

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CABINET BY THE
HON. MINISTER OF EDUCATION, CULTURE & TOURISM

Claims by the Malta Union of Teachers

The Malta Union of Teachers had submitted a claim for reorganisation and for regrading in May 1970. A number of meetings with the Union were held both by the Ministry of Education and by Establishments. As a result of these meetings the Union submitted detailed proposals in February 1971 providing for a substantial reorganisation and changes in the grading of staff in the Education Department. On the 31 March 1971 a formal meeting with the Union on the claims submitted was held in the Ministry of Education.

The Union's original claim was for changes in the grading of a substantial number of posts in the Education Department with a provision for automatic promotion from one grade to the other after a stipulated number of years service. It was made clear that this could not be accepted by the Government and the Union has, with reluctance, agreed to continue discussions on the understanding that automatic grade-to-grade promotion would not be involved. This therefore left the Government free to look at the claims in the light of the Cabinet decision that "Government could meet some of the Union's claims by creating new posts and providing additional posts within existing grades where this is considered justified in the light of the exigencies of the department concerned."

In view of the declaration contained in the Budget Speech that the Government did not want to pass any commitments on to a successor Government an attempt was made to make certain offers to the Union which, had they been accepted, could have been included in the Estimates in the Committee stage. The offers were for the creation of 225 posts of Senior Teachers on a salary scale of £750 x 30 to £960 x 40 to £1040, the creation of 100 posts of Senior Masters on a scale of salary of £1000 x 50 to £1325 (for graduate masters) and on a salary of £750 x 30

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to £960 x 40 to £1075 (for non graduate masters). In addition it was proposed that one of the posts of Assistant Director (present salary £2000) should be redesignated Senior Assistant Director at a salary of £2125. The Union considered these offers as insufficient and discussions stopped.

On the 14th May a delegation from the Malta Union of Teachers met the Minister of Education, Culture and Tourism and officials from the Education Department and from Establishments and it was proposed that discussions on the Union's claims should re-start at an early date and that any agreements reached in the course of these discussions would be left over for implementation until after the elections. In view of the public declaration that no new commitments would be entered into after approval of the Budget it is thought necessary to seek a clarification of the position before proceeding further with the M.U.T.

The fact is that this is a commitment of long standing and had it not been for a number of circumstances it is quite certain that some form of agreement would have been reached with the Union to enable what had been agreed to be included in the Estimates for 1971/72. It is felt therefore that the Government is morally bound to continue studying the Union's claims with a view to reaching agreement with them. It is proposed that these claims should be considered with urgency by Finance and Establishments and the Department of Education and that the Minister should be informed of what they consider can be conceded in the interests of good administration. The Minister would then make an offer to the Union on the basis of these recommendations and if the Union accepts, the proposals would be left over for implementation until it would be possible to give effect to the agreement either by Supplementary Estimates or by Special Warrant

Ministers are asked to consider and to advise on the course of action to be followed.

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