

MEMORANDUM FOR CABINET BY THE  
HON. MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE

Housing Scheme by Gas Board

Some time ago the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Agriculture had hinted to the Gas Board that it should consider the possibility of undertaking a housing scheme for the benefit of its employees. The Board has suggested that it would be willing to sponsor such a housing scheme provided a suitable plot of Government-owned land on emphyteusis for 150 years at a nominal rent is made available.

2. Because of the serious housing situation which has been the subject of severe criticism from various quarters, my Ministry not only endorses the Gas Board's suggestions but wishes to give all possible help in order that the scheme be implemented without delay. The Gas Board will finance the entire scheme from its own funds.

3. As the Gas Board's two main working stations are Marsa (Town Gas) and Birzebbugia (Liquid Gas) the best location for the proposed housing scheme would be Santa Lucia which lies mid-way between the two towns. Correspondence was accordingly initiated with the three departments most directly concerned in the matter (Public Works, Lands, Housing) who all expressed the view that any allocation of land in this area for schemes similar to those proposed by the Gas Board would run counter to Government policy under which land at Santa Lucia has been earmarked for the Government-sponsored home-ownership scheme.

4. My Ministry fully appreciates the stand taken by the three departments mentioned earlier but considers that the Gas Board proposal should not be allowed to fizzle-out because of what appears to be a technical hitch. The Hon. Minister of Justice and Parliamentary Affairs was accordingly approached and on his instructions the proposed scheme was considered by the Housing Units Committee. The latter body does not seem to be contrary to the proposed scheme but has suggested that it be submitted for the approval of Cabinet. Hence the purpose of this Memorandum.

5. Considering that the Gas Board does not intend to ask for any grants or loans as provided under the home-ownership scheme and that definite benefits would accrue to the workers employed by the Board through

- a) decent dwellings at a reasonable rent; and
- b) a residence within easy reach of the employee's place of work.

Honourable Ministers are asked to endorse the Gas Board's proposed housing scheme and to approve that the Gas Board be allocated a suitable plot of Government-owned land at Santa

Lucia on emphyteusis for 150 years at a nominal rent.

6. The provision of cheap housing to the Gas Board's employees is sure to increase their efficiency by instilling in them a greater interest and pride in their work. It could, moreover, result in other para-statal bodies and large commercial organizations evolving similar schemes of their own - a possibility which is certainly to be encouraged.

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