

MLP Electoral Program -- 1987

Source: The Times (Malta), 11 April 1987

Note: This is described by the newspaper as "an extract" rather than a reprint of the electoral program. It appears to vary between exact quotation and paraphrase and refers to the document both as "the programme" and as a "draft programme."

I. THE WORKERS' BELIEFS

The workers' movement, the programme starts by saying, embraces the principles of democratic Socialism as they are sensible for our islands. For democracy to be truly strengthened, Malta has to remain free and itself decide what happens in Maltese society.

The movement will continue strengthening democracy, and justice in every sector of life. Wealth, education, culture and political power have to become more widespread in the future. It will continue to work so that Maltese and Gozitans get used more to living in a society where there are no injustices and where people of different opinions understand it is possible for them to live together.

Malta must become more efficient and modern and learn to enjoy more the developments in science and technology. The movement will continue with its policy for peace, in the Mediterranean and the country will never again serve as a centre of war for others. This principle is now accepted by all.

II. WORKERS MOVEMENT FOR PEACE AND PROGRESS Fundamental rights

Every struggle for the rights the people have today, started among the working class. The anti-reformists were the roots of the opposition existing today and they have had the workers movement fighting against them. The roots of the workers' movement lie in people who struggled for changes, progress, and the rights of the working class.

Among these is Manwel Dimech who desired the people's political freedom from the beginning of the century and who insisted that for freedom to be obtained, the working class had to be educated. His call spread and found roots at the dockyard, and workers' organizations started being formed.

At the end of the Great War the workers started understanding how the foreign rulers were exploiting them and their plight led to the June 7, 1919 riots. From the first electoral programme in 1921, the party declared it would defend the interests of the Maltese, especially of the working class. It wanted compulsory education, and trade education, the elimination of unemployment and worker legislation, promoting their interests

In the twenties and thirties the party found all sorts of opposition, even from the clergy, and there were many who, in spite of all the difficulties, understood how right the party was. The workers' progress continued with the setting up of the industrial arm of the workers' movement - the General Workers Union - on October 5, 1943, since when the GWU has been shoulder to shoulder with the workers' party.

The movement made significant successes, such as the 1947 constitution of self government. Its call for

integration or self-determination was another struggle for the rights of the Maltese.

The sixties, when the movement fought for independence, were the worst.. years for democracy in Malta. The intolerance and barefaced breaches of human rights by the British and the ecclesiastic al authorities reached their summit under Nationalist governments, even burying the dead, in unconsecrated ground. The wishes of the movement were finally accepted by almost everyone in the Republican Constitution of 1974.

The Labour Party in government, led by Mr. Mintoff after 1971, provided for the practical implementation of the rights it had fought for and started the road for full freedom in March, 1979. The struggle for full freedom continued in spite of the interference of the reactionary forces in the country and the Maltese are today masters of their own affairs.

After 1981 it was again the workers' movement which carried the burden of administering the country according to the provisions of the Constitution. It immediately declared it did not want a repetition of the 1981 electoral result and proposed discussions to change the Constitution, strengthening parliamentary democracy.

With the recent constitutional amendments in Parliament the workers' movement achieved its(main aspiration of including neutrality and non-alignment in the Constitution. The amendments had reduced to nothing the destructive campaign against the movement, carried out in Malta and abroad, depicting it as not being democratic.

The workers strengthen democracy

The Socialist government in-tends in future to continue pioneering with new reforms to match democracy with the aspirations and interests of Maltese society. In this sense we have to recognize what may affect democracy in the future.

Democracy is strengthened if all citizens feel that in their daily life they have the opportunity to enjoy. the personal freedoms which are considered essential in modern democratic societies. The workers' movement insists that it was itself which worked to introduce in Malta civil and fundamental individual rights.

