

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

FORUM

OPENING ADDRESS

The Hon. JOHN DALLI, M.P.
Minister for Economic Services

Honourable Colleagues, Ladies, Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the organizers of the forum for inviting me to express my personal views on such an important subject.

A strong and efficient public service is undoubtedly vital in a political system such as ours. The public service is the institution that should provide the managers to run Malta Incorporated. It is the institution that should provide the operational apparatus to convert concepts into plans, and to transform plans into action. It is the institution that should provide a discreet monitoring mechanism to ensure that action is moving according to plan and that the result is close to the objectives of the original concepts. It is the institution that guarantees stability through its permanence and shelters the public from political caprice.

The public service is another national institution which is in urgent need of repair. It is high time for an attempt to orientate it away from being a colonial tool towards becoming a management structure required by a new, small, independent state. In this context, we talk about a new public service for Malta.

I see the new public service as an organization that is clearly laid out, with well-defined lines of responsibility and channels of communication; one wherein all participants have a clear idea of their responsibility levels rather than its being a schematic or labyrinth for a game of 'pass the buck'; an organization with a fluidity that allows individuals to float up to their level of maximum contributory capacity; where added responsibility is given to public servants on the basis of track record as opposed to seniority, and credentials as opposed to patronage, thus ensuring competence.

It will be a career that is sought as a prize rather than begged as a favour; a worthwhile prize because of excellent conditions of work measured in status, compensation and working environment; a prize because it promises satisfaction and fulfilment, rather than a guaranteed, slow-speed, carefree existence.

It will be an occupation in which each individual is motivated towards the achievement of a set goal, because the system will be run by objectives and because the system will allow each individual to use the required initiative in the solution of problems and the creation of new initiatives; an occupation that ensures that modern tools and streamlined procedures help public servants to achieve results, on which results they will then be measured and for which results they will be fully accountable.

The new public service will be a team of positive thinkers and doers who make it their business to develop adequate and required

services, and to maximise efficiency and quality in rendering these services; a new public service that sees the public as a client rather than a nuisance. This new public service, as I see it, will attain its scope in society, regaining its self-respect and, through its efficiency and integrity, gain the respect of the public that it serves.

This is a dream or is it?

Thank you.

