

MEMO FOR CABINET BY THE HON. MINISTER OF EDUCATION
CULTURE & TOURISM

Proposals for the cleaning and upkeep of Beaches in
Malta and Gozo.

1. Every year, since its inception in 1959 the Tourist Board raised the question with the Departments concerned of the impellent need to have all the beaches in Malta and Gozo cleared of the seaweed, tar, bottles, tins, stones and the incredible filth which accumulates during the winter months, on an all-the-year round basis and not limited solely to the Summer months. Every year, the Board's recommendations and the justifiably indignation of visitors ventilated in the columns of the local and foreign press fell on deaf ears. Once more this year, this Ministry and the Board have already received a number of complaints from visitors who had their beachwear spoilt by tar or cut themselves by broken bottles. In fact, the incredibly filthy state of our beaches today must be seen to be believed. We are swiftly becoming renowned for general filth and untidiness all over the Island.

2. The matter was taken up with the Director of Public Works on several occasions. Understandably this produced inconclusive results.

3. In the past, the cleaning of beaches was carried out by contractors who were ill-equipped to carry out the gigantic task satisfactorily, with the result that last year a Swiss journalist who visited Malta in mid-Summer wrote that "Malta's beaches are the dirtiest in Europe".

4. A serious attempt was made to find out what funds were required to keep the beaches clean all the year round. The Public Works stated that they required an initial capital outlay of £10,000 for beach cleaning equipment and £40,000 p.a. thereafter. A firm of contractors was also approached by the Malta Government Tourist Board and they stated that they were prepared to undertake the assignment for £10,000 - £11,000 a year (including the purchase of all necessary equipment) provided they were accorded a contract of not less than five years and this in view of the capital outlay involved.

5. On 24th March, 1965, the then Hon. Minister of Industrial Development and Tourism tried to persuade the Financial Secretary to accept the suggestion of a tender for five years, but this was turned down. The main objection from the Financial Secretary's point of view seems to have been that a long term contract would pose certain difficulties in the way of the responsible departments to ensure that the conditions of contract are adhered to by the contractor. These difficulties should not be of such proportion as not to be overcome by a careful consideration of the conditions to be imposed on the contractor and by the proper surveillance by the Department concerned of the work to be carried out under contract. This Ministry took the matter up with the Ministry of Finance Customs & Port last May but no decision on the proposal for a long term contract has been reached.

6. Tourism is today one of our biggest industries and appears to be destined to be among the main pillars of the Island's economy. It is therefore up to the Government to find ways and means to ensure that the beaches are kept clean all the year round for the benefit and enjoyment of both the tourists and the Maltese people themselves and that appropriate measures are taken for this purpose.

7. The present allocation of £6,000 is manifestly **inadequate**, whilst a recurrent expenditure of £40,000 seems excessive. Giving out the work on long term contract is obviously cheaper, and no doubt, would ensure a more efficient upkeep of the beaches.

8. Hon. Ministers are accordingly invited to consider the above proposals and to study whether the cleaning and upkeep of beaches in Malta and Gozo should be given by contract on a long term basis preferably for a period of five years.

30th August, 1966.