In the coming years the Labour government will do its utmost to uphold and widen the civil and individual rights considered necessary in modern societies. In this work it will look to respect the traditional sentiments of the majority of the people on public and private morality

A Labour government will seek to protect the rights of citizens in the fields of protecting privacy from interference and prying which modern technology had made so much more possible. Everyone has the right to be protected from interference by anyone who seeks private information about them and their families.

The workers' kind society

The workers' movement has striven to strengthen the material bastions of the country to be able vastly to improve the social conditions of the Maltese workers. One principal aim of the Labour government has been to introduce legislation ensuring that opportunities for a better life for everyone increase. Everyone, without discrimination, should enjoy the same rights for good and useful education, good medical care, provision against unemployment and sickness, a retired life of rest and dignity and for justice before the country's laws, to which all have to bow.

There had been strong resistance to the Labour government's social reform, accusing the government of wanting to stifle fundamental freedom.

Workers improve social achievements of the people

Some people had been taught by opponents of the workers' movement that social services were there to be utilized without contributing to them. The movement had always fought this sick mentality. Social achievements made in the country by the Labour government will be retained through everyone's responsible behaviour.

The movement considers that the most serious future challenge for the Maltese is how to improve the quality of social services. This challenge is bound to the need to lead a serious national effort to improve the quality of life of all the people.

The movement recognized that for a sense of social responsibility to grow in all the Maltese, everyone's participation has to increase - as workers, consumers and citizens - in decisions affecting our lives.

In this way, decisions taken by government leaders or company managers will not be seen as decisions imposed haphazardly on the individual but as a useful step which ultimately will be beneficial to everyone.

The Labour government will particularly introduce practical measures to give a greater role in national life to women. The best way of protecting and renewing women's rights is through legislation allowing the woman to develop her life as she sees best.

The workers increased material progress

If peace and progress in Malta are not built on sound material foundations, these can quickly change. The workers' movement has always seen it as essential to develop our economy. In the seventies it was far more difficult than in the sixties but industry and tourism made gigantic steps forward, allowing improvements in conditions of work, an assault on unemployment, and the development of social services which compare well with those in far larger countries.

An economic recession hit most of the world in the eighties and the Labour government helped to open, and itself opened, new markets for exports and helped those facing financial and sales problems. Financial assistance and subsidies were given to hotels and travel agents, imports were reasonably controlled, and a trade reciprocity policy was followed.

The decision sealing Malta's neutrality and non-alignment sustained the work of the Labour government to strengthen friendship and cooperation with Mediterranean countries. The Socialist government will retain its policy of equidistance from the superpowers and equal friendliness to both.

It will continue with its work for a Mediterranean that is free in peace, insisting on the need for a reduction and removal from the Mediterranean of the superpowers' fleets. It will give the greatest importance to developing friendship with Arab countries, especially those close to us. As since 1971, a Socialist government will work for close ties with the European Community, for the benefit Malta and Europe.

The workers' party is conscious of the limitations of a small country like ours, but equally conscious of the promise of March 31, 1979, that no foreigner will ever again rule here. A new Labour government will immediately start a modernization programme of the Armed Forces of Malta so that these will be better prepared for any eventuality.

III. FORWARD IN PEACE AND PROGRESS

The Constitution

It was the Labour movement which introduced democracy into the country. It must be the Labour movement to strengthen Malta's democratic institutions, among them the Presidency of the Republic, the Courts, the Electoral Commission and Broadcasting.

To do so it would be necessary to make changes in the Constitution and the changes would be made by agreement of at least two-thirds of the people's representatives.

Immediately after the election a Socialist government would be-£ in discussions to change the Constitution to provide new powers to the President of the Republic with regard to the Courts, the Electoral Commission, Broadcasting and National Security.

The talks would also be on how the Presidency of the Republic could be given more moral strength in the manner of the election of the President.

Improvement in the work of Parliament

A Socialist government would set up a House of Representatives Committee to examine, and put forward proposals for improvements that could be done in the running of Parliamentary business and how MPs could perform their duties better.

