

DRAFT.

CONFIDENTIAL

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
at the 340TH MEETING of the  
IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION  
held at  
32, GROSVENOR GARDENS, LONDON, S.W.1.  
on THURSDAY, 20TH SEPTEMBER, 1951.

Present:

MEMBERS

- Admiral Sir MARTIN DUNBAR-NASMITH, V.C., K.C.B., Vice-Chairman  
in the Chair.
- W. H. BUNNING, Esq.,  
Representing the High Commissioner for Australia.
- Major-General W.G. STEVENS, C.B., C.B.E.,  
Representing the High Commissioner for New Zealand.
- D.V. SERRURIER, Esq.,  
Representing the High Commissioner for South Africa.
- W. B. ENGLAND, Esq., M.B.E.,  
Representing the High Commissioner for India.
- TRAFFORD SMITH, Esq.,  
Representing the Secretary of State for the Colonies.
- General Sir ROBERT GORDON-FINLAYSON, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.
- Air Chief Marshal Sir ARTHUR LONGMORE, G.C.B., D.S.O.
- The Rt. Hon. Sir RICHARD HOPKINS, G.C.B.
- Sir PATRICK SPENS, K.B.E., K.C., M.P.
- GEORGE SYLVESTER, Esq., M.P.

ADVISERS

- Sir WILLIAM HALCROW, M.Inst.C.E. (Consulting Engineer).
- EDWARD MAUFE, Esq., R.A. (Chief Architect and Artistic Adviser).

SECRETARY

- F. HIGGINSON, Esq., C.M.G.

There were also present:

- F.C. SILLAR, Esq., C.B.E. (Principal Assistant Secretary)
- W.J. CHALMERS, Esq. (Assistant Secretary)
- Major-General J.F.D. STEEDMAN, C.B.E., M.C., (Principal Deputy Director  
of Works)
- H.P.R. FOSTER, Esq., O.B.E. (Legal Assistant)
- O.D. HOLT, Esq. (Principal, Secretarial Branch)

At the request of the CHAIRMAN, the SECRETARY said that apologies for absence had been received from Mr. Moore (on behalf of the Minister of Works), Captain Chopping (on behalf of the High Commissioner for Pakistan), Lord Wigram, Sir Herbert Ellissen, and General Sir John Crocker.

The CHAIRMAN welcomed Mr. George Sylvester, who, as Mr. Harold Neal's successor, was attending a meeting for the first time. Mr. Sylvester had kindly consented to take over the Chairmanship of the Commission's Joint Negotiating Committee on staff matters.

The CHAIRMAN said that members would also be glad to welcome Major-General Steedman, who had joined the staff as Principal Deputy Director of Works.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Minutes of the last Meeting had been circulated and, if they were approved, he would sign them.

1. The Minutes of the 339th Meeting of the Commission, held on the 19th July, 1951, were approved and signed.

The following points arose out of the Minutes:-

(a) War Graves Agreements (page 2)

The CHAIRMAN said that members would be glad to hear that the War Graves Agreement with Belgium - the second of the new series of agreements - had been signed in Brussels on July 30th.

For the Belgian and Netherlands Committees he hoped to lay the names of Commonwealth members before the October meeting for formal acceptance.

As far as honorary members were concerned the Commission were fortunate in having the agreement of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fraser and Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Tedder to appointment on the Netherlands and Belgian Committees, respectively. The Commonwealth Governments had been asked to say whether they approved the appointment of Heads of Mission in rotation to the other three honorary vacancies.

In view of the fact that the foreign governments concerned must be informed of the Commonwealth membership so that they could put forward their nominations through the diplomatic channel, he proposed, unless the Commission had any objection, to proceed, in the case of the Belgian and Netherlands Committees, on the system suggested in the correspondence and invite the United Kingdom, Canadian and Australian representatives to serve first.

Some further difficulties had arisen in connection with the Italian Agreement, which he would ask Mr. Sillar to explain.

Mr. SILLAR, in reply to the CHAIRMAN, said that the Italians had reiterated their request for reciprocal treatment in Libya, even though they were aware that this could not be granted in view of the transfer of power in that country. It would seem that their request was no more than a debating or bargaining point and that some special step should be taken to

induce the Italian Government to sign the Agreement, the negotiations for which had dragged on for so long. He hoped that the Vice-Chairman would be good enough to write to the British Ambassador in Rome to ask if he could intervene personally in the matter.

The CHAIRMAN said that if members agreed he would write a letter on their behalf. He would also ask Sir Arthur Longmore to speak to the Ambassador when he was in Rome at the end of the month.

