

CONFIDENTIAL

CAB(63)20

CABINET

NATIONAL FLAG

(Memorandum by the Minister for Works, Communications and Power)

Ministers will recall that in Minute No.7 it was agreed that alternative designs should be prepared and set before the Cabinet, depicting various sizes of the shield. These designs will be tabled, and a decision will be required on the following matters :-

- (a) The size of the shield, which is shown in several sizes.
- (b) The design of the shield. It will be seen that two alternative designs have been suggested; that shown on Sketch No.1 is asymmetrical, whilst that on sketch No.6 is symmetrical. I am advised that the symmetrical design would be easier and cheaper to produce.
- (c) The gold colour. That shown in sketches Nos.3 to 9 is metallic gold, but it will be seen this gives a dull impression; furthermore this colour would be difficult to reproduce: that shown in sketches Nos.1 and 2 is yellow-gold which is a standard colour, and which produces a bolder and cleaner effect.

2. In his Memorandum CAB(63)4 the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs recommended that the colour White should appear in the National Flag. He argued that a National Flag should be a symbol of pride to every citizen, regardless of political affiliation. The inclusion of a minor white colour would be a magnanimous gesture towards our political opponents and would be an act tending to unity rather than dissension. I submit that the inclusion of gold strips does not go far enough in this direction, a shortcoming which may well arouse bitter and resentful feelings and lead in the end to unpleasant incidents. For this reason I request the Cabinet to reconsider its decision that the dividing strips should be gold and I recommend that white strips be adopted, with the shield in black and yellow-gold, as shown in sketches Nos.10 and 11.

3. The usual procedure for the adoption of a new National Flag is for the Government-approved design to be sent to the Admiralty to ensure that there is no infringement of any existing flag. It is then customary for a painting to be prepared and inscribed by the College of Arms for submission to Her Majesty for formal approval, after which it is returned to the College of Arms for international registration and preparation of certified copies. I recommend that this procedure be followed.

4. This, however, will take more time than can be afforded at present, for at least six months will be needed to produce the new Flag in the quantities required. In these circumstances, I recommend that arrangements be set in train immediately to manufacture the Flag, but that the details of the design should not be made public until Her Majesty's approval has been received.

5. The official description of the Flag must also be decided, and I submit the following description for consideration :-