

DISCRIMINATION AT TOWNSVILLE

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Menzies

I have seen reports of an incident in Townsville where a hotel-keeper refused to serve liquor to a visiting Education Officer from Kenya. Quite clearly the laws governing the sale of liquor in Townsville are a matter for the Queensland State authorities and the Commonwealth Government has no jurisdiction in that matter. I have been reliably informed that in fact a hotel-keeper is not obliged, under the Queensland liquor licensing laws, to sell liquor to any individual person if he chooses not to do so.

Having said that, however, I would like to make it quite clear that I greatly regret this incident. I deplore any discourtesy to any visitor to this country from overseas, whatever the colour of his skin and whatever country he comes from. I am sure that most Australians will share my feeling on this. I am particularly sorry, however, that the incident reported has occurred to a responsible government officer of another Commonwealth country who is here to study the way in which Australians are educated.

CANBERRA,

22nd September, 1961.

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NOTE: Newspapers carried reports on 19th September of a Townsville hotel-keeper's refusal to serve liquor to a Kenya Education Officer, Mr. Gerald Kalya, who is at present on a study course in Australia.