

MEMORANDUM TO CABINET
BY THE PRIME MINISTER

St Paul's Press Limited are requesting that their permanent staff be issued with a permanent work permit. They also categorically state that they are not training Maltese understudies for the eventual replacement of this staff.

2. The **firm's** contention is based on the fact that once that in their application for Government aid they were required to say which technical staff, skilled workmen, etc., they intended to get from abroad, the approval of the application implies the automatic issue of the work permits and the excusal from the training and understudy condition in the work permits of the permanent staff. They maintain that "one of the reasons why Government approved the employment of eight permanent staff, was its recognition that the skills and experience required in this industry are far wider than the operations of manufacture in Malta" though they add that "all our permanent staff train Maltese in various aspects of the printing trade".

3. In the letter to the firm from the Director of Industry notifying the grant of assistance no mention is made of the staff but in September, 1966 the Director of Industry informed the Director of Labour and Emigration that the firm had been given approval to employ (a) eight permanent expatriates (b) eight temporary expatriates for at least five years on managerial, technical and skilled jobs and (c) as large a number of instructors as required.

4. Hon. Minister of Labour, Employment and Welfare states that, in his opinion, the letter by the Director of Industry notifying the firm of the grant of assistance cannot be interpreted as approval, tacit or otherwise, for the employment of expatriate staff and furthermore sees no valid reason for the company's rigid stand against the training of understudies. He considers that permits should be referred to his Ministry for renewal every year and points out that other companies have now several Maltese occupying positions of trust and is convinced that the same could be done by St Paul's Press.

5. In view of the categorical statement that the **firm** was not training understudies, it was considered advisable to withhold, pending a decision on the matter, the issue of the work permits which, on the recommendation of Hon. Minister of Labour, Employment and Welfare would have included the condition of training.

6. The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Agriculture state that neither the Department of Industry nor the Aids to Industries Board had ever assumed authority for the employment of expatriates in connection with state-aided **projects**, that the Company has been training local personnel but it will take years to produce workers with the required degree of skill and efficiency and that it would be criminal to wreck a much needed project because of the admission of a handful of experienced expatriates.

7. The Ministry add that the project, for several reasons, not the least being a lack of working capital caused by the relatively high number of trainees taken on, has not been pursued with the alacrity which had been envisaged but there is no reason why the project should not be brought to fruition as additional working capital has since been found for the firm. The Ministry therefore consider that it would be inopportune at the present time to tighten expatriate arrangements and strongly suggest that the promoters be given a breathing space within the limits of eight permanent expatriates, eight temporary expatriates for five years and a number of instructors. This last class can be subsidized under the approved Training Grant Scheme only to a limited extent and as long as the company does not engage additional expatriates under the guise of instructors, the Ministry suggest that the Company should not be fettered.

8. Honourable Ministers are requested to consider (a) the question of the issue of the permits and (b) the inclusion or otherwise of the 'training' condition in such permits.

28th September, 1963.

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