

MEMORANDUM FOR CABINET BY THE HON. MINISTER OF WORKS AND
HOUSING

War Damaged Building in Kingsway c/w Carts Street,
Valletta

As Hon. Ministers are fully aware, the war damaged building in Kingsway (opposite the Coliseum Theatre) c/w Carts Street, Valletta, presents a veritable eyesore in the main street of the City.

The repairs to this building, which is the property of various owners and which is occupied by several tenants for business purposes have not been effected yet because of disagreement between the owners and tenants as to the redevelopment plan of the building.

Efforts have been made to bring the persons concerned to arrive at an amicable settlement but with no positive results.

This building is not affected by the recent Time Limit Regulations published with a view to winding up the War Damage Commission. However, it cannot be left to offend indefinitely the aesthetics of Kingsway and a solution must be found as early as possible, especially now that Kingsgate is being redeveloped and construction work on the Law Courts site is due to be taken in hand within a matter of weeks.

The site under discussion is right in the centre of Valletta and in the heart of the main shopping area. Its value is, therefore, very great and the owners are fully justified in wanting to develop the site on modern, economic lines.

Although it is not the Government's direct responsibility to ensure that this valuable site is developed in the best way possible, it is felt that Government should intervene in this case as it is in the national interest that no valuable land is wasted.

It is, therefore, suggested that the building be acquired by the Government and either replanned and redeveloped by the Government or re-sold to the former owners on presentation by them of plans approved by the Director of Public Works, the said owners to make good all expenses incurred by the Government, including goodwill, cost of acquisition, notarial fees etc.

For this purpose, it would be advisable and necessary to issue a Governor's declaration for a survey of the building to be carried out in the first instance. This declaration may serve to convince the owners and tenants that Government is decided to proceed with the reconstruction of the building and may cause them to arrive at an amicable settlement without further delay.

Hon. Ministers are asked to agree that a Governor's declaration be issued for a survey of the said building in anticipation of the issue of a Governor's declaration for acquisition. Before acquisition proceedings are started, the matter will be brought up again before Cabinet.

15th February, 1965.

M.W.H.91/63