

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS  
at the 354TH MEETING of the  
IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

54

held at  
32, GROSVENOR GARDENS, LONDON, S.W.1.  
on THURSDAY, 18TH DECEMBER 1952.

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Present:

MEMBERS

- Admiral Sir MARTIN DUNBAR-NASMITH, V.C., K.C.B., D.L., Vice-Chairman  
in the Chair.
- W.H. BUNNING, Esq.,  
Representing the High Commissioner for Australia.
- L.J. ANSTEE, Esq.,  
Representing the High Commissioner for New Zealand.
- H.J. NEETHLING, Esq.,  
Representing the High Commissioner for South Africa.
- W.B. ENGLAND, Esq., M.B.E.,  
Representing the High Commissioner for India.
- Captain K.A. RASHID,  
Representing the High Commissioner for Pakistan.
- TRAFFORD SMITH, Esq., C.M.G.,  
Representing the Secretary of State for the Colonies.
- A.B. MOORE, Esq.,  
Representing the Minister of Works.
- 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.
- Colonel The Rt. Hon. The LORD WIGRAM, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., C.S.I.
- The Rt. Hon. Sir RICHARD HOPKINS, G.C.B.
- General Sir JOHN CROCKER, G.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., M.C.
- GEORGE SYLVESTER, Esq., M.P.

ADVISER

EDWARD MAUFE, Esq., R.A., F.R.I.B.A. (Chief Architect and  
Artistic Adviser)

SECRETARY

F. HIGGINSON, Esq., C.B., 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. (Director of Works).  
H.L. SIMMONS, Esq. (Legal Adviser).  
O.D. HOLT, Esq. (Principal, Secretarial Branch).  
A.S. LAING, Esq.



At the request of the CHAIRMAN, the SECRETARY read the apologies for absence.

The CHAIRMAN said that the minutes of the previous meeting had been circulated. There was a mistake at the end of the item on page 6, where the name "Sylvester" should read "Sigvaldason".

1. The Minutes of the 353rd Meeting of the Commission were then approved as amended and signed.

The following matters arose out of the minutes:-

(a) Jerusalem War Cemetery. (pages 6 and 7).

General Sir John CROCKER, replying to a question from the CHAIRMAN, said that he had seen the High Commissioner for Australia the previous day. Sir Thomas White had agreed to take up, on behalf of his Government, with the Foreign Office the question of the Commission regaining access to the cemetery on Mount Scopus and would inform him of the result. He (General Crocker) would then ask the Chairman to make a further approach to the Foreign Secretary.

Mr. SYLVESTER said that in a recent conversation with Mr. Barnett Janner, a member of Parliament who was also a prominent figure in the Zionist Movement in this country, he had mentioned the Commission's anxiety about the Jerusalem Cemetery. Mr. Janner said that he would be delighted to do anything he could to help, if he could have the particulars. He (Mr. Sylvester) had promised to ask the Secretary of the Commission to let Mr. Janner have a memorandum.

The CHAIRMAN thanked Mr. Sylvester; and General CROCKER agreed that such a move would be useful as he thought the more lines upon which the problem could be attacked the better.

(b) Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London (page 16).

The CHAIRMAN said that at the last meeting he had promised to enquire into the possibility of inviting the Prime Ministers of the Commonwealth countries who were then assembling in London for their conference to attend a colour film showing the Commission's work. As members were aware this suggestion was carried into effect on December 10th, when His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, as President of the Commission, entertained Commonwealth Ministers and members of the Commission at a showing of the film. It was unfortunate that their official engagements prevented many of the Prime Ministers from attending, but the party went off very successfully. The following was an extract from a letter he had received after the party from Sir Godfrey Thomas:

"The Duke of Gloucester desires me to say how glad he was to have been able to see the Commission's film yesterday evening, which he thought most interesting and very well put together."



His Royal Highness had decided to mark the occasion by presenting to each of the Prime Ministers a panel of photographs of the war cemeteries. These photographs (which had been laid on the table) had been specially chosen for their associations with the various Commonwealth countries concerned.