Political activity by parties

In the belief that political parties were essential for the maintenance of democracy in the country, a Socialist government would seek means of how political parties represented in Parliament could be assisted by equal means to propagate their respective political beliefs.

Office for safeguarding rights of the citizen

A Labour government would set up an office, run by a committee consisting of representatives of parties in Parliament, to help citizens who claim to be suffering from administrative mistakes or some abuse by some organ of Government.

Law to regulate collation of information on the individual

By law, a Labour government would regulate the collation and storage for commercial or political use, of private information on citizens through data banks and other technological systems. The collation of information and storage of information on the health of the citizen and his family would not be allowed to be done by persons or organizations not authorized by the person himself or when they were not reasonably required in the interests of the public health of the State. A Labour government would also set up an office - and this would be part of the responsibilities of the Prime Minister - to provide information to the citizen on benefits and obligations in social assistance schemes and on legal problems they may be facing in their relations with Government.

A Labour government would review and improve the training, conditions of service and discipline of the Police Corps as well as the procedures under which the Police conduct their duties. The aim here would be to ensure that members of the Corps work more efficiently, to better safeguard the rights of the citizen when dealing with the Police without in any way weakening order and security. Thus administrative procedures and responsibility of the Police would be updated through more modern norms while the rights of Corps members would be safeguarded.

Access to information

Regulations would be made and new laws would be introduced on information that could be given to the citizen in cases and in negotiations in which they had personal interest in relations with Government. The arrangements would be envisaged so that while they protect the right of the citizen to information, they would also protect the need of Government to perform its work - in a secure manner and with the confidentiality necessary to enable it to carry out its work efficiently.

Official documentation would be available to the public after the lapse of 25 years with the exception of State Papers which, if published, could endanger the security of the State.

The social sector - Education

After recalling that every Socialist Administration had given great importance to education, the manifesto said that in Malta the class that suffered from a lack of fair level of education was the working class. Labour governments introduced compulsory education and spread teaching in every sector. It did so with an eye to the needs of the country in the industrial, technical and professional fields.

The big reforms introduced by the Labour government through the student-worker schemes had opened the doors of free university tuition for everyone. This followed the opening of primary, secondary and technical schools for all and after a Socialist government had introduced a free kindergarten service. These form the basis on which a Socialist government would continue to work.

A Labour government would seek to ensure that teaching in State primary schools would be of the highest level with substantial improvements in facilities and equipment; provide free books to children in primary classes which the children would keep in an effort to increase interest in learning and reading from a tender age.

Improvements

A Socialist government would continue to give special importance to the need of improving the educational level of all people and its teachers; ensure that improvements would be aimed at reaching the aim to increase the ability of the individual to enable him to give a bigger share in the life of the country and to better enjoy the benefits which life offered and by preparing the individual to make fair use of his free time.

A Socialist government would insist on the need that education would not become the tool to increase social inequality and add new burdens on young children. It would also make an effort, through consultation with parent and teacher associations, to see how competitive tensions in the Maltese education system could be reduced. The same effort would be intended to ensure that selectivity would not come too early in the life of children and so that children who need it most, would be given the best possible assistance. Study programmes intended to increase the commitment for activities and study on peace would be introduced.

Technical and vocational education

A Socialist government will maintain its commitment to reforms it had introduced in technical education mostly through the fusion of work and study in student-worker courses, pupil worker and apprentice scholar schemes. It will also introduce other courses on work experience and study in fields relevant to the needs of the country, for students who had concluded their secondary education. It would also increase its expenditure on the necessary facilities for training suitable for modern industries, especially in electronics and engineering. It would also, if need be, broaden the training of specialized Maltese teachers and import foreign teachers to fill the gap until technical teachers were trained.

A Labour government, considering that the student-worker scheme was one of the bigger reforms of Socialist government, was prepared to introduce every improvement in the running of the student-worker scheme, giving it more flexibility in accordance with prevailing circumstances without in any way reducing the equal period devoted to the work-study phases.

