

Memorandum to Cabinet by the Honourable Minister
of Labour, Employment and Welfare

1. This memorandum proposes the transfer of the Government Industrial Training Centre Marsa from the Department of Education to the Department of Labour and Emigration.
2. The Centre was established in 1957 to improve the prospects, by training in a skilled craft, of men who wished to emigrate. After a period of stagnation, the Centre was reorganised, under the auspices of the Training and Placement Advisory Committee, to train men discharged by the U.K. Service Departments. The Centre is now firmly established, on a permanent basis, as a retraining centre for men who have to change their jobs in later life. The trades taught (electrician, mechanic, welder, sheet-metal worker, woodworker, building trades, etc.) are those in where there is a shortage of skilled men. The Centre as now established is capable of dealing with 500/600 trainees a year, on the basis of six months' courses.
3. The Centre is not being fully used. At the beginning of 1969, it contained some 300 trainees, all redundant men from the U.K. Departments, but with successful placing in suitable jobs, there are currently only 36 redundant service men in the Centre. In addition a number of youths are taking courses - these are young men who have failed to get apprenticeships or admission to the Technical Institute because they have not the required educational standard.
4. The essential role of the Centre is for the retraining of older men who become unemployed as a result of economic changes - the slow-down in the construction industry, for example, has displaced a number of men who could benefit from a retraining course. Among the 5,000 currently unemployed are a substantial number of unskilled men who missed the opportunity to develop a skill when they first entered employment, but are capable of benefitting from an intensive course of retraining, which would improve their placing prospects in the current situation when unemployment has risen whilst at the same time there is a serious shortage of skilled workers.
5. The Disabled Resettlement Advisory Committee appointed under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1969, is urging me to set up facilities for the industrial rehabilitation and training of disabled persons and I am desirous of making such provision. It would be a duplication of resources to set up vocational training and

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industrial rehabilitation courses for the disabled other than in the G.I.T.C. Marss (apart from establishments run by voluntary bodies with Government assistance which deal with special classes of disabled, such as the blind, paraplegics, and the mentally handicapped).

6. The case for transferring the Government Training Centre from the Department of Education to the Department of Labour and Emigration can be briefly summarised as follows:-

(a) The Centre is not an educational establishment. It is a retraining centre for adult workers who have to change their jobs, and as such, it should be administered by the Director of Labour and Emigration as an instrument of employment policy. The Director of Labour and Emigration is in direct touch with the clients of the Centre i.e. both the men who need retraining and the employers who need trained men. The training needs will change from time to time with changes affecting employment in the different sections of the economy, and the Director of Labour and Emigration is in a better position than the Director of Education to assess these changes, and ensure that the training courses run at any time are changed with changing needs.

(b) Because it is dealing with adult workers and not children or students, the Centre should provide the atmosphere of a factory rather than that of a school. The staff of an adult training centre, providing intensive courses, cannot for example enjoy the long summer holidays of school teachers.

(c) Under the Industrial Training Act 1952, the Department of Labour and Emigration is responsible for training within industry (apprenticeships and learnerships). The work of the G.I.T.C. has to be coordinated with the other training activities of the Department of Labour and Emigration.

(d) The industrial rehabilitation and vocational training of disabled persons (apart from special types of disabled mentioned above) can be developed within the Government Industrial Training Centre, using existing staff and resources. The administration of the Disabled Persons Employment Act is the responsibility of the Minister of Labour, Employment and Welfare; it would be administratively ineffective for the industrial rehabilitation and vocational training of disabled persons to be "farmed out" to the Ministry of Education.

(e) The success of a vocational training centre for adult workers depends on close consultation with employers' and workers' organisations. This could be achieved through the present Training and Placement Advisory Committee, if it were given wider powers to advise on the resettlement of all displaced workers, and not confined at present to persons affected by the run-down of the U.K. Departments.

(f) The Director of Labour and Emigration has the responsibility for placing workers after training in suitable employment. The work of the Training and Placement Advisory Committee has clearly demonstrated the staff and organisational difficulties which inevitably arise when responsibility for placing men in jobs, and responsibility for training them for these jobs, lie with two separate Ministries.

(g) The G.I.T.C. can in my view operate much more effectively as an instrument of employment policy, an adjunct of the Employer Service. Otherwise, with the end of the run-down, there is a danger that it will again become a somewhat neglected outpost of the Education Department.

Honourable Ministers are requested to approve that the G.I.T.C. be transferred from the Education Department to the Department of Labour and Emigration

MLEM 195/70.

31 March 1971