

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CABINET BY THE
HON. PRIME MINISTER

Aerial Ropeway between Valletta and Sliema

Messrs. Ed. Vincenti Kind have been asking since 1958 for permission to erect an aerial ropeway to carry passengers between Valletta and Sliema. The application was made because the Government controls the land required and because the permission of the Commissioner of Police is required under the Police laws.

2. A German firm from Cologne with experience in the construction of aerial ropeways are prepared to erect the ropeway which would link St. Anne Square at the Strand, Sliema, to a point on St. Michael's Bastion or Hastings Garden, Valletta, and would pass over the tip of Manoel Island where a supporting pylon would have to be erected.

3. In a letter from the German firm, it was indicated that the project would employ ten to eleven men per shift and that the fare charged would, subject to Government approval, be in the region of -/3d each for passengers travelling on a monthly subscription ticket and "somewhat higher" for passengers travelling only occasionally.

4. The firm had also indicated that Messrs. Vincenti Kind may expect to receive some form of financial assistance from the Government, such as exemption from customs duty on material imported for the construction of the ropeway. No request has, however, been received from Messrs. Vincenti Kind; on the contrary, in a letter published in the Times of Malta on the 16th March, 1960, they made reference to the fact that they have not asked for any form of assistance.

5. A ropeway between Valletta and Sliema would necessitate the erection of a steel structure on the Strand in Sliema rising to a height of about 200 feet with a tension structure behind the buildings fronting St. Anne Square along Tower Road. Pylons of a corresponding height would have to be erected on Manoel Island and on the foreshore at Valletta. Cables would run from the tension structure over the buildings in St. Anne Square to Valletta and there would be 24 cabins at intervals of 288 feet on the 3,500 feet ropeway with landing places situated on the pylons.

6. The Naval Authorities stated that they had no objection to the proposal provided there would be a minimum clearance over Sliema and Marsamxett Harbours of 150 feet. The Antiquities Committee likewise had no objection provided the terminus at the Valletta end of the ropeway would be not less than 10 feet from the parapet wall of the bastion. Both these requirements can be met by the Company.

7. The General Transport Union had objected to the proposed ropeway. In their view, the public is well served between Valletta and Sliema and the introduction of the ropeway would, in the Union's view, mean a reduction in the bus service between Sliema and Valletta, resulting in the discharge of drivers and conductors. The total number of buses on the Sliema route is 105, although not all of them ply every day. The number of conductors is 85 and there are 49 other persons employed as Ticket booth sellers, inspectors, etc. The Commissioner of Police has doubts whether the ropeway would cause a considerable reduction in the takings for any length of time. In any case the competition would be legitimate and would apply to only part of the route.

8. If the arm at the Sliema end will be erected at St. Anne Square, it is doubtful whether there will be enough room in the Square for the two kiosks with their tables and chairs, whether the entrance and exit to the Majestic Cinema will be left free and whether the taxi and other parking arrangements will not be interfered with. No such consideration would of course, apply if the structure, apart from the tension structure, is erected on the seabed just offshore.

9. The application had been considered in 1960 by the previous Government and refused. It is understood that this was done mainly on aesthetic grounds. The Government, however, also considered that the enterprise would not be economically viable.

10. Messrs. Kind have now renewed their application for permission to erect the ropeway and are pressing for the necessary approval to be given.

11. The Aesthetics Board has been consulted. They stated that if Government considers the project economically desirable and in the national interest they would not object to it on aesthetic grounds. However, they hoped the Board should be given further opportunities to study the plans of the project in order to discuss with the firm the details so as to minimise as much as possible the eyesore which it is bound to create.

12. The Hon. Minister of Industrial Development and Tourism has stated that as far as his Ministry is concerned, there is no objection to the application being granted. The Hon. Minister of Works and Housing agrees with the recommendations of the Aesthetics Board quoted in the preceding paragraph.

13. Hon. Ministers are kindly asked to say whether they agree that the application should be approved subject to the following conditions:

- (a) that the Aesthetics Board will discuss with the firm the details of the plans as suggested by the Board and that Messrs. Kind will comply with any directions given by the Board;

/ (b)

- (b) that the main structure at the Sliema end will be erected on the seabed just offshore;
- (c) that a minimum clearance of 150 feet be allowed from sea level; and
- (d) that Messrs. Kind will bind themselves that, should the enterprise fail, they will remove the relative structures within six months of the enterprise closing down for public transport.

28th June, 1963.

L-Arkivji Nazzjonali ta' Malta

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