News Release

22 September 2004

The Rank Group Plc

DCMS Response to Joint Committee Report on the Draft Gambling Bill

The Rank Group Plc ("Rank") has noted the publication today of the response by the Department of Culture Media and Sport ("DCMS") to the report issued by the Joint Committee on the Draft Gambling Bill which was issued on 22 July, 2004 (the "JCDGB Report").

Rank welcomes the commitment that the Government has shown towards the process of modernising the UK's outdated gambling laws. Rank is confident that the introduction of new gaming machines and sports betting into casinos, the removal of non-permitted areas, the abolition of the 24 hour rule for casino and bingo and the relaxation of certain advertising restrictions for casinos, will be positive for the UK industry.

However, there are aspects of the latest Government pronouncement which are inconsistent with its policy objectives and which ignore the recommendations made by the Joint Committee on the Draft Gambling Bill. In particular, Rank does not understand the motivation behind the Government's desire to limit Category A machines to regional casinos only. The JCDGB report noted that "the Government's proposals, as they affect the existing casino industry, are unnecessarily restrictive and could have negative implications for the future of the industry." Rank believes that the proposals in the JCDGB report in relation to these issues represent a sensible balance and will continue to lobby aggressively in order to secure a more level playing field for the UK gaming industry.

Commenting on the DCMS response, Mike Smith, Chief Executive, said:

"The Government's recognition of the urgency for the introduction for the new bill is good news and we are excited at the prospect of operating under an improved regulatory regime. We are continuing to lobby for further improvements and hope that over the coming weeks the final details of the bill will be resolved so as to ensure an early and smooth passage through Parliament."

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