

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CABINET
BY THE HON. THE PRIME MINISTER

Abolition of mule and donkey racing

The R.S.P.C.A. has suggested to Government that mule and donkey racing be abolished on the grounds that this kind of 'sport' involves cruelty to animals.

2. This kind of racing is traditional in the racing programmes of Mnarja and St Rocco in Malta and Santa Maria at Gozo (all of which are Government sponsored and subsidized) as well as in those of St George's (St George's Festivities Committee) 8th September (8th September Festivities Committee) and Santa Margherita (Sannat).
3. It is understood that donkeys are subjected to severe beating as part of this training. This is apart from the cruelty involved in the goading of these animals with spiked instruments and whips during the actual racing.
4. It has been pointed out that mule and donkey racing takes place in very few civilised countries, that its absence could not have a very serious effect on the racing programmes themselves and that, if cruelty is to remain an essential feature of this kind of racing then it should not be encouraged.
5. Of course, when considering the abolition of such races, one should not fail to analyse well the reactions which might follow the stoppage of such a deep rooted tradition.
6. It has been suggested that one of the ways which might possibly provide Government with a clue regarding such reactions might be a round table conference consisting of representatives of the Police, the R.S.P.C.A. and the various Committees and Organizations concerned at which some sort of prudent persuasion might succeed.
7. Hon. Ministers are requested to consider the R.S.P.C.A.'s suggestion at paragraph 1 and the proposal at paragraph 6.

28th July, 1964

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