



Ministerial Statement
Sen. the Hon. Michael M. Fahy, JP

Middleton Film Crew Denied Work Permits

Wednesday March 26th 2014

Madam President, yesterday on the front page of the Royal Gazette newspaper was the headline entitled, "*Middleton Film Crew Denied Work Permits*". The article - sadly - was full of inaccuracies.

Whilst I have shared my concerns with the editor of the Royal Gazette shortly after reading the content in the hard copy of the newspaper yesterday (which differed from the on-line version), and notwithstanding a clarification on page 4 of today's Royal Gazette which makes the true position more clear, it is still incumbent upon me in this instance to make as clear as possible, the Government's position.

Therefore, I shall highlight just a few inaccuracies with the story which are as follows:

1. The headline is very misleading and entirely wrong. The Middleton film crew were not denied work permits. Rather, they had not applied for any permits in the first instance - which is what they should have done.
2. The newspaper also quoted the executive producer of "*Mystery in Paradise*" as saying - all crew had letters from the Department of Immigration signed by the

Acting Chief Immigration Officer advising that they had permission to come and film on the island. *This is false.*

3. In fact, a letter had been received from the *Acting Director of Tourism* welcoming the film crew to Bermuda. That *does not* amount to permission from the Department of Immigration.

4. Mr. Meens quoted, "*Unfortunately I have no real explanation as to why the ruling government would want to sabotage the good intentions of the production company and their willingness to further explain what happened to Becky and her case*". *This is false.* There has been no sabotage.

5. The newspaper also says that I as Minister intervened on Friday March 21st 2014. *That is false.*

Madam President, here are the facts:

1. The matter was brought to me at a standing Immigration meeting on March 20th 2014 for consideration as a result of there having been no work permit applications made.

2. I made the correct determination during the meeting that temporary work permits must be applied for- which requires a ten day lead time.

3. The Department of Tourism was advised of the results of my determination by close of business on March 20th 2014. They were advised that the film crew needed to apply for temporary work permits.

Madam President, the Department of Tourism prepared *Letters of Introduction*. These can be used in certain circumstances; including undertaking fact-finding missions - i.e. journalists on short assignments to cover a story. This is the policy under which the Department of Tourism presumably provided letters to the film crew.

However, that is not appropriate in this circumstance since the film crew are not undertaking a fact-finding mission such as journalists from the Weather Channel who may be covering the island during a hurricane. Instead they are filming a documentary and as such, temporary work permits for each member of the crew are required.

Finally, **Madam President**, neither the Department of Tourism or the Bermuda Tourism Authority vet work permits which is being suggested by many in the community. I would like to make it clear that it is a common practice for the Department of Immigration to consult with other Government Ministries when it is deemed appropriate - which they do as a matter of courtesy.

Madam President, as I close I would like to say that it was very disappointing to read a story in the newspaper that was filled with so many inaccuracies. So for my Senate Colleagues and those listening by way of radio, I felt obligated to provide the correct information. I trust this clarifies my position in respect of this matter. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Editor of the Royal Gazette for making the corrections in today's edition.

Thank you **Madam President**.