It would continue to improve the level of qualifications of graduates in engineering, education and industrial management. It would encourage the introduction of evening courses in subjects relevant to the needs of the country and would give added recognition to the Workers Participation Development Centre of the University through more funds to enable it to broaden and improve its work so that it may be considered as a political, economic and sociological school for workers.

Computer technology

A Labour government would set up a group of specialized persons in software to meet the needs of local industry and to act as a reserve of technicians capable of offering their services to neighbouring countries via regional cooperation structures.

Private schools

The Labour movement had given proof of its goodwill on private schools, maintained its belief that tuition should be free and from which all would benefit equally. It envisaged that such a reform would be difficult and must be spread over a number of years. With difficulty the movement gradually started introducing the system in private secondary schools by agreement with the Vatican and the Church in Malta. Tuition in the four higher classes were already free, Form II would be free this year and a year later tuition in Form I of private secondary schools will be also free.

The movement will implement the agreement reached with the Vatican and the Church and would continue to forward its assistance as it was already doing so that all classes in Church secondary schools would be free. Only through this means could the right of choice of schools be ensured, also for those not in a position to pay for the secondary education of their children.

Sports

The Malta Labour Party manifesto recalls the expansion of sporting facilities in the years of Socialist Government, such as the construction of football and bowls pitches and others of national importance such as the national pool and the soccer stadium at Ta' Qali.

The manifesto said that activity in the sporting sector must be based on three levels - improving the people's health, to offer an opportunity for honest recreation to the citizen during leisure times and to help strengthen national identity and prestige.

For these reasons a Labour Government would intensify sporting activities in the educational life of children and youths and would continue to increase sporting facilities in State schools and public places. It would take steps, so that sportsmen of both sexes approaching international levels would be assisted, to set up a sports clinic aimed at providing specialized training in various sports to Maltese who appear to have the chance of reaching satisfactory placings in international competitions in the next ten years. It would import foreign experts to help the sport clinic organize the training.

Health

A Labour government will maintain the high level already reached in hospitals and specialized services, and

could continue to concentrate on these priority sectors as identified by the World Health Organization: prevention of illness, primary health care, care of the aged and the handicapped. Through capital investment it would continue to purchase equipment which could be necessary for such expansion; strengthen personnel to cope with the work and introduce legislation so that certain specialized work, like transplant of organs, could be performed more easily. This would reduce the need for more patients to undergo treatment abroad.

A Labour government would maintain the progress made in the care of mothers and children, would strengthen the school medical and dental service, would introduce a scheme for more regular ancillary services such as speech therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy in special schools for mentally and physically handicapped.

A Labour government would also strengthen the general practitioners service based in the polyclinics. The service would be run by an adequate number of doctors trained in general practice as a specialty in its own right and would be accessible to those who needed free assistance most. It would equip the polyclinics with more diagnostic methods, X-rays and laboratory facilities. The polyclinics, apart from increasing in specialist services would also act as monitoring and screening centres for diabetes and some types of cancer and would also serve as centres for health training such as diet, family planning, pregnancy and children. The government would also expand training both at the Medical School and at the School for Paramedics.

Mental health

A Labour government pledges to give more importance to mental care through continuing to modernize Mount Carmel Hospital, strengthening the Psychiatric Unit at St. Luke's Hospital, continue to fight drug addiction by strengthening the detoxification centre as well as giving greater attention to the rehabilitation sector on modern systems.

The handicapped

A Labour government would continue to increase measures it had already taken in favour and would continue with its efforts especially in the fields of rehabilitation and occupational therapy.

It would give more power and financial assistance to the Council for the Handicapped who would have the duty of maintaining a confidential register of all handicapped to ensure that all handicapped persons were identified and could thus be reached more easily; ensure the education of handicapped children through modern methods in adequate environment with sheltered workshops and offices; (submit projects for useful and productive work or handicapped persons of working age. It would also provide parking areas, toilets and other facilities for these persons. It would also give its assistance to philanthropic organizations working among the handicapped.

