

MEMORANDUM TO CABINET BY THE HONOURABLE
THE PRIME MINISTER

BROADCASTING AUTHORITY: ANNUAL REPORT 1966 - 67

His Excellency the Governor-General has made available an advance copy of the Broadcasting Authority's Report and Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March, 1967 in accordance with Section 13(4) of the Broadcasting Ordinance.

It would appear from the extracts contained in the attached schedule that advantage is being taken in the report to pass adverse comments on the Administration.

Hon. Ministers may wish to consider whether the Authority should be

- (a) (i) informed that the Report is considered by Government to contain various points which are unnecessarily critical of the Administration and which should not be contained in a report which should basically set out the activities of the Authority during the year under review; and (ii) requested to re-draw the Report on less controversial lines;

or

- (b) requested to make the amendments suggested in the attached schedule.

12th October, 1967.

BROADCASTING AUTHORITYANNUAL REPORT 1966/67ExtractSuggested Amendment

A. Following amendments to the Broadcasting Ordinance introduced in the House of Representatives in February 1966, the Government confirmed that the Authority had responsibilities under the Constitution and under a section of the Ordinance with regard to the output of the British Forces Broadcasting Service and of the Central Mediterranean Relay. Neither of these stations are under contract to the Authority and these additional responsibilities gave rise to certain difficulties, of control and finance, (which the Authority sought to clarify. At the end of the year under review the Authority awaited a reply from the Government on these points.)
(page 2)

Delete part shown between brackets.

B. New Copyright legislation was introduced in July 1966 and was approved by Parliament in February 1967. (The Authority took the initiative in this matter and is grateful for the help received from the European Broadcasting Union.) The new law which replaced the U.K. Copyright Act of 1911 comes into force on a date to be appointed by the Minister of Justice.
(page 3)

Delete bracketed part and "Minister of Justice" to read "Minister of Trade, Industry and Agriculture".

C. In the Authority's view it is essential that there should be a more rational basis for its financing; that this should bear some clear relation to the licence fees paid by the public, and that the amount which is being passed on to the Authority should be guaranteed by law and should preferably cover a three-year period.

Delete second paragraph which is a sweeping criticism of the provisions of the Broadcasting Ordinance.

(There are other aspects of the Broadcasting Ordinance and of existing arrangements which are unsatisfactory and which need to be looked into carefully in order to improve the system of broadcasting in these Islands.)
(page 6)

Extract

Suggested Amendment

D. The position of receiving sets in schools remains unsatisfactory. Nearly 150 classes are without Rediffusion sets while several others are not adequately catered for. Complaints have been passed on to the Government for action to be taken; (unfortunately very little has been done during the year under review.)

(page 17)

Add footnote: "A new Agreement between the Government and Rediffusion (Malta) Ltd with regard to the provision and maintenance of Rediffusion sets in schools, hospitals, etc has been signed.. Action is being taken for the provision of additional sets in schools (Oct. 67)"

And delete bracketed part.

E. Out of 1728 programme hours broadcast during the year under review some 87 hours were devoted to spot advertising and 23 hours to advertising magazines. This is well within the "Advertising entitlement" laid down in existing Agreements. Advertisements are nevertheless on the increase and the Authority feels that control should be tightened. (It is unfortunate that the Authority must once again express regret and concern that) Some of its rules which deal, among other things, with the permissible amount of advertising in any one clock hour (and which were submitted as far back as April 1964) are (still) being considered by the Government. (Because of this delay some of these rules are now due for revision.)

(page 34)

Delete bracketed parts.

F. After careful consideration of all the issues involved and after discussions with the Government and with the Contractors the Authority agreed to an extension of twelve months, i.e. up to the 28th September 1967.

Among the considerations which influenced the Authority in reaching this decision was the fact that the Government had requested the Company not to commence wireless sound broadcasting pending negotiations; that the Government had given an undertaking to the Company that the position under the existing

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L-ARKIVJI NAZZJONALI TA' MALTA

Extract

contract would not be disturbed pending these negotiations for a period of up to twelve months; that the Government had asked the Authority's cooperation in this matter; and the Authority had been assured that it would be fully consulted about these negotiations.

(pages 37-38)

Suggested Amendment

in reaching this decision was the fact that the Company had been unable to commence wireless sound broadcasting only for reasons beyond its control; that negotiations for a revision of the existing contract had been initiated; that the position of the Company under that contract would not be disturbed pending these negotiations for a period of up to twelve months; and that the Authority was satisfied that it would be fully consulted about these negotiations.

L-ARKIVI NAZZJONALI TA' MALTA

G. Test transmissions began in July 1964 and have been going on ever since. The Authority is most anxious that this unsatisfactory situation will not be prolonged unduly and in informing the Government of their decision the Authority expressed the hope that a final solution would be found in the shortest possible time. (The matter was still under consideration by the Government at the end of the year covered by this Report.)

(page 38)

Delete bracketed part.

H. The Broadcasting Authority was informed on the 25th September 1967 that due to unforeseeable circumstances consultations on this question had to be postponed to a later date. The Authority was also informed that it was Government's intension that discussions should take place at once and finalized within a period of no longer than three months. The Authority was asked by MTV and by the Government to consider extending the period during which the Company may start a wireless service and the Authority after considering all aspects of the case agreed to do this up to the 28th March, 1968.

(note at bottom of page 38)

The Broadcasting Authority months. The Authority after considering all aspects of the case decided to extend the period during which the Company may start a wireless service up to the 28th March, 1968.

ExtractSuggested Amendment

I. Further representations were made to the Government during the year regarding the Authority's powers to recruit staff and determine the remuneration and conditions of service of their personnel. The Broadcasting Ordinance while recognising the Authority's right to determine the conditions of service of its staff makes this conditional on the approval of the Governor (Government).

(Apart from the fact that the intention behind this clause is to ensure that staff is adequately paid and not the other way round, it is incongruous that the Authority whose existence and political independence is guaranteed by the Constitution and which is in a position to take major policy decisions, is denied the right to determine what it should pay its own staff.) This is not the case with other Public Corporations both in Malta and overseas and the Authority can see no valid reason for retaining the present restriction (which in practice has meant untoward delays in putting into effect decisions arrived at by the Authority and in some cases inability to do so.) The net result has been confirmation of the Authority's fears that under present conditions it would be difficult to retain its trained personnel. During the year two trained producers resigned to seek more rewarding employment elsewhere.

(pages 39-40)

J. The inadequate number of Rediffusion Sets became even more acute as more schools were built and new wings added to existing ones. Almost 10 per cent of the Schools (148 classes) are without the Rediffusion service while a good percentage of the rest are not adequately catered for. This is depriving thousands of school children of a service which has, over the years proved of considerable benefit.

(page 48)

Delete bracketed parts.

Add footnote to read
"Vide footnote at page 17".