

MEMO FOR CABINETBY THE HON. MINISTER OF ECONOMIC PLANNING AND FINANCEAllocation of special work to two Land
Survey Officers in the P.W.D.

The Director of Public Works, with the Hon. Minister for Works and Housing's support is requesting authority for the payment of £200 each to Mr. Anthony Mifsud and Mr. J. Vassallo, two Land Survey Officers in his Department, who were detailed to carry out survey work after office hours in connection with the Hamrun and B'Kara bypass roads.

2. In September 1962, when work was progressing on the designs of these two roads, the Public Works Department felt that unless an immediate survey of the proposed routes were taken, the designs would not be completed in good time. As the Survey Section of the Department was, at the time, very hard pressed with work, they considered that in order to go ahead with the job they should adopt one of two alternative courses. They could either entrust the surveys to some reliable surveyors outside the Government Service or else detail two Land Survey Officers in the Department to undertake the work after office hours against payment of extra remuneration on a lump sum basis. With the Minister's concurrence they chose the second alternative and fixed the remuneration at £200 for each Surveyor.

3. Their reasons for proceeding in this manner (which they admitted to be unorthodox and irregular) without seeking prior "Finance" and "Establishments" approval, were as follows:--

- (i) They saved the time that would have been lost in "endless correspondence" and were thus able to speed up the works;
- (ii) The arrangement resulted in economies. The fee of £200 worked out at £2 per acre which was below the price on the open market for work of this nature. Moreover each survey cost 18s.2d. per hour (in each case the job was performed in 219 hours) whereas had the same work been carried out by direct labour at overtime rates it would have cost at least 25s.0d. per hour;
- (iii) The Director of Public Works had several times been urged in the Economic Committee to secure additional professional and technical help and to resort to overtime work in order to increase the capacity of his department to deal with works speedily and efficiently.

4. "Establishments" and "Finance" are unable to endorse the Director of Public Works departure from the approved practice on the following grounds:--

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- (a) The surveys took 3 months to complete and approval could and should have been sought immediately it was proposed to start the work; and even if the work had inevitably to be taken in hand at a moment's notice, "Finance" and "Establishments" should at least have been "brought in" as soon as the work was started;
- (b) The remuneration which the Director of Public Works agreed to allow to the two surveyors did not conform to the regulations governing the payment of overtime in respect of work carried out after normal working hours;
- (c) In arriving at the figure of 25s.0d. per hour (which would have had to be paid) on the basis of overtime rates, no account was taken by the Public Works Department of any work which might have been undertaken during normal working hours and which would not have had to be compensated at time and a half rates;
- (d) Each of the two surveyors is supposed to have incurred an expense of £130 (presumably in respect of remuneration to outside labour) but no details have been given as to how this amount was expended. Even if this expense quoted by the Public Works Department is taken as correct, the amount of £70 (viz. £200-£130) allegedly left over for each surveyor would work out to an overtime rate of 6s.5d. an hour which exceeds both the rate of 5s.0d. normally payable to officers of this grade and the maximum overtime rate of 6s.0d. allowed under the regulations;
- (e) As the two jobs in question were entrusted to P.W.D. surveyors and not to outsiders one may assume that with some measure of overtime the Department could have coped with the work;
- (f) While the Public Works Department's efforts to secure legitimate means to speed up development works are appreciated, any action which goes against the established regulations cannot possibly be countenanced.

5. In view of the "Establishments" and "Finance" objections and as it is important to ensure uniformity in the payment of remuneration to Government employees for overtime work, Hon. Ministers are asked to consider whether the covering authority requested by the Director of Public Works should be granted.

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27th November, 1964.

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