

Memorandum for the Cabinet by the
Prime Minister

Shift and Disturbance Allowances

The General Workers' Union has, for some time, been requesting the extension to all Government employees, of the Shift Allowance being paid to M.E.B. employees and of the Disturbance Allowance being paid by Government to its employees in the Milk Marketing Undertaking.

Shift Allowance

2. A shift allowance is at present being paid by the Malta Electricity Board at the rate of £62 a year to employees working a shift of 44 hours per week, and £72 a year to employees working a shift of 51 1/3 hours per week.
3. A shift allowance is also paid at the Malta Drydocks at the rate of £1.9s.2d per week. In addition Drydocks employees working on shift, work 38 hours per week instead of 42 hours per week.
4. No shift allowance is, so far, payable to Government employees.
5. The claim for a shift allowance was originally made by the General Workers' Union on the 23rd July, 1956, when the working hours of Government employees were reduced from 48 hours to 44 hours per week. Shift Workers had previously been working 56 hours per week and received an extra day's pay. With the introduction of the 44 hour week Government had proposed that shift workers should also be conditioned to a 44 hour week. To compensate for loss of earnings, (the reduction of 1 day's pay per week), the General Workers' Union claimed shift differential of 12%. It was eventually agreed that shift employees then in Government service would be allowed to work 51 1/3 hours per week and continue to receive an extra day's pay per week by way of extra duty allowance. Newly employed shift workers were not to be allowed to work more than 44 hours per week, and were not to receive extra remuneration. The claim for a shift differential was then dropped.

6. Through this agreement shift workers were in fact receiving 16.66% (i.e. 1/6 th of weekly wage) more than non-shift workers.

7. Shift Workers also work a roster of six days a week, Sunday being considered a normal working day. They, therefore, work six Sundays out of every seven. Due, however, to the extra hours they are allowed to work every day, including Sundays, they are paid for all Sundays in the year. Double pay on Sundays, approved since the 14th July, 1967, has, therefore, brought about a further benefit to shift workers who are now receiving eight

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days' pay for a six day week of 51 1/3 hours, or 33 1/3 % more than non-shift workers. Thus a State Registered Nurse whose nominal salary amounts to £1,062 a year (£965 + 10%) is in actual fact receiving £1,416 a year, i.e. more than the minimum of a basic grade Medical Officer.

8. If a shift allowance is added to the benefits already enjoyed, shift work in Government service will become far too attractive. It seems advisable that the opportunity should in the first instance be taken to reduce the number of working hours of shift workers to the normal 44 hours per week. This would enable the Government to absorb a number of redundant employees and engage a number of unemployed. Total number of additional employees required is estimated at 300.

Disturbance Allowance

9. A Disturbance allowance is at present being paid to Government employees in the Milk Marketing Undertaking who work irregular hours at the following rates:-

- (a) £1.10s.0d for a 6 day week to all employees who are required to commence work between 00.01 hours and 4.00 hours;
- (b) £1.7s.6d for a 6 day week to all employees who are required to commence work between 04.01 hours and 06.00 hours;
- (c) £1.3s.0d for a 6 day week to all employees who are required to commence or finish work outside the normal working hours between 06.01 hours and 24.00 hours.

The above allowances are paid in respect of actual attendances, i.e. they are not paid during sick or vacation leave, and are doubled in respect of Sunday attendance. Employees performing watchmen duties are not entitled to any allowance.

10. Besides 1830 shift workers working 51 1/3 hours per week and 230 shift workers working the normal 44 hour week, there are also 157 employees in Departments outside the Milk Marketing Undertaking who work irregular hours. These are not receiving any compensation for these irregular hours.

11. When the disturbance allowance was originally approved, the General Workers Union had agreed that the Management of the Milk Marketing Undertaking should examine the possibility of reducing the number of employees working irregular hours to reduce consequent hardship.

12. The question of shift and disturbance allowances can hardly be dealt with separately and in these circumstances the Government would be well advised if each Ministry should carry out a thorough study of the implication of reducing the working hours of shift workers to the normal weekly number of hours, now 44, and the consequential introduction of a shift allowance, keeping in view the desirability of reducing as far as possible the number of employees required to work irregular hours and/or on Sundays.

40 hour week

13. The General Workers' Union are also pressing their claim for the reduction of the working hours of industrial employees especially now that the Services have agreed to a working week of 41½ hours, to be progressively reduced in the near future to 40 hours. It would appear that the Government can hardly resist a reduction to at least 42 hours a week. In any case it is advisable that a decision be taken on this matter before action is taken as recommended in paragraph 12 of this Memo.
14. Ministers are asked to consider the suggestions made above.

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