Members signified their approval of this step.

Sir Arthur LONGMORE said that he would gladly speak to the Ambassador. He thought that intervention at the top was necessary now, as he believed that most of the difficulties had arisen at a lower official level.

(b) Headstones for Service Graves (pages 3 & 4)

The CHAIRMAN said that a misunderstanding had arisen at the last meeting as a result of a certain ambiguity in a letter from the Adjutant-General on the subject of headstones for non-war Service graves, which the Secretary had read out at that meeting. The letter had given rise to the impression, reported in the Minutes, that the scheme did not apply to men dying abroad. The War Office had now pointed out that the scheme did in fact apply to men who died abroad, whereas men who died at home were eligible only if the body was buried under military arrangements.

The CHAIRMAN said that similar arrangements applied to the Royal Air Force; and Sir Arthur LONGMORE asked whether the Air Ministry and the War Office were in agreement in the matter.

The SECRETARY said that the two departments were following the same line of policy. (He handed a copy of a recent Air Ministry Order on the subject to Sir Arthur Longmore).

(c) High Commissioner for New Zealand (page 5)

The CHAIRMAN said that he had had a very nice letter from Mr. Jordan in reply to the letter of thanks which he had written to him on the Commission's behalf.

(d) Zehrendorf Indian Cemetery (page 5)

The CHAIRMAN said that a letter had been written to the Foreign Office asking that an approach might be made to the Russian authorities with a view to obtaining their permission for periodic visits to be made to the cemetery by German civilian employees of the Berlin Municipality, so that it might be tidied up and kept in reasonably good order.

(c) Jerusalem War Cemetery (page 2)

Sir Arthur LONGMORE enquired whether any further moves had been made to restore the Jerusalem War Cemetery to good order.

The CHAIRMAN said he regretted he was unable to report any progress since the July meeting. He understood the discussions were still proceeding between the British Ambassador, Amman, and the Jordan Government.

## DEATH OF LIEUTENANT-COLONEL R.W. BATEMAN.

The CHAIRMAN said that he had now to refer to the great loss which the Commission and their staff had suffered by the sudden death of Colonel Bateman - a loss which was both serious to the work and grievous to all his colleagues.

It was shortly after the July meeting that Colonel Bateman had been taken suddenly ill, and though his condition was serious for some time it was hoped that with care and rest he would get well again; but he had another heart attack in hospital on August 30th and died within a few minutes. The funeral took place on the 4th September at West Chiltington, near his home in Sussex, and Sir Arthur Longmore represented the Commission. The Secretary and many members of the staff were present.

Colonel Bateman had been appointed to the staff as the Commission's Director of Works in 1945. Everyone who sat at that table was well aware of the immense difficulties which he had to face in endeavouring to put into effect the plans approved and the decisions reached there. His activity and resource were unbounded, and he faced every obstacle with cheerfulness and courage.

The SECRETARY, replying to the CHAIRMAN, said that as a former Director of Works he could perhaps appreciate more keenly than others the difficulties of the task which Colonel Bateman had to contend with. These difficulties never seemed to grow less; they continued to multiply, and the answer to one problem was seldom the solution to the next. He had a high sense of duty and responsibility, and a most active mind. It was tragic that his life had ended while his zest for living was so strong. He (the Secretary) was very glad of the opportunity of paying this tribute.

## REPORT OF THE 384TH MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The CHAIRMAN said that he would like to draw members' attention to Item 2, which indicated that a start had been made towards the printing of the Cemetery and Memorial Registers. Members would see from Item 3 that the contract for the construction of the Royal Naval Memorial at Lee-on-Solent could now be let.

Items 27 and 28 were the subject of separate papers which would be considered later in the meeting.

It was proposed by Sir Patrick SPENS, seconded by Mr. Sylvester, and carried unanimously:

2. That the report of the 384th Meeting of the Finance Committee be adopted.

## MODIFICATION OF THE COMMISSION'S TITLE.

The CHAIRMAN said that he hoped that members would have read the correspondence which had been circulated. He was not asking for a decision at the present meeting because he had hoped that the Chairman would be present when the matter was discussed. In view of the approaching General Election, it was unlikely that

the Chairman would be able to attend a meeting until November; but members having seen the correspondence that had taken place would doubtless regard to-day as a suitable opportunity for discussion and interchange of views.

