

MTIA 907/67

Memorandum for Cabinet by the Hon. Minister  
of Trade, Industry and Agriculture

Siting of a new Power/Water Station "C"

Works are at present in hand on the construction of Stage II of "B" Power/Water Station, situated at Ta' Cejlu Wharf, Marsa. When the extension is completed, the total generating capacity available will be increased to 115 Megawatts and the water production capacity to approximately 4.5 m.g.p.d.

2. According to the forecast of the load demand growth, two additional turbines of 50-Megawatts capacity each, will have to be installed in 1972/73 and 1975/76 respectively. So far, the Malta Electricity Board has unavoidably had to take the calculated risk of allowing the load to exceed the firm generating capacity. With the extent of present industrial loads and the anticipated future increases, it will be most unwise not to have spare generating capacity to meet unscheduled outages of plant. It is strongly emphasized that the Board should at all times have sufficient firm generating capacity compatible with the maximum demand existing at the time.

3. On the basis of the above reasoning, the Cejlu site will be fully utilised by 1975 and no additional plant could be installed thereon. To meet future increases in load growth after 1975, a new Power/Water Station will therefore have to be constructed. By interpolation of the present load increases, it is envisaged that additional generating capacity will be required in 1977/78. From the water production angle, however, the existing Power/Water Station will be fully utilised by 1974/75 if the fifth and sixth distillers are uprated to 3 m.g.d. and by 1972/73 if these two distillers (Nos. 5 and 6) remain at 1.17 m.g.d. Should the Redport project materialise, this date will have to be advanced, depending on the extent of the power requirements in the Zone. It is therefore imperative that a new Power/Water Station be constructed. This "C" Power/Water Station will have an installed generating capacity of 300 megawatts and an ultimate water production capacity of the order of 30 m.g.p.d.

/4. When a decision.....

4. When a decision is ultimately taken for the building of this new Power/Water Station the problem of its siting immediately arises and this Ministry has considered it opportune to tackle the problem now thus ensuring that all planning is made beforehand. As there are clear indications that the southern part of the island is to be developed for industrial purposes and especially in the light of the proposed Free Trade Zone around Marsaxlokk Bay, the focus of the electrical load should, it is felt, move southwards.

5. With this end in view a preliminary inspection of potential sites was carried out early in 1967, by the Malta Electricity Board in conjunction with the Water Works Department. The sites considered suitable for the purpose are the following:-

<u>Site No. 1</u>	Irdum il-Bies
<u>Site No. 2</u>	St. Thomas Bay
<u>Site No. 3</u>	Il-Qajjenza, St. George's Bay.
<u>Site No. 4</u>	Qrejten Point (Marsaxlokk)
<u>Site No. 5</u>	Bengħajsa
<u>Site No. 6</u>	Kalafrana

6. These sites were subsequently discussed with the other departments concerned (Public Works Department and Tourist Board) and it resulted that sites Nos. 1 and 2 would be more suitable for tourist development whilst sites Nos. 5 and 6 would present difficulties because of the Free Port Project. The choice therefore had to be whittled down between sites Nos. 3 and 4.

7. Given this limited choice the Malta Electricity Board opted for site No. 3 (Il-Qajjenza) but through a misunderstanding they described this as site No. 4 (Qrejten Point). The Director of Public Works would normally not have objected to site No. 4 but on being told of the Malta Electricity Board's misunderstanding he deemed it fit to reconsider the whole issue and after consulting his Minister, expressed the objection of his Ministry to any of the sites in the Marsaxlokk/Birzebbugia area.

8. Incidentally the Public Works Department had originally suggested that any new Power/Water station should be sited at Marsa but as the paramount problems with another Power Station in this area are the inadequacy of cooling water required for a plant of the magnitude contemplated, the difficulties encountered in constructing the foundations, (the rock being some 30 ft. below the existing surface) this site was not considered suitable for the purpose.

9. In the light of the foregoing, it is clear that an impasse has been reached. There is no doubt that a new Power/Water station will have to be constructed if we are to ensure adequate supplies of power and water for our expected needs. It is equally essential to plan now for this new Power/Water station and what is more important to ensure that the frustrations and delays that are usually associated with a project of this nature and which always crop up when least expected, should be avoided.

10. Although it is realized that a decision on a new Power/Water station has yet to be taken, this Ministry feels that it should not run the risk of being criticised for insufficient planning and therefore, at least, a decision on a suitable siting should be taken immediately.

11. In the circumstances, Hon. Ministers are asked to approve:

- (a) one of the sites indicated on the attached plan of the area; and
- (b) that all private property within the boundary of the chosen site be frozen immediately in order to allow the Malta Electricity Board to commence the survey of the area with a view to preparing the general lay-out of the new Power/Water station.

4th March '69

L-ARKIVJI NAZZJONALI TA' MALTA





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