

Approved

DRAFT.  
CONFIDENTIAL,  
110<sup>E</sup>

MINUTES of PROCEEDINGS  
of the

110th. MEETING of the IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION  
held at  
H.M. OFFICE OF WORKS  
on  
Wednesday, 9th. May, 1928.

PRESENT :

Major-General SIR FABIAN WARE, K.C.V.O., K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G.,  
Vice-Chairman, in the Chair.

Colonel SIR GEORGE W. BADGEROW, C.M.G., M.D., F.R.C.S.,  
Representing the High Commissioner for Canada.

Major-General SIR GRANVILLE RYRIE, K.C.M.G., C.B., V.D.,  
High Commissioner for Australia.

C. KNOWLES, Esq.,  
Representing the High Commissioner for New Zealand.

R. WEBSTER, Esq.,  
Representing the High Commissioner for South Africa.

W. HUTCHINGS, Esq.,  
Representing the High Commissioner for Newfoundland.

RUDYARD KIPLING, Esq.,

Lieut. General SIR GEORGE MACDONOGH, G.B.E., K.C.B., K.C.M.G.,

Admiral SIR MORGAN SINGER, K.C.B., K.C.V.O.,

LORD STANLEY, M.C., M.P.,

Colonel LORD ARTHUR BROWNE, K.B.E.,  
Principal Assistant Secretary.

THERE WERE ALSO PRESENT :

Lieut. Colonel SIR FREDERIC KENYON, G.B.E., K.C.B.,

Lieut. Colonel C.P. OSWALD, O.B.E.

Lieut. Colonel H.F. ROBINSON.

Major H.F. CHETTLER, O.B.E.

110<sup>th</sup>

The Minutes of the last Meeting were approved and signed.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN said that information had been received from Gallipoli to the effect that wreaths had been laid on Anzac Day in Beach Cemetery on behalf of the Navy, Army and Air Force, and the Returned Soldiers' and Sailors' Association of New Zealand. The High Commissioners and Departments concerned had been informed.

At the 104th Meeting the Commission had passed a resolution instructing the Secretary to send suitable letters of thanks to the Principal Architects on the termination of their services. Replies had been received from Sir Herbert Baker, Sir Robert Lorimer and Sir Reginald Blomfield. (Letters read).

The Lord Mayor of London had recently visited Ypres. He had inspected the Memorial at the Menin Gate and some of the Cemeteries in the neighbourhood and had written an appreciative letter to the Commission. (Letter read).

The Commission would remember that the Tablet in Antwerp Cathedral had been erected for some time. It had been originally proposed that Mr. Winston Churchill should carry out the Ceremony of Unveiling. There had, however, been great delay and an article had appeared in the local press commenting on the apparent neglect of the Commission in arranging a suitable Ceremony. He (the Vice-Chairman) had discussed the matter with the British Ambassador and with Mr. Churchill's approval suggested that the Ambassador should be asked to unveil the Tablet himself. He was a member of the Commission's Anglo-Belgian Mixed Committee. (Agreed).

The questions at issue regarding the staff of the Commission at Kelia had not yet been cleared up. The Turkish Government had urged that the Commission's office at Kelia

should be vacated and that the Commission's representative should reside at Chanak, on the other side of the Straits. The British Ambassador had at first held the opinion that it was doubtful whether under the Treaty the Commission had the right to maintain a headquarters at Kelia but had subsequently modified his views. The matter was somewhat embarrassing. The Turkish Authorities were anxious for the Commission to vacate Kelia but it would be difficult to supervise the maintenance of the Cemeteries satisfactorily from the other side of the water; moreover even if permission was given for a launch to cross daily from Chanak to Kelia an excuse might be found later raising objections even to that privilege.

It was most important that somebody with standing and authority on behalf of the Commission should look into the matter locally, and he (the Vice-Chairman) had asked Sir George Macdonogh who happened to be visiting the east of Europe later on in the year whether he could enquire into the circumstances on the spot and report to the Commission.

Meanwhile steps had been taken to approach the French and Italian Authorities to gain their support in the attitude of the Commission.

REPORT OF THE 164TH. MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN said that Item No.7. related to the last large contract into which the Commission would have to enter for the preparation of headstones. They were coming to an end of this work.

Item No.11 related to the construction of Villers Bretonneux Cemetery. There was special interest attaching to the design of this Cemetery as the Australian National Memorial in France was to be erected on land immediately adjoining the Cemetery. The main entrance to the Memorial

would be through the Cemetery and special treatment had therefore been given to the entrance features of the latter. The design of the Cemetery would be laid before the Commission for approval.

