

MEMORANDUM FOR CABINET BY THE
HON. MINISTER OF JUSTICE

Main Ditch, Valletta

In 1958 the Command Land Agent requested that the Main Ditch, Valletta, which the War Department hold on encroachment, be granted to them on a 21-year lease. The ditch was required for the Admiralty as it provides an access to Naval Headquarters at Lascaris.

The view taken by Government was that all structures in the ditch visible from Kingsgate should be removed as they are an eyesore and should be concentrated out of sight and the gate should also be shifted further back. The lease would then have been limited to the smaller area behind the gate as re-sited and a rent of 10s/- per square cane charged thereon.

This proposal was put to the Senior Surveyor of Land, without commitment, in 1961, but in spite of various reminders no reply was ever received. The position regarding land held by the Services will have to be reviewed when Malta becomes an independent state and it would render the present position more complicated if a more secure tenure were to be negotiated at this stage.

The Government's real interest in the matter is the removal of an eyesore and the possible use of part of the ditch as a car park.

Ministers are therefore requested to consider whether Government should insist on either the removal or the screening of the offending structures independently of the question of tenure and whether the question of tenure should be left over for consideration together with the general problem of Service Lands.

11th November, 1963.