Housing

In the housing sector a Labour government would continue with its rent subsidy schemes or emphyteusis on houses for families whose incomes fall below a certain level. It would also rehabilitate old buildings, build new houses in areas where it was practicable, and build on the small-town pattern as in the case of Santa Lucija and Rinella.

More plots would be issued by the Housing Authority and would continue with its policy of providing subsidized bank loans according to need and circumstances. It would also ensure that the provision of houses and flats for the people would be within the framework of the structural plan being prepared with regard to the environment. While it would take steps to reduce the use of requisition orders, the use of empty houses would be encouraged through rent subsidies.

A Labour government would set up a section run by the Housing Authority to coordinate the maintenance of common facilities in flats and other buildings within housing estates. It would encourage residents to organize committees and contribute to a common fund in each estate so that they themselves would decide on what maintenance should be done in the estate and also ensure that this was done.

It would also allocate money for a common fund proportionate to that contributed by the residents(and would put at the disposal of the committee, Government workers to perform necessary maintenance work.

Culture

In the culture field, government would strengthen work already begun so that there would be schools of music, drama and ballet, an orchestra and a national theatre company. It would introduce drama, music and sculpture contests and(would subsidize theatrical, musical and arts shows which reached a certain level.

The government would ensure that the department responsible would collate an inventory of archaeological treasures which exist in Malta and Gozo. It would also take steps so that excavations would be made in remaining areas of archaeological importance, work to be done by Maltese or foreign personnel according to need. It would seek assistance from international organizations to help in this work but would also be prepared to provide public funds to ensure that such work was carried out in a serious and professional manner.

It would help local artistes by giving musicians and other entertainers reductions or by abolishing duties on instruments for personal use; ensure that preference would be given to Maltese entertainers.

It would help literary authors through subsidies and by introducing literary contests to increase public interest in Maltese literature.

The environment

To the Socialist Party, the word environment did not simply mean the countryside or a locality which should be left in its natural state. The first consideration for environment should be in places where the workers lived.

It would therefore continue with measures it had begun to protect the environment and would strengthen the Institute of Design for Environmental Action (IDEA).

Areas where no building whatsoever could be constructed would be declared immediately while laws under which industry and shops do not mar the environment would be strengthened.

Valetta

With regard to Valetta, a Labour government would implement a plan for the modernization of old residential and commercial buildings in Valetta. The project would be aimed to give new life to Valetta and halt the exodus of its population to areas outside its bastions. This would be done without in any way diminishing the historical value enjoyed by certain buildings in the City.

A Labour government would seek to reconcile the need to protect the natural heritage and the exercise of hunting and trapping.

It had succeeded in instilling in the minds of hunters and trappers the need for a close season while, at the same time, hunters and trappers understood the need to safeguard the same environment where they indulge in their pastime, for example, Mizieb where the hunter looks after the place where he indulges in his hobby.

The afforestation programme was thus being improved.

Working conditions

The Labour Party manifesto recalled that the Socialist government had taken steps so that legislation concerning health and safety at the place of work were updated and became a single law. This was done with the cooperation of the General Workers Union and the Employers Association. Government would continue to update legislation from time to time on injury, death and illnesses caused through work in accordance with norms and procedures already existing in other countries. Where workers suffered injury, illness or death while at work through no fault of theirs or that of their employer, he or his dependants would be assisted by the State.

While ensuring that public funds would not be abused, a board of experts would be appointed so as to decide at the shortest possible time, cases involving injury, illness or deaths caused while at work to relieve the workers or their dependants of the delays that such cases took in civil cases at the Law Courts.

Privileged pay

The government would add the privileged pay to safeguard workers against closure of factories by those who leave workers unpaid for work done.

On the basis of experience gained where worker participation was in being, such as at the Drydocks, a Labour government recognized that worker participation in the running of their place of work must be broadened according to plan.