The following resolution was moved by Sir George Macdonogh, seconded by Sir Granville Ryrrie, and agreed :-

- (2) "That the report of the 164th. Meeting of the Finance Committee be adopted".

VILLERS BRETONNEUX CEMETERY.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN said that the design for the Cemetery at Villers Bretonneux was for approval by the Commission.

(The design was explained by Colonel Robinson).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN said that Sir Edwin Lutyens had designed this Cemetery with particular reference to the Australian Memorial and the Architect for the latter had been in England and had discussed the matter with him.

SIR FREDERIC KENYON said that in his opinion the Cemetery design harmonised with the Australian Memorial.

The following resolution was moved by Sir Grenville Ryrrie, seconded by Mr. Kipling, and agreed:-

- (3) "That the Commission having considered a statement by the Principal Assistant Secretary No.7/E28/325/S.1. dated 7th. May, 1928, approve the treatment proposed for Villers Bretonneux Military Cemetery".

EAST LONDON CEMETERY, PLAISTOW.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN said that this was another case where the Finance Committee had agreed to construction subject to the Commission approving the design. There were 138 scattered war graves and the burials in 103 cases were in common graves. On the common graves there existed a large number of small memorials which marked other civilian burials within the

110<sup>+</sup>

graves. It would be inappropriate to place the Commission's standard headstone among the small private memorials, even if there were room for the same, which was not generally the case. It was therefore proposed to commemorate the 103 burials by the erection of a Screen Wall with stone panels bearing the names. The design had been approved by Sir Frederic Kenyon.

SIR FREDERIC KENYON said the treatment was on the same lines as numerous other cases.

The following resolution was moved by Lord Stanley, seconded by Mr. Webster, and agreed :-

- (4) "That the Commission having considered a statement by the Principal Assistant Secretary No.3/E28/323/S.1.dated 3rd.May,1928, approve the commemoration of the 103 war burials in common graves in East London Cemetery, Plaistow, in the manner suggested".

POZIERES MEMORIAL TO THE MISSING.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN said that the name of Mr. Turner had been submitted by the Architect as the Sculptor to carry out the sculpture work in connection with this Memorial to the Missing at Pozieres. The name had been approved by Sir Frederic Kenyon.

The following resolution was moved by Sir Morgan Singer, seconded by Mr. Knowles, and agreed :-

- (5) "That the Commission having considered a statement by the Principal Assistant Secretary No.1/E28/322/S.1. dated 1st.May,1928, approve the appointment of Mr. L.A.Turner as Sculptor for the sculpture work in connection with the Pozieres Memorial to the Missing".

ANGLO-ITALIAN MIXED COMMITTEE.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN said that at a former Meeting the Commission had approved a proposal to appoint Major Ingpen to be Secretary-General of this Committee and a formal resolution was now necessary.

The following resolution was moved by Sir George Badgerow, seconded by Sir Morgan Singer, and agreed :-

- (6) "That Major A.L Ingpen, M.V.O., O.B.E., be appointed Secretary-General of the Anglo-Italian Mixed Committee".

STAFF OF THE COMMISSION.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN said there were the usual resolutions.

The following resolution was moved by Mr. Hutchings, seconded by Sir George Macdonogh, and agreed :-

RESIGNATIONS.

THAT the Commission hereby approve the resignation of the under-mentioned Officers as from the dates set out against their names.

May, 1928.

NAME	APPOINTMENT.	SALARY	DATE
Ball H.F.	Draughtsman Grade "A", France	© £300/15/350.	5.5.28.
Hughes W.	Chief Clerk of Works, France,	© £350/15/400.	21.4.28.

CEMETERY REGISTERS.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN said that eight Registers for 21 Cemeteries had been published since the last Meeting of the Commission. These contained 8,721 entries and 3,175 copies of the Registers had been sold.

ISOLATED GRAVES IN FRANCE AND BELGIUM.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN said he had recently inspected a number of isolated graves in France and Belgium but was only able to see a small proportion of those in the wide area he had covered. Owing to the scattered localities of the graves a thorough inspection would require the individual labour of one man for several months.

In Belgium the condition of these graves was altogether unsatisfactory. There were 2,215 graves in Belgium of which a considerable proportion were isolated and could not be cared for by Commission gardeners except at unjustifiable expense. These were looked after by an Organisation recognised by the Belgian Government "Nos Tombes". The Commission paid that Organisation the same fee as was paid by the French and the Belgians for the care of their graves, seven Belgian francs a year. This was obviously quite inadequate for anything like proper maintenance of the graves, but they had been requested by both the French and Belgians not to pay more than the recognised rate. The cost of maintenance of the graves in the Military Cemeteries in charge of the Commission was somewhere about 5/- a grave. The custom in France and Belgium was to tidy up the graves on one particular day in the year, the 1st. of November, and to neglect them more or less for the rest of the year. He would remind the Commission that in the early days there had been difficulty in getting their policy accepted by the public and the relatives, and the Commission had undertaken that if the graves were left in the countries where the men fell they would be cared for by the Commission. He thought the Commission could not divest themselves of that responsibility and that they would not be carrying it out in a proper manner if the care of the graves was confided to an Organisation like "Nos Tombes", who were unable to appreciate or carry out the Commission's standard of upkeep.

