

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CABINET  
BY THE HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER

CLAIMS FOR REORGANISATION

The following claims for re-organisation in various Government Departments have been submitted by various Unions:-

1. Teaching Grades (M. U. T.)
2. Postal Grades (G. W. U.)
3. Store Office Grades (G. W. U.)
4. Customs Grades (Landing & Warehousing) (Customs Federation)
5. Customs Grades (Customs and Excise) (N. A. C. C. S.)
6. Printing Grades (Printers Union)
7. Executive and Administrative Grades (S. A. E. C. S.)
8. Malta Land Force Clerical Grades (N. A. C. C. S.)
9. House of Representatives Grades (N. A. C. C. S.)
10. Health Inspector Grades (M. C. S. A.)
11. Customs Weighers (G. W. U.)
12. Technicians Grades (M. C. A. S. T.) Department of Education

2. The Secondary School Teachers Association also claims that it had not accepted to be bound by the findings of the Salaries (Anomalies) Commission and is claiming the restoration of pre-commission relativities.

3. Other claims are known to be due to be submitted to Government. Thus the Welfare Officers Group of the M. C. S. A. are known to have made representations claiming the creation of a new post with a maximum of £1,000 to correspond to the new post of Senior Clerical Officer. Welfare Officers are a disappearing grade and are being replaced by Higher Clerical Officers. A number of Higher Clerical Officers performing Welfare Officer duties are due to be upgraded Senior Clerical Officers with effect from 1st January, 1970, in accordance with the recent agreement with the Malta Government Clerical Union.

4. These claims are no more than requests for salary revisions under the guise of reorganisation and they arise mainly out of disagreements with the findings of the Salaries (Anomalies) Commission. For instance the G. W. U. claim that Postmen (£430/565 = Clerk Typist) and Sorters (£465/600) should be amalgamated into one grade of Postmen with a salary of £600 x 20 - 680, but that duties of Sorters should only be performed by Postmen in the new grade with eight years' service. This would mean that Postmen, during the first eight years of service, would, without any change of duties, receive £600 x 20 - £680 instead of £430/565, and Sorters, again without any change of duties, would receive £680 per annum instead of £465/600 as recommended by the Commission. The G. W. U. further claim that Senior Sorters, (£510/650 = Clerical Officer)

should be redesignated Despatch and Mail Officers with a salary of £800 x 20 - £880. The salary scale of Postmen and Senior Sorters is directly linked with that of Clerk Typists and Clerical Officers. Any concession made to the G. W. U. will therefore have repercussions on the General Service clerical grades and destroy the basis of the recent agreement signed with the M. G. C. U.

5. Some claims are difficult to resist. Thus Store Officers I and Store Officers II have always been considered as grades analogous to Clerical Officers and Higher Clerical Officers with the same scales of salary and avenues of promotion by internal competition to the Executive Officer grade. The same applies to the Malta Land Force clerks Grade 'B' and Grade I, analogous to Clerical Officers and Higher Clerical Officers. However, if acceded to, most claims will open the door to claims from all other grades in the Public Service. Thus for example any concession made to Health Inspectors is likely to have repercussions on Radiographers and other comparable grades.

6. The Malta Union of Teachers claim the creation of new posts of Senior Teacher and Senior Master. This would effect the whole salary structure of the Teaching grades. Moreover as parity between Teachers and State Registered Nurses has been established by agreement between the Government and the G. W. U. and confirmed by the Commission, any concession made to Teachers will have repercussions on S. R. Ns, destroying the basis for the recent agreement reached between the Ministry of Health and the G. W. U. on the reorganisation of Hospital Grades.

7. An analysis of all the various claims listed in paragraph 1, reveals similar repercussions throughout the whole salary structure established by the Commission.

8. In most cases claims cannot be accepted. Thus claims for automatic promotion from Health Inspectors to Senior Health Inspectors cannot be accepted as the latter perform Supervisory duties. The same applies to the claim of the Customs Federation for automatic promotion from Customs Officers to Senior Customs Officers.

9. However the Associations making the claims already referred to, have represented that the automatic promotion granted to State Enrolled Nurses and Higher Clerical Officers immediately on reaching the maximum of their salary scale is in effect an increase in salary beyond the recommendations of the Commission. Moreover they argue that, once the Government has agreed to a re-organisation of the Hospital grades and the Clerical grades, it cannot refuse re-organisation of the grades represented by them.

10. The Establishments Division which deals with conditions of service and staff relations is not sufficiently equipped to deal with all these claims with the speed expected by the Unions. This is leading to discontent and threats of industrial action. If and when in fact,

industrial action is resorted to, pressure is exerted on the Division with the result that some of the repercussions of any decisions taken by the Government are not sufficiently assessed. In their turn, decisions taken piecemeal create more claims from the Unions.

11. In these circumstances it would be appropriate for the Unions to be informed that the Government is not prepared to consider claims for salary revisions under the guise of proposals for re-organisation. It is also desirable that the Unions should be told that the making of changes in the organisational structure of Government departments is a prerogative of Government and is not therefore a matter which should lead to industrial action. This, of itself, would not however be enough. The unions will expect to have some assurance that the Government is ready to negotiate on any salary claim and that, in the event of disagreement, an assessment of the situation should be undertaken by an independent person or persons. The whole subject has therefore to be looked at in relation to what machinery the Government is prepared to use to ensure that the Unions feel satisfied at the way that claims on salaries and conditions of service are dealt with.

12. In the past the Government has been most reluctant to go to arbitration on claims submitted by the Unions. This policy has, however, led to all sorts of pressures from the unions, including industrial action, which, in the majority of cases, have yielded larger concessions to the unions than any that would have been granted after a cool and well considered assessment by the Government or an arbitration tribunal. A revision of this policy seems therefore called for, and it is for consideration whether, concurrently with the declarations referred to in paragraph 11, the Government should not give an assurance to the unions that in case of disagreement on any particular pay claim, the matter would be referred for independent assessment. Whether this should be the arbitration machinery under the law or a separate standing tribunal is a matter for further consideration. Whatever is decided upon it is suggested that it should apply to grades up to and including the basic professional level.

13. In this connection it is of interest to note that the Society of Administrative and Executive Civil Servants have recently submitted proposals for the setting up of a Standing Advisory Committee to deal with pay matters in respect of the higher grades. They state that should the Government agree to this proposal they would be prepared to give an undertaking to refrain from taking industrial action on matters covered by this Standing Committee.

14. Ministers may therefore wish to consider whether they agree in principle to the lines of policy to be adopted as in paragraphs 11 and 12 of this memorandum.

24 JUL 1970