

✓ Sitting No. 22/68.

Cabinet meeting held at the Ambasciata d'Argon, Valletta, on Tuesday, 19th March, 1968, at 11.30 am.

Present: The Hon. Prime Minister

The Hon. Minister of Science, Culture
& Parks.

The Hon. Minister of Public Building
& Works.

The Hon. Minister of Justice & Parliamentary
Affairs.

The Hon. Minister of Health

The Hon. Minister of Education, Culture
& Museums.

The Hon. Minister of Labour, Employment
& Welfare.

Absent: The Hon. Minister of Trade, Industry
& Agriculture, who was away
from the Islands on official
business.

Malta Drydocks.

The Cabinet was informed
of a joint letter from Mr. Mintoff and
Mr. Alfred Kingswell, dated 18th March, 1968,
requesting inter alia the insertion of a transitory
clause in the Constitution which would
guarantee the administration, management,
lease, etc., of the nationalised drydocks by
agreement between the Government, the
Opposition and the General Workers' Union.

ORH. 513/65
III.

until June, 1971, or after new general elections, whichever was the earlier.

It was noted that this condition was imposed by the Opposition and the General Workers' Union as an inflexible and absolute pre-requisite for cooperation with the Government on the Drydocks issue.

It was agreed that such a condition was unacceptable. The entrenchment of this clause in the Constitution would be humiliating to the Government and it would also put the Government in the untenable position of being the only shareholder of the new company owning the Drydocks, without the power of deciding on the ~~best~~ future for the undertaking.

The Cabinet was also informed that the Council of Administration had raised doubts whether they had the power to declare the company bankrupt and whether, even if they had or were given that power, they would so act. The probability was that they would not. In the circumstances it was doubtful whether the procedure which could have been adopted in the event of a declaration of bankruptcy by the Council, should be pursued further.

The Cabinet agreed that

- a) the British High Commissioner be informed of the present position; ~~and~~
- b) a letter in reply be sent to Mr. Mintoff and Mr. Alfred Kingswell, after the Council's official views on the bankruptcy procedure were known.

Copy to Cabinet
Sent to Cabinet 26.3.68

Sheila Oliver
28-3-68 Prime Minister