The Labour government would encourage the owners of private industry to have consultation with the representatives of the workers so that workers would participate in their respective establishments to enable both employment and investments to be safeguarded. Steps would be taken so that in all management boards in all public companies and parastatal companies workers would continue to enjoy the right to choose their own representatives through election. This would be the first step towards participation of the workers in the running of public industries.

Public administration

Where it comes to public administration, Government would make new efforts to setup departmental committees consisting of management representatives (ex officio) and elected representatives of the workers.

Cooperatives

Despite several efforts by Government to broaden the cooperative sector, economic and psychological problems still existed which were holding back the workers, producers and consumers to unite in cooperatives. To encourage the setting up of cooperatives, Government would implement an incentive scheme through which Government would provide interest free capital loans to the cooperative that would refund the loans from profits. It would also assist in the technical and commercial sectors, those established cooperatives as well as new ones to broaden their activities.

Women

Government would set up a service for women who consider themselves to have been discriminated against at their place of work so that they would dispute their case free of charge. It would amend the law on conditions of work so that discrimination at the place of Work on the basis of sex would be illegal. The

amendments would be applicable to the private sector.

Promotions

A Labour government would take steps so that promotions in the public sector would be given on the basis of merit and not on sex considerations. This would ensure that women would be given the opportunity to move forward.

A Labour government will also take steps so that women will be suitably represented on public boards and commissions.

The programme speaks about the Labour government's determination to make the country depend on its work, the creation of projects and the opening of new horizons for youths.

Youths

The Labour government which will protect youths from exploitation, will further encourage youth organizations to involve themselves more to study problems of youths at their places of work, entertainment and in sports so that it would be themselves who would recommend solutions to problems and also help in applying the solutions.

A Labour government will set up a Youth Organization to give a service in the community on a voluntary basis. The organization will be open to youths who wish to provide work of a social nature to the community for a year or two.

Elderly

A Labour government will continue on its programme to modernize centres for the elderly which are under the direct responsibility of the state, both as regards medical care as well as in matters relating to the environment at these centres.

It will also intensify its work to open more centres for the elderly in different towns and villages, so that those staying at the centres will be able to continue to live in the community and the environment which they were used to.

A Socialist government will see that suitable accommodation is provided for the elderly under its housing programme; like for example pound floor apartments in Government housing estates. A Labour government will help organizations for the elderly and others which are being set up in future by the workers movement, to create activities for the elderly during their free time.

Church and State

On relations between Church and State, the draft programme speaks about the government's belief in religious freedom and that religious affairs should not be allowed to mix with other affairs which were not of a religious nature. The Government believed that there could not be peace in the country if such a mixture was allowed.

A Labour government wanted more harmonious relations with the Church because there were many sectors where common work could be done for the good of the people. Such harmony can be achieved through agreement and the Socialist government will continue on the road of discussion so that an agreement would be reached as soon as possible for the good of the people and of the Church itself.

Trade Unions

After confirming the movement's belief that the union, between the workers' party and the General Workers Union was a natural unity since it was designed to ensure the best defence of the workers the programme speaks on the Trade Union Congress, saying that a Labour government would give its support for the setting up of such a Congress, which if possible should be created through an agreement between all the unions concerned. The government will be prepared to provide a building in Valetta to be used as a headquarters for the Trade Union Congress.

A Labour government will be prepared at all time to discuss and negotiate with other unions besides the GWU, and will continue to stress its offer to other unions to join in the responsibility of governing if the other unions will be prepared to shoulder the responsibility of decisions taken collectively in the administration of the country.

Industry

In the field of industry, a Socialist government will set up a branch within the Development Corporation to provide technical assistance to industrial enterprises aiming at improving production. Such assistance will consist of technical advice, training and in helping those industries to implement the programme aimed at increasing efficiency. The new branch would seek the help of foreign experts when the need is felt.

