

Lettering No. 23/68.

Cabinet Meeting held at the Auberge d'Argon,
Rallotta, on Thursday, 21st March, 1968, at 11 am.

Present: Hon. Prime Minister

Hon. Minister of Finance, Customs
& Ports.

Hon. Minister of Public Buildings
& Works.

Hon. Minister of Justice and Parliamentary
Affairs.

Hon. Minister of Lands, Industry &
Agriculture.

Hon. Minister of Health.

Hon. Minister of Education, Culture
& Science.

Hon. Minister of Labour, Employment
& Welfare.

OPM. 573/68
111

Malta Drydocks.

(Mr. F. Imato Fenei and Dr. E. Mugei were in
attendance.)

Reference was made to
the mounting campaign of allegations, both
in the local and British Press, that the
Drydocks funds would run out by Saturday,
23rd March, with the consequent closure of the
'Yard'. The harmful effect of such a campaign
was obvious, and it was therefore agreed that
a statement be published in *Liberty*, 22nd
March, in time for the 6.00 pm. Radiofonix News
Bulletin, to refute those rumours.

Dr. G. Muge informed the Cabinet that, as instructed by the Hon. Prime Minister, he had informed the British High Commissioner of the up-to-date position on the Drydocks. A memorandum dated 21st March had been sent to the British High Commissioner.

The Cabinet discussed the temporary measures that the Government might have to take to keep the 'Yard open' if the Council of Administration decided on closure.

It was agreed that on present indications the bankruptcy procedure was not worth pursuing, while action under section 64 of the Constitution appeared impossible. A course open to the Government for securing the 'Yard' was therefore action under section 38. ~~Further~~ That course of action was to be considered further.

At this stage a message was received from the British High Commissioner that Lord Shackleton, Lord Privy Seal, was prepared to come to Malta on Friday, 22nd March, to continue talks on the Drydocks situation. The Cabinet agreed to accept the offer. It was also agreed that a meeting should take place between the Civil Advocate General and the Commissioner of Police to decide on the steps that would be necessary in the case. The Government felt the need to declare a state of emergency.

The terms of a letter in reply to the joint letter dated 18th March from Mr. Mintoff and Mr. Attard Kingswell, were approved.

26-3-68.

Colin Clive
Prime Minister

Colin Clive
Secretary to Cabinet 26.3.68