

MEMO SUBMITTED TO CABINET BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF LABOUR,
EMPLOYMENT AND WELFARE

Extension of the Probationary Period of an Apprenticeship

In terms of the Industrial Training Act (Act X of 1952) the first six months of an apprenticeship is considered as a probationary period, during which the apprenticeship may be terminated by either party on three days' notice.

On the 14th June, 1968, Messrs. Malta Drydocks Corporation, which has 360 out of the 670 apprentices in Malta, applied to extend this probationary period from six to twelve months.

All the apprentices engaged by Drydocks perform their first year of their service on basic training. During this period they visit various trades sections in the Drydocks Training Centre and receive practical experience in a number of trades, at the end of which they are offered a trade on the basis of their performances and aptitudes and relative to the exigencies of the Company.

In accordance with the Industrial Training Act, 1952, apprentices are given written confirmation of their apprenticeship at the end of their first six months of apprenticeship. However, at this stage, they cannot be allocated a specific trade; this allocation can only be made at the end of the first year's basic training.

When considering the question of confirmation of apprenticeships, at the end of the present six months probationary period, no problems arise for those apprentices who have made satisfactory progress in their training and demonstrate adequate potential and aptitude in at least one of the trades covered during this period.

On the other hand, the Drydocks must take a decision whether to dismiss an apprentice who has not progressed sufficiently during this period or risk entering into a five year contract with him, a costly liability to the Company. The Drydocks is most reluctant to dismiss an apprentice at this stage unless his progress is extremely poor. It is felt that an apprentice may not have had an aptitude for the trades covered in the first six months of his training and that he could improve when he visits other sections, which would suit his particular abilities.

The Department of Labour is satisfied that the request by Messrs. Malta Drydocks Corporation is justified and is solely meant to give every opportunity to an apprentice to take up a rewarding and self-satisfying career.

The Youth Advisory Committee unanimously approved the proposed extension of the probationary period at its meeting of the 7th August, 1968.

If other employers, apart from Messrs. Malta Drydocks Corporation, apply to the Director of Labour for similar extensions, their case would be studied on its own merits.

Hon. Members are invited to agree to the proposal to amend the Industrial Training Act to enable the Director of Labour and Emigration to extend, at the request of the employer, the period of apprenticeship from six to twelve months.

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19 December, 1968.

L-Arkiw Nazzjonali ta' Malta