(c) Permanent Maintenance Staff. (page 6)

General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON said he would like to take up a point made by Mr. Sigvaldason in his report at the last meeting. Mr. Sigvaldason had noted that some of the gardeners were disappointed because they did not know what their future was going to be. He (General Gordon-Finlayson) was also uncertain what the position was and he thought that some circular on the subject should be issued as soon as possible, otherwise the men would not settle satisfactorily to their work.

Mr. CHALMERS, in reply to the CHAIRMAN, thought that all the ex-service gardeners did know that their appointment to the permanent staff was virtually a certainty, provided their service was satisfactory; he hoped to be in a position before the following March to enable the Commission to make a general announcement on the subject. It was difficult to be definite about other grades of the staff because nobody could foresee at present exactly what numbers would be required permanently. Some appointments to all grades of the permanent staff would be made within the next few months.

(d) Edge-Clipping Machines. (page 13).

General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON said that he had also been interested to read in Brigadier Brown's report about the development of the edge-clipping machines in the Anzac Agency's District. He wondered whether it would be possible to see one of these machines.

The CHAIRMAN said that a set of drawings had been received from the Anzac Agency and were being carefully examined.

LETTER FROM LORD NATHAN OF CHURT

The SECRETARY said that the Secretary of State for War, as Chairman of the Commission, had received a letter from Lord Nathan recounting a small incident about which the Commission would be interested to hear.

The son of the late President of Israel had been killed in the last war, and as his grave was never found it had been Mrs. Weizmann's habit each Remembrance Day to place flowers on the grave in Ramleh Cemetery of a friend of his who had served with him in the R.A.F. This year the late President's funeral took place on Remembrance Day and it was naturally thought that Mrs. Weizmann, having just returned from her husband's graveside, would not wish to go to Ramleh. However, she insisted on doing so and when she got there she found on the grave of her son's friend a bowl of flowers such



as she always placed there. She enquired how the flowers came to be there, and was told that the Custodian, thinking that she would not be able to come this year, had placed them on the grave himself. She had been greatly moved by this kindly act and had expressed her deep appreciation.

The SECRETARY said that Lord Nathan at the end of his letter had expressed his admiration of the war cemetery in Rome which he had visited several times, and he paid tribute to the work of the Commission's representative there.

VISIT BY HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCHESS OF KENT  
TO KRANJI WAR CEMETERY.

The CHAIRMAN said that when the plans for the Duchess of Kent's visit to South East Asia were being made it had been suggested that Her Royal Highness might visit Labuan Cemetery. It was later found that the visit could not be included, much as Her Royal Highness personally wished to go there. When at Singapore, however, she had visited the cemetery at Kranji at her own especial wish and laid a wreath, and had expressed great appreciation of the way in which the cemetery was being maintained.

REPORT OF THE 398TH MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:  
ANNUAL ESTIMATES FOR 1953-1954.

The CHAIRMAN said that the estimate recommended by the Finance Committee for the year 1953-54 was shown in detail on the three large Schedules which had been laid on the table.

The figures on the Schedules were in groups of three. The middle figure (in red) was the approved estimate for the current year 1952-1953; below (in black) was the revised estimate now submitted for the same year, and above the red figure (in black) was the estimate now submitted for the following year 1953-1954.

The comparison of the totals was as follows:-

Approved estimate 1952-53 (current year)	£2,900,000
Revised estimate for the same year	£2,800,000
Estimate now submitted for approval for the year 1953-54	£2,825,000

In arriving at the Revised Estimate, cuts totalling £58,535 were made on the figures submitted by Agencies, Districts, and Departments.

In considering the estimate for 1953-54, the Commission's officials had first made detailed reductions totalling £94,250 on the figures submitted by the Agencies, Districts, and Departments. These reduced the total to



£2,925,275 made up as shown on the red and black sheets. The Finance Committee had recommended that this total be further reduced by an overhead cut of £100,275 to the figure of £2,825,000 which they recommended should be approved as the Commission's estimate for 1953-1954.

The whole of the difference of £25,000 between the revised estimate and the proposed estimate could be accounted for by the provision of £20,500 for purchase of premises in France and Gallipoli, and an increase of £4,700 in the provision for printing Cemetery and Memorial Registers. The decrease of £100,000 in provision for headstones was compensated by increased provision for construction.

