

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CABINET BY THE  
HON. PRIME MINISTER

Method of declaring Public Holidays

It has become the practice, when one of the annual paid holidays falls on a Sunday, to recommend to His Excellency the Governor that another day, generally the immediately following Monday, be declared a public holiday under section 3 of the Public Holidays Ordinance (Chapter 55). The procedure, until now, has been to submit such a recommendation to His Excellency every time that a public holiday fell on a Sunday, as it occurred.

2. However, when recently the Governor was asked to approve that the Monday immediately following Epiphany should be declared a holiday, His Excellency remarked whether it would not be sensible to take "at one go" this same decision in relation to each of the public holidays throughout the year which were affected by the week-end.

3. Three other paid holidays this year fall on a Sunday, namely, the feast of St. Paul's Shipwreck (10th February), National Day (8th September) and the feast of the Immaculate Conception (8th December). It may, of course, be more expedient to decide now, "at one go", that the Mondays following these three holidays should be Public Holidays. There are, however, two factors which weigh in favour of retention of the present piece-meal practice, namely:

- (i) In 'remote' holidays, there may occur circumstances which cannot be anticipated now, and which, when they do occur, may well warrant some day other than the immediately following Monday being declared alternatively (or even additionally) a public holiday. One such occasion happened in January, 1957. In order to enable Government employees to attend a football match which was to be held in aid of the Maltese in Egypt Relief Fund, the public holiday in lieu of the Epiphany (January 6), which that year fell on a Sunday, was given on the following Saturday, 12th January, 1957. Government employees were also allowed the afternoon of the preceding Friday, 11th January, 1957, as a half-holiday. It is to be explained that whenever a public holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday is observed as a half-holiday.

/Public ....

- (ii) Public notice of a day declared a public holiday because an established one falls on a Sunday must be given reasonably close to the date in question, not so months ahead. Thus if, in January, days in December are declared public holidays, the declaration notice and consequential action on it may well be overlooked when the December date itself comes around.

4. Hon. Ministers may therefore wish to agree that, despite the inconvenience entailed, it is advisable to retain the present arrangement of asking the Governor to approve each alternative holiday as it arises.

5. Hon. Ministers may further wish to recommend to His Excellency that Monday, 11th February, 1963, immediately following the feast of St. Paul's Shipwreck, should be declared a public holiday under section 3 of the Public Holidays Ordinance (Chapter 55).

14th January, 1963.

L-Arkivji Nazzjonali ta' Malta