

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CABINET
BY THE HON. PRIME MINISTER

Type of Seal to be used on certain official Documents

The Ministry of Commonwealth and Foreign Affairs has taken up the question of whether documents such as Commissions of Appointment of Ambassadors, Consular Commissions, Exequaturs, etc., requiring the Royal Seal, should continue to bear the Royal Seal at present in use or else the Public Seal of Malta.

2. At present Royal Commissions of Appointment, Consular Commissions, Exequaturs and other similar documents for Malta, bear either the Greater or the Lesser Signet of the United Kingdom. This follows the practice which has been conveniently adopted by a number of other Commonwealth countries, but it is illogical, difficult to explain, and it is not understood by foreign nationals of whom more are now being appointed as honorary consuls of Malta. Maltese diplomatic representatives abroad too would naturally prefer a national seal.

3. The Public Seal of Malta was established by Act XXII of 1936. This seal is only used on documents for which it is required by law, but it is not exclusively either a Royal seal or a Governor-General's seal.

4. The Governor-General has sounded Buckingham Palace, informally, about this, and it is appreciated that the documents referred to in paragraph 2, should bear a Maltese seal. However, it has been suggested that this seal should have some readily apparent connection with The Queen of Malta. In Canada and Australia, provision has been made for the use of the Governor-General's seal, instead of the Great Seal and Signet, in the case of Canada by local legislation, in the case of Australia, by Royal Warrant.

5. As there is no Governor-General's seal in Malta, the suggestion is that Malta might wish to adopt a design incorporating a Royal Symbol, such as the St. Edward's Crown, the Royal Cypher or Her Majesty's Style and Title for Malta with the Coat-of-Arms of Malta. The Governor-General feels that the Seal, preferably oval-shaped, should incorporate the Coat-of-Arms of Malta, surmounted by a crown (as in the Governor-General's invitations) and surrounded by the Queen's Title in Malta. The crown in this case is the St. Edward's Crown surmounted by the Governor-General's symbol of office.

6. A draft sketch of the proposed New Seal is attached. Should it be decided to adopt the proposal for a new Seal and the proposed design, it would be desirable to refer the design to the Garter King of Arms to ensure absolute correctness. It would

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then be necessary to obtain The Queen's informal approval, and subsequently her formal approval by Royal Warrant, which would dispense with the need for legislation.

7. Ministers may wish to consider whether a new Royal Seal for Malta should be adopted, whether the proposed design is acceptable, and if so whether action should be proceeded with as in paragraph 6. The cost of producing the new Seal is not great and is not a determining factor.

5th April, 1989.