Mr. BUNNING said that the matter had been put before the General Purposes Committee, which dealt with matters of interest in all parts of Australia covering the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. Australia considered that a change in the title of the Commission was most undesirable from all points of view. She did not object to the word "Imperial" - there were, for example, the Imperial Service League and other organizations with the word Imperial in their titles - and therefore she would like to see the title retained as the Imperial War Graves Commission. The Navy and the Returned Soldiers' organizations were unanimous in the matter. On the practical side also, Australia felt a change was undesirable; but it would probably be better to defer final decision until the work of the Commission was completed. As members were aware, Australia referred to herself as the Commonwealth of Australia and was a part of the British Empire; the word "Imperial" was therefore more suitable than the word "Commonwealth".

Major-General STEVENS said that he did not think New Zealand had any enthusiasm for the suggested change. No suggestion had come from the New Zealand Government - indeed he was quite certain that no suggestion would come - but before he came to the present meeting he had spoken to the new High Commissioner who, at the time of the correspondence, was Minister for External Affairs in Wellington. Undoubtedly, as the months had gone by, Mr. Doidge's own personal opinion had hardened against a change. He was very emphatic that as far as New Zealand was concerned he would not agree to a change now and would certainly prefer that the matter should be postponed.

Mr. SERRURIER said that the views of the Union Government were set out in the letter written last May. The Union Government agreed in principle to the change, but likewise felt that it should not be hurried, and indeed that it should be deferred for some time for a variety of reasons. The only outstanding point was the question of "inter" and "intra".

The CHAIRMAN said that he was interested in this view because Canada (who was not represented at the present meeting) had made the same point: they preferred "intra" to "inter".

Mr. ENGLAND said that his instructions were to press for the change in principle, if agreement could be obtained. The Government of India had carefully considered the views put forward by the Commission and they still felt that their original view obtained. The term "Commonwealth" had been adopted at the highest level; it was well understood everywhere; it was used in the Press, and altogether there was every reason for the change in principle.

General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON said that the letters which had been sent to the Governments dealt with the situation very fully and clearly, but he thought it was possible to go a little further, particularly on the line of sentiment. In the first place, India had put the matter forward merely as a suggestion, evidently without consideration of all the possible repercussions. Their representative now said that India was pressing for the change to be carried out, but there was no indication of that in the letters. He (Sir Robert Gordon-Finlayson) felt that if they had the situation put fully before

them they would take a different view. They should be told that Australia was emphatically opposed to it, that New Zealand was pretty well against it, and that some others did not mind it, but desired a postponement of the change. The point in regard to "inter" and "intra" should also be mentioned. He did not see why, because one Government wished for something, all the other Governments should comply; and he believed that if India realized that there was a weight of opinion against her she would understand.

Sir Arthur LONGMORE said that Sir Robert had covered quite a few of the points he himself had in mind. In travelling around and attending ceremonies at the various cemeteries, he had found that there was a tremendous amount of sentiment for the Imperial War Graves Commission, and that it would be hard to explain to relatives the necessity for changing the name. It had also occurred to him that, after all, the dead of the 1914-1918 War had all been killed while the Empire was still known as such, before the Statute of Westminster, and the Commission's Charter was to maintain their graves, which were Imperial graves. In the case of the 1939-1945 War, India became a republic after the war had finished and as far as her dead were concerned, he presumed - though he was open to correction upon this - that she was still a part of the Empire when those casualties occurred. For various reasons such as these, he was very much against any change. He thought a decision should in any case be deferred until at least 1954 or 1955, by which time the cemeteries should be complete; and that would be time enough to settle the question of "inter" or "intra", or whatever other alteration might be put forward.

Sir Richard HOPKINS said that all the practical considerations certainly led to the conclusion that the matter should be deferred. He would like to add one point, which was purely personal to himself. He had been sorry to see the introduction of the word "intra" into the discussion at all. He had a feeling that though "inter" started as a Latin word it had come to be regarded to a considerable extent as an English word now. "Intra" seemed to him to remain Latin. Neither the word "common", nor the word "wealth", was in the least Latin, and "intra" seemed to him to have all the disadvantages of the hybrid.

Sir Patrick SPENS expressed agreement with Sir Richard Hopkins' view. He did not like either of the two alternatives, and he was against the name being changed at all if India could be persuaded not to press her point. He felt very strongly that the whole of the work that had been done had been done while the Commission were representing the Empire and nobody else. If it were decided ultimately to make a change - and he thought that there was a great deal to be said on the ground of the difficulty of explaining such a step to the relatives - then quite frankly he would prefer simply the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, though he knew that this created a difficulty for Australia.

Mr. BUNNING agreed that it did create a difficulty. A "Commonwealth" Commission would mean an "Australian" Commission.