The division of the estimate between the two wars was shown in detail on Schedules II and III amounting, after cuts, to £760,000 for the 1914-1918 War (Schedule II) and £2,065,000 for the 1939-1945 War (Schedule III).

The CHAIRMAN said that 1953-54 was likely to be the peak year, after which expenditure would begin gradually to decline towards the end of the construction period until it was eventually reduced to the level of normal care and maintenance. Expenditure in 1954-55 and 1955-56 was not likely to be much lower than in 1953-54. Thereafter it might be expected to decline more steeply.

As a result of changes in the investments of the Endowment Fund, the income for 1953-54 was estimated at the increased rate of £218,000 compared with £206,000 for the current year. At £218,000 the income would fall short of the estimated expenditure of £760,000 on 1914-18 war graves by £542,000 which, with £2,065,000 for 1939-45 war graves, would give a total of £2,607,000; this would be further reduced by the estimated carry-forward of £147,000 as at 31st March 1953 to a net total of £2,460,000, which the participating Governments would be asked to provide.

The CHAIRMAN asked members if they had any questions to ask on the Estimates.

Mr. MOORE enquired what was the composition of the figures shown in columns 5 and 6 on the first page. He would be interested to know whether it included materials and wages, transport, travelling expenses, and so forth, or whether it only included materials used.

Mr. CHALMERS, in reply, said that none of the wages of gardeners regularly employed were shown in the maintenance column. Where structural maintenance was concerned, approximately all of it was carried out by contract so that the wages element was not a Commission concern; on the other hand, where it was carried out by direct labour the wages of such labour were included in the maintenance column. In the case of construction, again practically all of it was done by contract, while for work done by direct labour wages were shown in the same way, namely, in the construction column.

The CHAIRMAN said that if there were no other questions he would invite members to consider the remainder of the report.



He said that members would note that Item 3 dealt with construction at El Alamein.

Item 5, which concerned the Superannuation Scheme, was the subject of a Paper to be considered later in the meeting.

Items 26 and 28 dealt with a promotion on the staff at headquarters and with certain alterations in the establishment of staff in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, producing an overall economy.

It was proposed by Mr. BUNNING, seconded by Mr. ANSTEE, and carried unanimously:

2.
  1. That the Estimate of Expenditure for the year 1953-54 be approved at £760,000 for the 1914-18 War Graves and £2,065,000 for the 1939-45 War Graves.
  2. That the Report of the 398th Meeting of the Finance Committee be adopted.

SUPERANNUATION SCHEME (1952) -  
ASSIGNMENTS OF POLICIES OF ASSURANCE.

It was proposed by Mr. SYLVESTER, seconded by General Sir John CROCKER, and carried unanimously:

3. The Commission having considered a Paper No. CM/270/6/3/LEG/CON, dated 11th December 1952,

RESOLVE:

- (a) that the sealing by the Commission and the signing by the Proper Officer of the Deed of Assignment dated 5th December 1952, between the Commission of the one part and the Trustees of the Imperial War Graves Commission Superannuation Scheme (1952) of the other part relating to certain policies of assurance with the Atlas Assurance Company Limited in respect of Mr. Alfred Hodge be hereby approved and confirmed;
- (b) that the Seal of the Commission be affixed to and the Proper Officer sign the respective Deeds of Assignment to be executed between the Commission of the one part and the Trustees of the Imperial War Graves Commission Superannuation Scheme (1952) of the other part in respect of the policies of assurance which require to be transferred to the Trustees in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4 of the Rules of the Scheme relating to members of the previous Superannuation Scheme who have elected to become members of the new Scheme.



SUPERANNUATION SCHEME (1952) -  
SERVICE IN SPECIFIED COUNTRIES OR PLACES.

