

MEMO FOR CABINETBY THE HON. MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE
RE THE 800 PERSONS DISCHARGED DURING THE FIRST
MONTHS OF THE LABOUR ADMINISTRATION IN 1955.

The Nationalist Party had pledged in its Electoral Programme to do its best to reinstate those persons who were discharged during the first months of the Labour Administration in 1955, commonly known as the 800.

Although two years have passed since the Nationalist Party has taken over the reins of the Government, it has been very difficult to give jobs to the persons above referred to. Firstly, the Government has very few vacancies of jobs available and complete reinstatement is almost impossible and secondly, whereas the number of persons of the group of 800 who were registering as unemployed when the Nationalist Government took over was considerably small - about 20 - 30, the number at present has grown and is in the region of 100. This change is due mainly to the Services Rundown as many persons discharged by Mintoff had in the meantime found alternative employment with the Services. Moreover, others who did not find alternative jobs and decided to set up business on their own, although considered self-employed, and therefore not jobless, have started to register as unemployed either because the business they took up is not lucrative or because they know that without registering at the Labour Office they cannot expect to be given a job.

It is the general idea of those discharged persons (ex 800) who are registering for employment at the Labour Office, that they should be given a job with the Government and that those who have been lucky to have been given a job with Private Industries or individuals, still claim that they have a right to obtain a Government job.

During the present administration many persons ex the 800 have been given alternative employment - Government or otherwise - and four persons are being reinstated with an impressed vehicle and the Hon. Prime Minister has given his approval to reinstate these vehicles on a permanent basis.

It is not always possible and many a time impossible, to offer a vacancy in the Government Service to a person ex 800 whose priority at the Labour Office is not absolute and where other persons - not ex 800, are enjoying a better priority at the Labour Office and in most cases the person who is registering does not qualify for the job that has become vacant.

The National Employment Act does not empower the Minister of Labour to give a job to a person who does not enjoy priority at the Labour Office and disabled persons are to be given preference where Government jobs are concerned.

The Cabinet is asked to consider:

1. What ways are open to give jobs to those persons registering for employment;
2. Whether it is advisable to amend the National Employment Act to give due consideration to the ex 800 who are still unemployed;

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3. Whether there are vacancies in the Government Service which could be filled by some of the ex 800, and if so the Ministry of Labour should be duly informed so that the necessary action be taken;
4. Whether in the statement to be made by the Hon. Minister of Labour and Social Welfare in connection with the Financial Estimates 64/65, special mention of the 800 should be made and whether Cabinet's decision should be made public so that the position of the Government vis-a-vis the ex 800 be clarified.

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11th March, 1964.