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Report on gaming for Island is complete::

By Tim Smith

Consultants have completed their \$300,000 study into the impact gaming would have on Bermuda.

New Orleans-based Innovation Group and the Island's gaming task force are both keeping tight-lipped over the results of their findings, which now rest with Cabinet.

Innovation Group vice president Matthew Landry has previously pointed to studies showing a quarter of holidaymakers in the United States say gaming is one of the things they look for when they choose where to go on vacation.

However, Mr. Landry has warned that doesn't make casinos a silver bullet to save the struggling tourism industry.

Premier and Tourism Minister Ewart Brown launched the review last October after hoteliers lobbied him to relax Bermuda's gaming laws.

Church groups and many Government MPs have consistently opposed gambling on the Island, such as the controversial *Niobe Corinthian* casino ship and poker in bars, although debate has raged while Crown and Anchor is allowed at cricket matches.

The Premier tried to score a point for the pro-gaming group by putting forward legislation which would allow cruise ships to open their casinos at night while in port.

However, his attempt to sneak the bill through behind the backs of his party colleagues backfired when they got wind of his tactic and voted him down in the House of Assembly.

Some say the fallout from Dr. Brown's move — which led to calls for his resignation from four Progressive Labour Party MPs including two Ministers — was a potentially fatal blow for gaming in Bermuda.

On this point, gaming task force head Wendell Hollis told *The Royal Gazette*: "The issue of opening the casinos of cruise ships in port was never part of the terms of reference of either the task force or The Innovation Group."

Asked how the report was going, Mr. Hollis said at the end of last month: "The completed task force on gaming report together with the Innovation Group report were submitted to the Cabinet.

"The release of any information in relation to the same is very much a matter for the determination of the Cabinet."

Dr. Brown has confirmed the report will go before Cabinet, but his press secretary Glenn Jones has ignored requests for information about what it says or what will happen next with it.