In the light of experience gained from the National Organisation for the Promotion of Export, a Labour government would take steps to convert this organization into an Export Corporation. The aim of the Corporation will be to increase exports either on its own or together with other public or private enterprise. The Corporation, which would involve itself in the export of locally made goods, would be run by a board in an autonomous way and would receive Government financial assistance in its first years.

In view of the need for an expansion of Maltese industry, a Labour government would continue to strengthen the workerstudent scheme and will implement other schemes to assist youth to receive training in trades and technology. If there be the need, youths will be sent abroad to receive their training. In this way one can ensure that the country will have enough trained youths in the various industrial sectors that have to be set up and developed in the future. This also serves as encouragement for future -foreign investment in Malta.

Local crafts

A Labour government will continue to encourage the teaching of local crafts and will give assistance to enable this sector to expand in away that it will be able to meet tourist demand. It is also the intention to market local handicrafts overseas.

Tourism

After giving a look at development in tourism in recent years, the draft programme speaks about the implementation of a plan for the development of beaches in Malta and Gozo by the private sector with the help of the Government.

A Labour government will continue to give assistance to the National Tourism Organization; and will give all assistance to the Hotels and Catering Studies School to be set up on new structure through the cooperation of foreign schools in the field.

A Labour government will also assist students at the Hotels and Catering Studies School through a suitable scheme which would be on the same lines of the Extended Skill Training Scheme.

A Labour government would continue implementing its tourism diversification plans; it will continue to increase the influx of elderly tourists in the winter months, and would make a law to regularize timesharing.

Agriculture

In the field of agriculture, a Labour government will seek markets to export agricultural products, it will work to attract investment and would assist farmers, to diversify products in-tended for foreign markets. A Labour government will also give incentives and will encourage farmers' organizations to embark on the exportation of products.

A Labour government considers the schools of agriculture to be the foundation of this sector for the future. Therefore it will strengthen and reform these schools and will look into the possibility of providing higher education in the agriculture field, by seeking overseas courses for local experts and for others joining the agriculture service. The government will also see that the principle of cooperatives would be further introduced among farmers.

In order to ensure progress in agriculture, a future Socialist government will increase efforts to develop intensive agriculture projects aimed at the foreign market. It will give all encouragement for the setting up of centres both in horticulture and in animal breeding to be run under modern systems. It will be prepared to give financial assistance, through subsidized interest on loans or these projects.

A Labour government will sponsor an intensive educational campaign for farmers in the use of insecticides and will make new measures on the importation, control and the use of pesticides to safeguard public health.

It will also continue to strengthen agriculture in Gozo through export oriented projects and will extend the subsidy on transport between Gozo and Malta from horticultural products to other products such as meat, poultry and related products, and fish.

Fishing

A Labour government will continue to help so that a larger number of fishermen would be encouraged to invest in fishing by trawlers. It will set up a scheme or subsidies on loans for this type of investment and will continue to encourage fishermen to have a more direct role in the marketing fish which they catch themselves besides giving them incentives to enter in the export market. An effort will be made to develop the commercial breeding of fish, and to study the possibility of starting to freeze and pack fish locally.

A Labour government will give attention to youth training in more modern and efficient use of technology and will therefore setup a Fisheries School with the help of U N's Food and Agriculture Organization besides sponsoring overseas scholarships for promising youths.

Commerce

The draft programme says that while Labour governments have always recognized that importers, distributors and retailers had a legitimate share in commerce and a right for suitable profit; they had also held that the interests of consumers had to be protected always. A Labour government will continue with the strategy of price control in the field of commerce while it will ensure that everyone will receive suitable profit. It will do this with least bureaucracy and control as possible and by reviewing the strategy according to the needs.

A Labour government will take steps so that the laws for the protection of the consumer, particularly the Trade Description Act, will be fully implemented and improved. It will continue to revise and to update laws connected with the trade sector to present-day needs.

