank you Mr. Speaker