He had discussed the matter with the British Ambassador who had thought that even if the Commission increased their rates of payment the standard of upkeep would not be greatly improved except perhaps for a short time.

He (the Vice-Chairman) thought there were two alternatives, one was to call a joint Meeting of the two (the French and Belgian) Mixed Committees and urge upon them the desirability of paying whatever was necessary and to see the effect of this policy for a year. The alternative was to bring the graves back into the nearest British Cemetery where they could be cared for in the same way as the other graves in the Cemetery. He thought that in that case the situation would have to be explained to the relatives and their agreement obtained. Up to the present their experience was that some 80 per cent of the relatives would agree. If any insisted on the graves remaining they would have to understand that this would be on their own responsibility.

SIR GEORGE MACDONOGH asked what the practice was as regards the maintenance of German graves in Belgium. He thought that if the Germans were maintaining themselves they must be paying more than seven francs a grave and if that was the case he thought there was no reason against the Commission doing the same thing.

The whole matter was eventually a question of inspection; without inspection no maintenance could ever be satisfactory. He suggested that one way of carrying out inspection was the system adopted in Italy. The inspecting officer went round and if he found the graves not well maintained found fault with the caretaker; if on the other hand the graves were in good order a present of a few lire was given to the caretaker. This system was eminently satisfactory.

SIR FREDERIC KENYON thought the policy of the Commission should be that as long as the graves remained isolated in the

Communal Cemeteries the standard of upkeep of the Communal Cemeteries should be accepted. The only alternative was to bring them into the Commission's Cemeteries. He did not like the idea of exhumation and removal but thought that the relatives might be informed that the remains could be removed if the relatives desired it.

MR. WEBSTER supported Sir Frederic Kenyon's view and thought that the cases should be dealt with as they arose so that if any complaint was made the Commission could at once offer to remove the grave to the nearest Military Cemetery, or otherwise explain to the relatives that they must accept the standard in force in the Communal Cemeteries.

SIR GRANVILLE RYRIE thought it would be a mistake to force upon the Belgian Authorities a larger sum for upkeep. He doubted whether this would improve the maintenance to any considerable extent as it would be done reluctantly.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN pointed out that if they waited for complaints that might hardly be fair to the poorer relatives who would not see the graves. The matter was one on which a decision must be given. In a few months the staff who carried out the exhumations would no longer exist. Exhumations could only be carried out by trained people.

MAJOR CHITTLE, who was asked by the Vice-Chairman to give his opinion on this said that few men had the qualities needed for doing the work reverently, as it should be done, and carefully, as it must be done to keep the bodies separate and not lose marks of identification. Such men were available now, but would not be available in two years' time.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN said he would consider the matter and put up definite proposals to the Commission.

SIR FREDERIC KENYON'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMPLETION OF CEMETERIES.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN said that in 1923 and 1925 Sir Frederic Kenyon

had made an inspection of Cemeteries in France and Belgium and had reported that in certain cases construction was in his opinion incomplete and had recommended certain specified additions. In some cases these recommendations were for shelters and tool houses and in others for a low wall instead of a concrete kerb or hedge. It was for the Commission now to decide whether these recommendations were to be carried out. He (the Vice-Chairman) thought that they were likely to be judged in the future by the worst of their work rather than the best and that if a considerable number of the Cemeteries were unsatisfactory it would be the subject of comment. When the matter had been discussed before the Commission had decided not to deal with the whole of Sir Frederic Kenyon's proposals at the time but to postpone consideration until the work of Cemetery construction was nearing completion. That time had now come and if any additions were to be made to the Cemeteries it must be within the next few months. His recommendations had been carried out in 18 Cemeteries and a certain amount of work had also been done in some 74 others. About one third of the total cost involved had been incurred, principally in the erection of tool houses. The chief item of cost in the recommendations was the substitution of walls for concrete kerbs or hedges. There were two opinions in this matter some who were in favour of hedges as a boundary to a Cemetery and others who were in favour of a low wall.

