

Memo to Cabinet by the Minister of Finance,Customs & PortJoint Mission Recommendations Heading D - PortsPort Authority

The "Ports" Committee appointed in compliance with a decision of the Cabinet taken at its sitting of the 23rd January last to consider ways and means of implementing the recommendations of the Joint Mission Report concerning the Port have now completed their findings and have submitted their report. A copy is attached for Hon. Ministers' perusal.

The recommendations regarding the setting up of the Port Authority are contained in paras 35 et seq. of the Report in which the Committee have considered the type of Authority that would best suit the Island's particular circumstances. Briefly, the Joint Mission recommended that the Port Authority should be independent of the Customs Department and possibly be self-financing, and that it should assume full responsibility for the running of all Malta's ports and take charge of port dues, mooring and towage charges etc.

As Hon. Ministers will observe from the report the Committee are in general agreement with the Mission's recommendation on the responsibilities of the Port Authority. They suggest, however, that it should be charged with additional responsibilities relating to allocation of berths, moorings, and particular areas within territorial waters for particular needs. As regards type of Authority the Committee recommend a "compromise" type between a state controlled Body and an autonomous one.

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The Committee have received a proposal from Malta Drydocks relating to the Maritime Commission which, eventually, will be set up to take charge of registration of ships, conditions of engagement of crews, disciplinary procedures etc. Malta Drydocks suggested that the Port Authority should administer the Maritime Law. The Committee, with the exception of one member, endorse this suggestion.

A first draft of the necessary legislation is being prepared.

Hon. Ministers are asked to consider the Committee's recommendations and to signify their approval that Government should sanction the divorcing of the Port Department from the Customs Department and to entrust the responsibilities now devolving on the Port Division to a Port Authority as recommended by the Ports Committee.

Hon. Ministers are also asked to consider whether the Maritime Law should be administered by the proposed Authority.

24th August, 1968.