Water

The programme says that water consumption is expected to increase in the coming years. It has increased from a daily 8.5 million gallons in 1971 to a daily 18.5 million gallons in 1986. A Socialist government will continue to expand the reverse osmosis plants to ensure adequate supplies; it will continue in its efforts to reduce water wastage from mains. Besides continuing on the programme to replace pipes, it will continue to strengthen the distribution system.

It will also give assistance for the creation of new water wells and for the repair of existing ones, besides giving attention to water storage by building new reservoirs. A Socialist government will continue to increase sewage water recycling to irrigate more land.

Ports

The programme speaks on Ports and says that a Socialist government will ensure that the Marsaxlokk Port would be operated to the best advantage of the people. Its operation is expected to bring other industries for the processing of goods for export.

It will continue to introduce more modern machinery to enable more efficient work in Grand Harbour. A Labour government will continue with the Marsamxett Port development; to make it one of the most modern ports in the Mediterranean.

It also planned to continue development at Mgarr harbour in Gozo and to improve facilities at Cirkewwa to ensure communication between Malta and Gozo in winter months.

Telecommunications

The programme also dwells on the Master Plan for communications which has to be completed by the end of this year with the assistance of International Telecommunications (ITU) experts. Besides for other local exchanges, the plan includes the installation of a telephone international exchange which was needed for the development in industry and tourism.

A Labour government has a plan of works to continue expanding telecommunications services both for domestic needs as well as for the industrial and commercial needs of the country. To ensure this, the government will introduce more efficient maintenance systems on plants of the Corporation.

Gozo

A Labour government will continue to increase assistance to increase agricultural activity in Gozo and to encourage the production of vegetables and fruit in Gozo for export. It will also continue to improve roads used by farmers all over Gozo.

More measures will be taken to increase and strengthen tourism in Gozo and among works which a Labour government will implement in this field will be the continuation of the Yacht Marina at Mgarr Port, the expansion of the Chambrai tourist complex, the building of an airstrip at Ta'Lanbert, Xewkija. Attention will also be given to the development at Mgarr ix-Xini Bay and Ramla Bay, and to other projects at Marsalforn and Xlendi.

A Socialist government will continue to improve sport facilities in Gozo. The programme mentions the continuation of a racing course, turf laying at the football ground besides increasing public facilities, and the construction of a gymnasium.

Public administration

The draft programme also talks on reforms in the public administration pointing out the Labour government's intention to carry out a general reorganization of the civil service, in consultation with unions representing public servants.

A Labour government intends to set up a Holding Company for companies in which government has a majority of shares. The aim of the exercise will be to ensure that such companies will be run on commercial criteria.

A Socialist government will continue to recognize the usefulness of the work for the Maltese economy put in by the self-employed sector. It was convinced about the important contribution this sector could give to the country's economic development. A Socialist government will create an incentive scheme for the self-employed which will be similar to that being operated with large companies. Through the scheme, subsidies will be given when new jobs are created in entities employing less than ten persons.

Finance

A Labour government will take new steps to improve and expand the financial systems of the country. Commercial banks will be urged to revise the criteria on which financing for exports is done so that companies in the external sector will not be kept back from expanding sales by unnecessary problems of liquidity.

The capital of the Investment Finance Bank will be increased to be better able to meet demands for long term loans. Bank staff will be increased and procedures revised to facilitate the processing of applications for loans.

In order to speed up the development of Maltese economy, one had to encourage investment in related activities through more advanced technology. A Labour government would set up a company purposely to participate with a capital in companies which for the big risks involved, cannot obtain enough loans from the commercial banks.

Income tax

The MLP programme also speaks on reforms on income tax. A Labour government will continue to reform with the aim of continuing to ensure the principles of justice and social solidarity and economic efficiency. There will also be increased control not to allow anyone to avoid to pay tax.

Finally, a future Labour government committed itself to reform the law relating to the setting up of companies and to regulating their operations. A Labour government will modernize such a law in order to give more breathing space to companies finding themselves in difficulties because of recession.