

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

Establishment of a Weights and Measures Inspectorate

In November 1964, Mr L.A.W. Hayward, F.R.I.C. the Scientific Adviser attached to the Department of Industry submitted the attached report recommending the establishment of a Weights and Measures Inspectorate in Malta under the then Ministry of Industrial Development and Tourism. The Minister at the time requested that an explanatory note be prepared for Cabinet giving details of the scheme and an indication of the expenditure involved. These details are contained in the report prepared by the Mechanical Engineer of the Department of Industry (Mr Maurice E. Galea, B.Sc., Tech. (Manch), B.Eng., B.E. & A., A. & C.E., G.I. Mech.E., A.M.C.S.T.). This report, however, required certain revisions in view of the fact that a committee was set up by Government with the aim of working out a plan for making Malta a Metric country, and it has been brought up to date.

The report covers:-

- (a) the establishment of a Weights and Measures Inspectorate within the Department of Industry.
- (b) The provision of the accessory staff, that is a Superintendent, a Chief Inspector and two Inspectors in addition to minor employees.
- (c) Provision of equipment estimated at £4,000 and of two small vans estimated at £1,600.
- (d) Revision of the Weights and Measures Ordinance 1921, Chapter 62 Vol. IV of the Laws of Malta.

Under the prevailing Maltese Law (The Weights and Measures Ordinance of 1921, Chapter 62, Vol. IV, Laws of Malta), the Commissioner of Police is responsible

for keeping the standard weights and measures and is empowered to enforce the law in connection with weights and measures offences.

Owing to the absence of qualified personnel and lack of proper equipment, the current system is entirely unsatisfactory and virtually non-existent. Besides, owing to the lapse of time since the present Ordinance was enacted, it is not difficult to presume that a revision of the law to meet modern trade and industrial development is imperative.

Apart from the above mentioned reasons, the introduction of such an inspectorate is recommendable on the grounds of (i) protection of our industries, the more so in view of the ever-increasing exports in respect of which importing countries require certificates of verification for weight and measurement from a Government body; and (ii) protection of retailers and consumers against receiving short weights or measures; the activities of unscrupulous retailers should be curtailed.

An estimated average annual revenue of £25,000 will be collected as against an annual expenditure of about £2,500 for salaries and renewal and purchase of equipment.

Considering that it is Government's policy to make Malta a metric country, it is essential to set up, concurrently with this change, an Inspectorate of weights and measures to be in line with other developed and developing countries.

The timing of the inspectorate should coincide with the metric system as when this change is made most of the old weight and measures would have to be replaced by the metric weight and measures. In the interest of industry it is essential also to have such weights and measures covered by a stamp verification, which in its turn requires the existence of an Inspectorate of weights and measures.

It is also necessary to reach an early decision on the setting up of this Inspectorate as it will take over two years to train the necessary staff and to obtain the necessary equipment.

Hon Ministers are therefore asked to consider whether action should be taken to produce the legislation necessary for the establishment of the Inspectorate, broadly on the lines of the report of the Experts and to initiate action for the setting up of the Inspectorate and the resultant training of staff, etc.

7th September, 1966.