

JAMAICAN NATIONAL FLAG

Members of this Honourable House will recall that on the 30th September last the previous Government decided to hold an open competition for the design of a National Flag for an independent Jamaica and to award a prize for the best entry received.

2. In response to the publicity given this contest through the newspapers and radio, some 368 entries have been received and thereupon a special Committee of private individuals was named to recommend for further consideration by Government a short list of 12 designs from which the winning entry would then be chosen by a Joint Bipartisan Committee of both Houses of Parliament. The details of these arrangements have already been outlined in Ministry Paper No. 20 dated 28th March, 1962 entitled "National Emblems".

3. In my previous role as the Leader of the Opposition, I saw fit to agree to these proposals made by the Government of the day, as I considered it important that a National Flag for Jamaica should be ready by the date of Independence if at all possible.

4. Following the closing of the competition on March 10 of this year and the subsequent adjudication by the special panel of judges informal consultations with the present Opposition failed to reach agreement on a mutually acceptable design. Accordingly upon my assumption of office I concluded arrangements for the setting up of a Bipartisan Committee under my Chairmanship to examine the short list of designs considered by the panel as worthy of more detailed examination by Government, with a view to arriving at a design suitable to become the nation's flag.

5. The Parliamentary Committee named for this purpose is as follows:-

- A. The Hon. D.B. Sangster, M.H.R., Minister of Finance
The Hon. E.L. Allen, M.H.R., Minister of Education
The Hon. E.P. Seaga, M.H.R., Minister of Development and Welfare
The Hon. N.N. Ashenheim, M.L.C., Minister without Portfolio

representing the Government, and

- B. Messrs. F.A. Glasspole, M.H.R.
W.O. Isaacs, M.H.R.
Dr. Glendon Logan, M.H.R.
Messrs. B.B. Coke, M.H.R.
Dudley Thompson, M.L.C.

representing the Opposition.

6. I have been informed that the procedure involved in the adoption of a post-Independence Flag for Jamaica is as follows :-

- i) when the Flag has been selected, a coloured design of it should be sent to the Colonial Office for clearance with the Admiralty to ensure that there is no infringement of any existing flag;
- ii) a painting is then prepared and inscribed by the College of Arms for submission to Her Majesty the Queen for approval. (The Flag is granted by the Queen);
- iii) after approval, the painting is returned to the College of Arms for the presentation of two certified copies, one of which is retained by the College of Arms;
- iv) the other copy is sent to the Stationery Office for the reproduction of prints for circulation. This procedure takes some time to complete.

7. Having regard to the necessity to adhere to the procedures outlined above, it is my view that everything should be done to expedite this matter so that all the appropriate formalities might be completed in time for bulk orders to be placed with the manufacturers, to the end that there might be adequate supplies available to Government and the public well before Independence Day.

8. The Joint Parliamentary Committee was guided in its judgment by the following principles :

- I. That it is generally felt that it is not desirable that racial origins should be represented by separate colours in a National Flag since this is divisive rather than unifying.
- II. That counties or parishes should not be represented in the Flag except where they are separate political Governments such as in a Federation. (Note that the Union Jack represents the flags of the original Kingdoms which were merged into the U.K. and the U.S. Stars and Stripes represents in the stripes the original members and in the stars the existing number of States).
- III. That all the nations which were once British Colonies and consist of populations drawn from Britain have retained the Union Jack in some form.

- IV. That all the nations which were once British Colonies but whose populations were not in the main drawn from the U.K. have struck completely new flags, this including South Africa even when it was in the Commonwealth.
- V. That the modern tendency is towards simple flags in geometric patterns, either horizontal stripes or vertical, mostly tricolour.
- VI. That the colours in flags are mostly used for the emotional ideas with which they are associated.

9. After carefully examining a variety of entries and variations thereof against the background of these principles, the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the 22nd instant finally AGREED, on the basis of substantial compromise that the design of a National Flag for Jamaica should embody the following details :-

- I. As to design, the Flag should consist basically of horizontal stripes;
- II. As to colours, these should be Black, Gold and Green arranged as follows: a centre black band with gold stripes above and below and with outer stripes of green at the top and bottom.
- III. The Flag should follow the "Admiralty Pattern" and be in the proportion of 2 x 1, and
- IV. The symbolism should be:
 - BLACK - hardships overcome and to be faced.
 - GOLD - natural wealth and beauty of sunlight.
 - GREEN - hope and agriculture resources.

