



Ministerial Statement to the House of Assembly

Opening of Bermuda Registry of Shipping London Office

By
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Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to inform this honourable house of a reception that was held at the Bermuda London Office on Wednesday evening 14th May to officially launch the opening of the London satellite office of the Department of Maritime Administration (DMA) commonly referred to as the Bermuda Registry of Shipping.

Mr. Speaker, understanding the importance and value of having an office in London the Government made it a priority to get this office established and operational, therefore the opening reception was a significant milestone towards achieving our objectives to enhance the level of services provided and the expansion of the Registry.

Mr. Speaker, Bermuda has been operating a shipping registry since 1789, that's two hundred and twenty five (225) years in the business. During early years Bermuda played a strategic role in the safety and security of the British ships

transiting the Atlantic Ocean and the Registry has evolved expanding its role and services to ships covering all the oceans of the globe.

The Bermuda Shipping Registry is a Category One (Cat 1) member of the prestigious Red Ensign Group (REG) of Registries and the Registry takes pride in the high standards of its ships and the world class service it provides to its clients. As a REG Cat 1 shipping registry Bermuda can register ships of any type, age or size subject to meeting the standards required for flagging-in to Bermuda.

Mr. Speaker, the current Bermuda fleet consists of large Cruise Ships, Oil, Gas and Chemical Tankers, Container Ships, Bulk Carriers, Offshore Vessels (FPSOs, FSOs, Oil Rigs) and Code vessels under the Passenger and Commercial Yacht Code. The Administration has extensive experience with Large Cruise Ships, especially with the new generation of passenger ships embracing the 'safe return to port' concept. The latest addition to Bermuda fleet is the most modern large passenger ship "**Regal Princess**" currently being delivered at Fincantieri shipyard in Italy.

Mr. Speaker, as members will know, the Merchant Shipping Act, 2002 provides the primary legislation and the Merchant Shipping (Registration of Ships) Regulations 2003 provides for registration of ships in Bermuda. Schedule 1 of the Merchant Shipping Act 2002 provides the private law provisions relating to the title of ownership and mortgages over the ships on the register. Under the Bermuda laws the title of a ship is divided into 64 shares, and a share can be owned by five joint owners representing that share. The law also provides for nonqualified interests to register a ship as minority shareholders of a Bermuda ship.

In addition to the main registration, Bermuda also provides for the Demise (Bareboat) Charter Registration, both for 'demise in' and 'demise out' registration. This registration process has been of immense assistance to some of our ship owners to achieve profitable and gainful employment of their ships in this difficult economic climate. A further registration service Bermuda provides is the 'registration of ships under construction' which has gained popularity in the recent years.

Mr. Speaker, subject to a ship complying with the statutory survey and certification requirements, and the ship owner providing the relevant declarations and documents, the Bermuda registration process can be completed within the day of receiving the application. The Registrar of Shipping and the Registry staff are available during the normal business hours, and they are also available by prearrangement at any time when required for urgent registration transactions.

Mr. Speaker, we will undertake and complete some of the registration functions through the new London Office to take advantage of time difference between UK, Europe and Bermuda. In this regards this Office will be able to accept registration and mortgage documentation for immediate registration, this is a value added service for which the shipping and financial community had been hoping for. Ultimately, the primary aim with the establishment of the DMA Satellite Office in London is to provide efficient and cost effective ship survey, certification and registration services to Ship owners and ship operators, in a timely manner.

Mr. Speaker, Bermuda's shipping registry has a large number of ships operating internationally that requires frequent surveyor attendance for conducting statutory surveys, audits and inspections. It has been the practice of Bermuda to send its in-

house surveyors to conduct the mandatory flag State surveys and audits on ships where ever they are at a cost to the ship owners. It is the aim of the DMA by having a team of surveyors based in London to reduce the costs of the surveys substantially, particularly for those ships operating in and around the UK and European waters. The London based survey team will also service Bermuda ships calling into Middle East, Indian Subcontinent, Far East and Australasia, providing surveyor availability at short notice.

Mr. Speaker, the reception was attended by representatives of over twenty five (25) companies and business entities that are either clients or work on behalf of clients of the Bermuda Registry. Some of the companies and businesses represented included Anglo Eastern, Carnival UK, Concordia Maritime, Hapag Lloyd, the MCA and Burgess Yachts to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge and thank the Chief Surveyor Captain Pat Nawaratne, the Registrar of Shipping Mr. Edward Robinson and all of the DMA team for their hard work and efforts towards establishing the London Office as all of the clients in attendance provided complimentary comments on the service provided by our Registry.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the Director of the London Office Ms. Kimberly Durrant and her colleagues for their assistance in organizing the reception that was enjoyed by all in attendance.

Thank You Mr. Speaker