

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CABINETSummer Uniforms of Messengers

On the 25th May, 1964, Staff Side submitted the following motion in the Malta Government Joint Council:

That this Council agrees:

"That the Summer uniforms of Messengers in Government Service should be altered so as to comply with modern trends."

Staff Side maintained that white drill uniforms were out-dated because white drill was being replaced by other kinds of material which required less frequent laundering and ensured better appearance. Though the desired colour of the uniforms had not been specified in the motion, Staff Side requested that the uniforms of Messengers be tailored from some sort of light blue material. Samples of this shade of colour were in fact submitted for consideration in January, 1965.

2. During every meeting of the Joint Council held since then, Staff Side have been pressing for a decision on this matter. They have now complained that two summers have passed away and that their claim has not yet been settled.

3. While Staff Side's motion was being discussed in the Joint Council, other claims, made by departmental grades and backed by the General Workers Union, for a change in the colour or material of their uniforms have been settled as follows:

4. On the 16th June, 1965 the Hon. Minister of Industrial Development and Tourism on the recommendation of the Comptroller of Customs agreed to the issue of diagonal winter uniforms instead of serge ones to the Customs and Excise Guards. Diagonal uniforms were in fact supplied for the winter 1965/66.

5. The General Workers Union then requested that the serge uniforms of Postmen and other Postal employees should be substituted by diagonal ones as was done in the case of Customs and Excise Guards. At a meeting held on the 16th November, 1966 at which the Hon. Minister of Trade, Industry and Agriculture, the Administrative Secretary, the Principal Assistant Secretary (Ests.) and representatives of the General Workers Union were present, it was agreed that in all cases diagonal uniforms be issued instead of serge ones.

6. The Executive staff of the Courts requested a change of colour and material of Summer uniforms. On the 4th October, 1966 during a meeting with the General Workers Union at which the Administrative Secretary and the Principal Assistant Secretary (Ests) were present it was agreed that the colour and material of the Summer uniforms of

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Court Marshals, Ushers and Usher Messengers should be changed. The colour and material chosen was similar to that of the Usher staff of the House of Representatives.

7. Following the settlement of the above claims Staff Side remarked, on the 4th November, 1966, that the question of uniforms of these Departmental grades, which was never brought for discussion in the Council, had been decided upon and settled. They emphasised that if matters continued to be handled in this manner, the result would obviously be the creation of a most unhealthy spirit and lack of trust in the Joint Council.

8. At the meeting of the Joint Council held on the 3rd February, 1967, Staff Side requested a definite reply by the next meeting which was due to be held on the 3rd March, 1967, as otherwise it would not be possible to issue the uniforms this Summer. The Malta Civil Service Association delegates again referred to the requests made by other departmental grades that had been favourably settled and attributed this to the "weight" of the threat of strike when made by the General Workers Union. They even went so far as to say that Official Side by its inaction was inducing all Government employees to join the General Workers Union.

9. The Accountant General has since issued a call for tenders for the supply of summer uniforms for messengers of the same colour and material issued hitherto. In view of a possible settlement of this claim the Accountant General has now been asked not to proceed with the acceptance of any tender until further notice. Time is however pressing and the Accountant General must now be given definite instructions on whether to proceed with the acceptance of tender, if the messengers are to be issued with a uniform this summer.

10. Hon. Ministers are requested to consider whether the present colour and material of the summer uniform of messengers, i.e. white drill, are to remain, or whether a change in the colour is indicated. Following such a decision, discussions would be held with Staff Side on the colour of the uniforms.

27th March, 1967.

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