Sir Patrick SPENS said he thought it was important to try to persuade India not to press the matter, because he knew how receptive the Indians were to sympathetic considerations, and to make them realize that there were millions of relatives throughout the Commonwealth who had looked to the Imperial War Graves Commission, who had known it as such, and who had trusted it, and still did. The first result of the change would be the creation of an atmosphere of distrust of a new body, because people would not realize that it was the same body under a new name. They would think somebody else was taking over the Commission's duties.

He was quite certain that the last thing India wanted was to shake the confidence and the faith of relatives in what they had known for at least a generation as the Imperial War Graves Commission.

Mr. Trafford SMITH said that in view of the forthcoming election he thought he could hardly express a formal view on behalf of the Colonies. From the point of view of general office policy the word "Imperial" and the word "Empire" had fallen into disuse; but he felt certain that there would be no objection to the proposal for delay. It was essentially a matter which would have to be considered by the Secretary of State himself.

The CHAIRMAN thanked members for the opinions expressed which he said would be recorded.

Mr. ENGLAND said that he was sure the Commission would realize that the Government of India had no wish to be difficult about the matter. But they had thought that there was some reason for a change, and he was sure that this was fully appreciated. He would be glad to report back on the nature of the discussion which had taken place, and on any other matter which the Chairman might wish to add, and the Indian Government would let the Commission have a further reply as soon as possible.

The CHAIRMAN said that he did not think he had anything to add except that he himself felt very strongly that those to whom the Commission were doing honour by their work did die for the Empire when it was still an Empire; and that until the work of construction was finished no change should be made. He hoped that in November it would be possible to come to some decision - unless India replied that she did not wish to press her point. That, of course, would solve the problem.

#### FIRST QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK.

The CHAIRMAN said that he was sure members would be very much interested to read this report. It summarized in a convenient way the work which had been done. Subsequent reports would enable members to see at a glance the rate and extent of progress.

Sir Patrick SPENS said that it should be remembered that the report only indicated work on the 1939-45 war cemeteries. It should not be forgotten that simultaneously a good deal of restoration and repair work was going on in the 1914-18 cemeteries, some of which was substantial and required a good deal of supervision by the Commission's local officials.

Sir Arthur LONGMORE asked if it would be possible to have a report on the construction of memorials.

The SECRETARY, in reply, said that a supplementary sheet, which would be added in due course, would show progress made with the building of Memorials.

General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON said that it would be useful if the Commission could be given a rough forecast of what work was expected to be completed at the end of, say, a year or six months, and what was the total extent of their commitments.

General STEEDMAN, replying to the Chairman, said that he was now working on a form which would show progress in relation to the whole task and its cost. He hoped it would show how much had been spent this year, and perhaps how much was to be spent in the next two or three years.

PURCHASE AND SALE OF MOTOR TRANSPORT, ANZAC AGENCY.

The CHAIRMAN said that the question of the purchase and sale of motor transport by the Anzac Agency had been considered by the Finance Committee at their meeting the previous week. Copies of all the correspondence with the Agency on this subject were included in the folder which had been circulated to the Commission. The Committee's recommendations were set out in the covering paper and he would like to know whether they had the Commission's approval. If members approved them an instruction to the Agency would be prepared accordingly by the Secretary in consultation with the Treasury representative, and the representative of the High Commissioner for Australia on the Finance Committee.

A short discussion followed in which the nature of the misunderstanding which had arisen was explained and Members indicated their approval of an instruction being sent to the Agency on the lines of the recommendations contained in the paper.

EXAMINATION OF SKETCH DESIGN FOR CEMETERY CONSTRUCTION:  
SOUTHERN EUROPEAN DISTRICT.  
RIMINI GURKHA WAR CEMETERY.

Mr. MAUFE, replying to the Chairman, said that apart from two very minor alterations in the horticultural layout he fully approved the design, which he thought was most satisfactory.

It was proposed by Mr. BUNNING, seconded by Major-General STEVENS, and carried unanimously:

3. The Commission having considered a Paper No. A/97/222 dated 10th September 1951,

RESOLVE:

That the Commission having taken note of the Sketch design for Rimini Gurkha War Cemetery, Italy, (Mr. Louis de Soissons, A.R.A.), resolve that the Finance Committee be and hereby is authorised to consider and accept tenders for the construction of the said cemetery without further reference to the Commission.

CHATHAM NAVAL MEMORIAL EXTENSION.

It was proposed by Mr. SERRURIER, seconded by Mr. England, and carried unanimously:



4. The Commission having considered a Paper No. A/52/2/2/1 dated 16th August 1951,

RESOLVE:

That the seal of the Commission be affixed to and the Proper Officer sign the Counterpart lease of the site for the extension to the Naval Memorial at Chatham, Kent.