It was proposed by Mr. NEETHLING, seconded by Mr. ENGLAND, and carried unanimously:

4. The Commission having considered the recommendation of the Finance Committee (Item 5 of the 398th Meeting of the Finance Committee) and a Paper No. ES/42/17, dated 11th December 1952,

RESOLVE:

That the Commission hereby directs for the purposes of Paragraph 9 of the Rules relating to the Imperial War Graves Commission Superannuation Scheme (1952) that service in any of the countries or places outside the United Kingdom specified hereunder shall qualify for benefit under the Scheme in the manner provided by the said Paragraph 9 with effect from the dates respectively stated in each case as follows:

<u>Country or Place</u>	<u>Date</u>
Australia - West and North of latitude 31½ degrees South and longitude 150 degrees East	14th July 1949
Burma	Deemed always to have applied
Ceylon	Deemed always to have applied
Cyrenaica	14th July 1949
Egypt (excluding Alexandria)	3rd September 1939
India	3rd September 1939
Indonesia	Deemed always to have applied
Iraq	Deemed always to have applied
Israel	8th May 1945
Japan	Deemed always to have applied
Jordan	14th July 1949
Kenya	Deemed always to have applied
Lebanon	Deemed always to have applied
Libya	14th July 1949
Malaya, Federation of	Deemed always to have applied
New Britain	1st July 1947
New Guinea	1st July 1947
Nigeria	Deemed always to have applied
North Borneo	Deemed always to have applied
Pakistan	3rd September 1939
Palestine	8th May 1945
Singapore	Deemed always to have applied
Syria	Deemed always to have applied
Thailand	Deemed always to have applied
Turkey in Asia	14th July 1949



COMMONWEALTH-NETHERLANDS JOINT COMMITTEE:  
APPOINTMENT OF NEW MEMBER.

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

5. The Commission having considered a Paper No. CM/13/11/01, dated 12th December, and Resolution No.4 of the 349th Meeting of the Commission,

RESOLVE:

- (1) That the Commission accept with regret the resignation of Mr. J.P. Sigvaldason from the Commonwealth-Netherlands Joint Committee.
- (2) That Mr. Frederic Hudd, C.B.E., be and hereby is appointed an Official Member of the Commonwealth-Netherlands Joint Committee.

HALIFAX MEMORIAL, CANADA.

Major-General STEEDMAN, at the request of the CHAIRMAN, explained the main features of the design for the proposed extension to the Halifax Memorial.

The SECRETARY said that two designs had been submitted by the Architect, Professor Percy Nobbs, and the Canadian Government had indicated their preference for the one now submitted to the Commission.

The CHAIRMAN said that, if members approved the design, he would like to suggest various amendments to the resolution as contained in the paper which had been circulated.

After consideration the following resolution was proposed by General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON, seconded by Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur LONGMORE, and carried unanimously:

6. The Commission having considered a Paper No.A/52/2/2, A/52/2/7, of 10th December 1952,

RESOLVE:

- (a) That the proposal in the said paper for the construction of a 1939/45 War extension to the Halifax Memorial, Canada, to commemorate members of the Royal Canadian Navy who lost their lives at sea, and of the Canadian Army who lost their lives in Canadian territory and have no known grave, be agreed;
- (b) That the design preferred by the Canadian Government be approved, and that the Finance Committee be and hereby is authorised to consider and accept tenders for the construction of the said memorial without further reference to the Commission.



EXAMINATION OF SKETCH DESIGN FOR CEMETERY CONSTRUCTION:  
ARNHEM OOSTERBEEK WAR CEMETERY, HOLLAND.

Major-General STEEDMAN, at the request of the CHAIRMAN, explained the main features of the design. He pointed out that the Chief Architect and Artistic Adviser had recommended that the Cross should be set back a little from the point indicated in the Architect's design so that it should stand between the two groups of liquid amber trees, and that, because of the background of oak trees, there should be no hedge at the back and sides of the Cross.

General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON said that he hoped that by putting back the Cross and cutting out the hedge the background to the cemetery would be safeguarded, since the present oak trees would not always be there.

Major-General STEEDMAN, in reply, said that the boundary of the cemetery lay sufficiently far back to enable the Commission to have control of the planting at that point.

The SECRETARY, replying to the CHAIRMAN, drew attention to the shelters on either side of the cemetery. Their cost amounted to £2,000 and it was a question whether they were strictly needed, since shelter was provided at the entrance.