SIR FREDERIC KENYON said that by desire of the Commission he had visited the Cemeteries and had reported on them to the best of his judgement. His opinion at the time was that certain Cemeteries did not come up to the normal standard of the Commission and in many cases this was due to the absence of walls or sometimes shelters. In his opinion a low wall was a better boundary for a Cemetery as a rule than a hedge or

110

kerb both in appearance and in the matter of maintenance. He had hoped that these alterations, which were merely to bring a certain number of defective Cemeteries up to the general level, might have been carried out at the time, when the expenditure would have been merged in the general expenditure of the Commission. However, the Commission had decided to reserve the matter for consideration later. He had not revisited many of the Cemeteries since and therefore had no fresh opinion on the point, but would expect his opinion to be the same. He felt that future generations would judge the work by its appearance and without any particular reference to the cost and that it would be pity if, largely because of economies which were made in the early stages when finance was difficult, the Commission's work was in any considerable number of cases considered not to be up to an adequate standard. He hoped, therefore, that it would still be possible to carry out this work. If the Commission wished it he might be able to visit the Cemeteries again to see whether his opinion could be revised. On the other hand where a hedge had been planted he had tried to visualise what the hedge would be when fully grown. It was quite possible on reconsideration he might see occasion to revise his opinion in details but he did not think it likely that his views on general principles would be changed.

SIR GEORGE MACDONOGH thought the question was whether they could spend the large sum necessary. His view was that the work should have been done when the Cemeteries were originally made and presumably the plans had been passed by some responsible authority.

SIR FREDERIC KENYON said this was not so. In most cases the designs were passed in one form and cut down afterwards on financial grounds and that was the basis of much of the objections that he had found to the Cemeteries.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN agreed. The plans as passed by Sir Frederic

110<sup>th</sup>

Kenyon were not carried out in every case but owing to the expense they were definitely cut down against his advice and purely on financial grounds.

SIR GEORGE MACDONOGH said that one of the objections to the hedges was their unsatisfactory condition in some cases owing to blight or insect ravages. This could be dealt with by a proper system of spraying. No doubt hedges were more expensive to maintain than walls but the question was whether hedges required additional gardeners. If the work for the hedges could be done by their existing staff then maintenance would not cost more than the maintenance of walls. There was also he thought the question of heightening the walls in certain places.

SIR FREDERIC KENYON said it was a question of principle whether a wall should be built rather than a concrete kerb. On general principles he was against either a concrete kerb or a high wall.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN said that there were several instances in which he himself strongly advised that additions should be carried out e.g. shelters in some of the larger Cemeteries and some form of seating accommodation.

He would urge that the Commission should accept in the main Sir Frederic Kenyon's proposals as regards shelters, tool houses etc. but should treat the question of walls separately. He himself was in favour of a low wall as against a hedge.

Possibly Sir Frederic Kenyon and some members of the Commission could go out to France and Belgium and consider some of the proposals on the spot.

SIR GEORGE MACDONOGH said he was not suggesting that Sir Frederic Kenyon's proposals should be turned down en bloc. There were certainly some instances in which it was absolutely necessary to adopt Sir Frederic Kenyon's recommendations but that was rather different from accepting a general proposal to

119

expend the large amount which would be necessary.

SIR GRANVILLE RYRIE was in favour of hedges from the point of appearance but thought that the question of rabbits and ground game should be considered. A hedge was no protection against rabbits.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN suggested that he should form a Departmental Committee to go into the matter and put proposals to the Commission.

Agreed.

#### GRAVES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN said the treatment of graves in the United Kingdom had been discussed on several occasions. It had been found impossible to make reasonably economical arrangements with Cemetery Authorities for planting flowers and maintaining generally in the same manner as the graves in France, and the Commission had been forced to accept the standard applied to other civilian graves in the Cemeteries in which the graves existed, that is to say, their agreements with the local authorities only provided for keeping the graves clear of weeds, stones, loose stones and rubbish and mowing the grass from time to time. There was general agreement that this standard was not a satisfactory one and the matter had been brought to a head by a request from the High Commissioner for New Zealand to carry out certain alterations in the Cemetery at Brockenhurst for which the estimate was £300.

MR. KNOWLES said this was a question of principle. He could not explain to a visitor from New Zealand why a war grave in the United Kingdom should not be so well maintained as a war grave in France. People were coming from New Zealand in greater numbers and after seeing the graves in France and Belgium they naturally complained at the standard in force in the United Kingdom.

110  
1

SIR GRANVILLE RYRIE thought it would be comparatively easy to arrange with various local Associations to undertake to plant flowers and attend to the graves.

SIR MORGAN SINGER thought that after some initial expenditure in forming flower beds it would be easy to maintain the graves thereafter by voluntary effort without further expenditure.

After some further discussion

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN said that he would see if anything could be done by voluntary effort to arrange for the planting of flowers on the graves in the United Kingdom.