LIVERPOOL NAVAL MEMORIAL.

It was proposed by Mr. Trafford SMITH, seconded by Mr. Sylvester, and carried unanimously:

5. The Commission, having considered a Paper No. A/52/2/5 dated 25th August 1951,

RESOLVE:

That the seal of the Commission be affixed to and the Proper Officer sign the Counterpart leases of the site of the Liverpool Naval Memorial to be granted respectively by the Corporation of Liverpool and the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board for 99 years at a peppercorn rent.

PENZANCE BURIAL GROUND, CORNWALL.

It was proposed by Sir Patrick SPENS, seconded by Sir Richard HOPKINS, and carried unanimously:

6. The Commission, having considered a Paper No. A/10594 dated 4th September 1951,

RESOLVE:

That the seal of the Commission be affixed to and the Proper Officer sign the Duplicate Deed of Grant granting to the Commission the exclusive rights of burial in the area of land comprising the Services Plot in the Penzance Burial Ground, Cornwall.

GENERAL NOTES.

The CHAIRMAN said that the ceremony at Cambridge, on July 31st, when Marshal of the Royal Air Force Lord Tedder had unveiled the Stone of Remembrance, had been very impressive. He would like to thank Sir Arthur Longmore for having unveiled the Cross of Sacrifice at Chester on September 9th.

Sir Arthur LONGMORE said that it had been quite a simple ceremony which was favoured by good weather. A number of relatives had been present, including some from New Zealand.

Sir Richard HOPKINS enquired whether local residents came to these ceremonies.

Sir Arthur LONGMORE replied that in his experience they frequently did. The local authorities were responsible for the arrangements.

Mr. BUNNING said that at Cambridge the local authorities had made excellent arrangements. He knew that full details of the ceremony had been sent in advance to relatives in Australia, who had written back to friends in this country asking them to attend on their behalf.

The SECRETARY said that it was felt to be right that the municipality or the city corporation should arrange the ceremonies and not the Commission, because it was only in that way that the local authorities would come to realize that the cemetery was in their care and that they were going to look after it.

Sir Richard HOPKINS said he thought that every effort should be made to advertise these ceremonies locally, either in the Press or by means of posters.

The CHAIRMAN said that the other matter in the General Notes Paper to which he would like to draw attention was the interesting despatch from the British Consul-General, at Istanbul, about cemeteries on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

#### RETIREMENT OF MR. H.P.R. FOSTER.

The CHAIRMAN referred to the approaching retirement of Mr. Hugh Foster, who had joined the Legal Department in 1922 and had been the Commission's Legal Assistant since 1929. This was one of the occasions when he (the Chairman) felt that someone with longer memories of the Commission than he had should speak of Mr. Foster's able and devoted services, and he would ask Sir Patrick Spens to say a few words in a moment, but he did know that Mr. Foster had held a very special place in the hearts of all his colleagues; and that they always had complete confidence in the thoughtfulness and good sense of his opinions.

Sir Patrick SPENS said that he supposed that his memories of Mr. Foster did go back farther than anybody else's, indeed he had first made his acquaintance before he had become a Commissioner. He thought the Commission had been unusually fortunate all these years in having their legal affairs under Mr. Foster's care. Some of the problems had been difficult and the Commission had been extraordinarily little troubled with the technicalities of them. This was due to the presence of the extremely competent official whose responsibility it was to deal with them. He was sure that the Chairman's predecessor, and all other members of the Commission, both past and present, had realized what a wise counsellor and good sound lawyer the Commission had. Mr. Foster's work for the Commission had been of the highest value and it has been well appreciated. The Commission owed him a very great debt.

Mr. FOSTER thanked the Chairman and Sir Patrick Spens for their kind words, and said he would like to say how much he had enjoyed all the years he had worked for the Commission. It had been a very happy period of service.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Commission would wish to extend their warmest wishes to Mr. and Mrs. Foster in their retirement.

ITALIAN WAR GRAVES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Sir Arthur LONGMORE asked whether the Italian authorities were providing headstones for their graves in this country.

Mr. SILLAR, in reply, said that headstones had been provided for the graves in Botley Road Cemetery, Oxford, and at Brookwood but that despite more than one reminder the Italians had not indicated when they would provide headstones for the remainder of their graves. The Commission had approved the design used.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING.

The CHAIRMAN said that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, the 18th October, 1951, at 11 a.m.

There being no other business the meeting concluded at 12. 5 p.m.