It can also be rendered -

"Hardships there are but the land is green and the sun shineth".

10. The accompanying note prepared in my office gives some technical details about the design and use of flags by independent nations, and is attached for general information.

APPENDIX

11. This Honourable House is formally requested to approve the recommendations contained in paragraph 8 above so that all the necessary steps might be taken to complete the formalities and to secure adequate supplies for decorative and functional purposes before the date of Independence.

Alexander Bustamante
Premier.
31st May, 1962.

FLAGS - THEIR DESIGN,
STANDARDS AND USAGE.

Flags were invented essentially for the purpose of indicating by visual means the identity of those who bear them, and they must therefore be easily distinguishable at a distance. It is considered that simple patterns are the most easily visible.

DESIGN AND STANDARDS

2. Flag design is a branch of heraldry, and flags ought therefore to be in accordance with the laws of heraldry both in form and colour.
3. In regulation flags, anything in the nature of an inscription is rare, the assemblage of colours being usually held to be sufficient.
4. Tricolour flags were originally revolutionary flags, but in the 19th and 20th centuries they have been taken as symbols of republicanism. Nevertheless, they are sometimes adopted by monarchical countries because of legibility and economy of manufacture. Flags not based on the tricolour, the cross or stars and stripes are usually heraldic or oriental. Heraldic flags embody the whole or a part of a Coat of Arms.
5. For flags to be flown on land, the Admiralty recommends proportions of 5 x 3. For ensigns to be worn at sea, the recommended proportions are 2 x 1 to provide a reasonably smooth flat floating surface in a moderate wind, identifiable at a great distance. These "Admiralty pattern" flags (2 x 1) can also be used on land, particularly when of a considerable size and flown over large buildings or on tall flagstaffs. (Proportions are usually reduced to a common hoist i. e.

5 x 3	=	20 x 12
2 x 1	=	24 x 12).
6. The "hoist" is the portion of the flag which is nearer to the mast, the "fly" the portion farther from the mast. In heraldic descriptions "dexter" and "sinister" are used to denote the hoist and fly respectively, dexter being that part which is on the right hand of the bearer. The dexter half is the more honourable.
7. The older Commonwealth Dominion Flags are usually based on the British ensign or else they otherwise incorporate the Union flag pattern in the top hoist quadrant or Canton. Colonies mostly use the Union flag or Jack with a badge or shield placed in a white disk covering the centre or lower fly quadrant.
8. With reference to colours: in blazonry white represents silver and yellow is for gold. One of the rules of heraldry is that metal must not be placed on metal or colour on colour unless they are separated by a narrow border known as a fimbriation. White on yellow (metal on metal) would therefore be unacceptable unless they are separated by another colour, as would also be the case with red on blue. Provided this rule is observed, any colours or devices may be used. Usually, however, dark or bright shades are preferable owing to the tendency to fade which is characteristic of light colours. The combination of red, yellow and green in a tricolour flag has, however, become a symbol of the newly emergent African States. This holds good for most of the former West African colonies of metropolitan countries in Europe.

9. Flags are usually made of bunting but, in recent years, a mixture of 75% nylon and 25% bunting is frequently used. The nylon-bunting mixture lasts longer, but it may be double the price of bunting. Silk is used for special and military purposes. It is advantageous to choose a design which will be the same on both sides of the flag. Otherwise the flag would have to be made of heavy opaque cloth, probably doubled.

USAGE

10. Stars are often used to denote separate regions, provinces etc. A black star is used by Ghana to represent the lodestar of African freedom. The Crescent and Star usually represent Islamic countries.

11. Originally the symbolic interpretation of the colours was based on aesthetic considerations, e. g.

red	-	bravery, valour
white	-	purity and singleness of purpose, amity
blue	-	truth, loyalty
green	•	hope

Recently, however, additional interpretations have crept in, based on historical and geographical considerations, e. g.

red	-	revolution, the blood of heroes
green	-	agriculture
blue	-	the sky, the sea, mineral wealth
yellow	-	wealth.

Black is used by some countries to symbolise the old regime from which they have emerged.