The CHAIRMAN said it was a very big cemetery and visited by large numbers of people, and he thought it was important to provide adequate shelter.

Other members expressed agreement with this view.

It was proposed by Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur LONGMORE, seconded by Lord WIGRAM, and carried unanimously:

7. The Commission having considered a Paper No.W/97/55, dated 11th December 1952,

RESOLVE:

That the Commission having taken note of the Sketch Design for Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery, Holland, 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.

EXAMINATION OF SKETCH DESIGN FOR CEMETERY CONSTRUCTION:  
BOULOGNE EASTERN CEMETERY.

The CHAIRMAN said that the shelter building, which had been erected after the 1914/18 War and was situated at the side of this very long, narrow plot, had been damaged in the last war and was being demolished. A new entrance had been made from the road at one end of the cemetery, and in addition to the new gates and piers the Architect had designed, as members would see, a small circular shelter just inside. This seemed to him rather to spoil the view and the nature of the building which was at present open on all sides, would, he felt, afford little protection from wind and rain on this high and exposed site.



General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON suggested that the shelter might be put at the side in place of the demolished building.

The CHAIRMAN said that he felt that either two small shelters could be placed close to the entrance on either side, or one against the flanking wall.

Mr. MAUFE agreed that if the shelter proposed by the Architect was to be enclosed it would block the view of the Cross from the entrance and therefore that its site would have to be reconsidered.

Major-General STEEDMAN, in reply to the CHAIRMAN, said that what he would like to do would be to go ahead with the working drawings for the entrance leaving the shelter for further consideration.

General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON suggested that perhaps the shelter might be placed at the far end of the cemetery; and that perhaps if space was limited it could be combined with a toolshed.

After further discussion the following resolution was proposed by General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON, seconded by Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur LONGMORE, and carried unanimously:

8. The Commission having considered a Paper No.W/97/386, dated 15th December 1952,

RESOLVE:

That the Commission having taken note of the sketch design for Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, French District, 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, subject to the omission of the shelter for further consideration.

EXAMINATION OF SKETCH DESIGN: SCHOONSELHOF CEMETERY,  
ANTWERP - NORTH-WEST EUROPEAN DISTRICT.

Major-General STEEDMAN, at the request of the CHAIRMAN, explained that this was a very large civil cemetery, in which the Commission had three distinct plots. The Principal Architect had designed a scheme which would link these plots together by paved walks. He then gave members a detailed explanation of the plan.

Mr. MAUFE said that he noticed that the cost of the paved path had been questioned but he thought the path was essential from a practical point of view.

Sir Arthur LONGMORE thought that the combined shelter and toolshed was a very satisfactory arrangement, and that it would be a good thing to adopt it wherever possible.



It was proposed by Mr. MOORE, seconded by Captain RASHID, and carried unanimously:

9. The Commission having considered a Paper No.W/97/383, dated 15th December 1952,

RESOLVE:

That the Commission having taken note of the Sketch Design for Schoonselhof Cemetery, Antwerp, Belgium, 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.

GENERAL NOTES

The Commission took note of the paper submitted.

MAINTENANCE OF 2ND CORPS UNITS 1914/18 MEMORIAL  
- LE CATEAU, FRANCE.

It was proposed by Mr. NEETHLING, seconded by Mr. ANSTEE, and carried unanimously:

10. The Commission having considered a Paper No.WG/1806, dated 13th December 1952,

RESOLVE:

- (a) that the revised financial arrangements for the Maintenance Fund of the 2nd Corps Units 1914/18 Memorial at Le Cateau, France, by the investment of the sum of £175 received on behalf of the Units concerned be hereby approved and confirmed;
- (b) that the Seal of the Commission be affixed to and the Proper Officer sign the Deed of Transfer for the purchase of £487.4s.10d. 2½% Funding Loan 1956/61 in the name of the Commission.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The CHAIRMAN said that the next meeting would be held at eleven a.m., on Thursday, the 15th January. The meeting of the Finance Committee would be on the preceding day.

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 12.10 p.m.