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MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

of the 43rd

MEETING OF THE IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

held at

THE WAR OFFICE

on

Tuesday, 21st March, 1922.

1723

PRESENT:

COLONEL The Hon. SIR JAMES ALLEN, K.C.B.
High Commissioner for New Zealand, in the Chair,

COLONEL W. W. CHITTY, C.M.G.,
Representing the Secretary of State for India,

The Right Hon. the EARL OF CRAWFORD AND BALCARRES, K.T.,
First Commissioner of Works,

M. L. SHEPHERD, Esq., I.S.O.,
Representing the High Commissioner for Australia,

The Hon. SIR EDGAR WALTON, K.C.M.G.,
High Commissioner for South Africa,

SIR WILLIAM GARSTIN, G.C.M.G., G.B.E.,

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

SIR ROBERT HUDSON, G.B.E.

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

There were also present:

Lieut.-Colonel SIR FREDERIC KENYON, K.C.B.,

Lieut.-Colonel H. ELLISSEN, C.B.E.,

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

Lieut.-Colonel H. F. ROBINSON,

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

SIR WILLIAM GARSTIN proposed that in the absence of the Vice Chairman the chair be taken by Sir James Allen.

(1) Agreed.

SIR JAMES ALLEN (CHAIRMAN) said he was sorry to say that the Vice Chairman was laid up in France and unable to attend.

The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated. The only matter that arose out of them was the question of a visit to Germany by the Committee which had been appointed to go into the question of graves in Germany. The members of the Committee were the Vice Chairman, Sir George Macdonogh and Mr. Shepherd.

SIR GEORGE MACDONOGH said that it was doubtful if he would be able to go in April.


(2) The minutes of the last meeting were agreed to.

REPORTS OF 52nd and 53rd MEETINGS OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.

THE CHAIRMAN said there were two matters/^{to} which he wished to draw special attention. The first was Resolution 3 of the 52nd Meeting, dealing with the payment of subsistence allowance to the staff in Berlin. And the other matter was the 16th Resolution of the same meeting dealing with ^a~~the~~ surcharge on the Deputy Controller in France.

COLONEL ELLISSEN explained that, as regards Resolution 3, it was to the effect that ^{the}~~a~~ subsistence allowance at present in force should cease. A letter had ^{now}~~been~~ received from General Sir Edward Perceval making certain suggestions. He thought that perhaps the Commission would wish to refer the question back to the Finance Committee.

With regard to ^{Resolution 16}~~the other matter~~ to which the Chairman had referred, he had received a letter from the Deputy Controller in France making certain requests, which he would read to the Commission.



SIR GEORGE MACDONOGH pointed out that the joint War Office and Foreign Office Commission in Berlin at the present time were still receiving a high rate of allowance. He thought that if the Imperial War Graves Commission discontinued the subsistence allowance they were granting, it might give rise to considerable ~~trouble.~~ *discontent.*

THE CHAIRMAN thought that in the circumstances it would be best to refer ~~it~~ ^{the question} back to the Finance Committee.

SIR ROBERT HUDSON moved the following resolution:

- (3) "(1) That Resolution 3 of the 52nd Meeting of the Finance Committee be referred back for further consideration and report.
- (2) That Resolution 16 of the 52nd Meeting of the Finance Committee be confirmed subject to such adjustments, if any, of the amounts payable by the Deputy Controller under paragraphs 1 and 3 of the said resolution as, after consideration of the Deputy Controller's letter of the 18th March 1922, the Finance Committee may see fit to make.
- (3) That subject to the foregoing the reports of the 52nd and 53rd Meetings of the Finance Committee be adopted."

The resolution was seconded by Sir William Garstin and agreed to.

DELEGATION OF FINANCIAL POWERS TO VICE CHAIRMAN.

COLONEL ELLISSEN explained that this resolution was one renewed annually. The substance of the resolution was to limit the Vice Chairman's powers of expenditure to £250. It also gave him power to appoint and employ certain officers and to vary their emoluments, subject to the recognised scales of pay and existing allowances. It also gave authority ~~for power~~ to write off ~~certain~~ ^{within certain limits} losses. The resolution was identical

with that which had been in force the previous year.

The following resolution was moved by Sir Robert Hudson:

- (4) "(1) That subject to a report being made to the Finance Committee at the next meeting of all action taken under this resolution, the Vice Chairman be authorised until 31st March 1923:-
1. To sanction and incur the expenditure necessary to carry into effect any of the purposes or to exercise any of the powers of the Commission, provided
 - (a) That no expenditure exceeding £250 shall be incurred on a single item;
 - (b) That in case of a new service the whole cost of the service is estimated not to exceed £250.
 - (c) That no excess is involved on any head of the estimate approved for 1922-23.
 2. To appoint and employ such officers and servants as may be necessary to carry out the work of the Commission and to fix or vary their emoluments, provided:-
 - (a) That recognised scales of pay, subsistence allowance, etc. are not prejudiced as regards other staff, and that no authority of general application is given hereunder.
 - (b) That no excess is involved on any head of the Estimate approved for 1922-23.
 3. To authorise after investigation the write-off of losses:-
 - (a) Up to £10 where due to theft, fraud, arson or gross carelessness.
 - (b) Up to £100 in other cases.

(2) That the Vice Chairman be authorised to expend out of the Commission's funds the moneys necessary to pay the salaries and meet the expenses of the Commission in accordance with the estimate adopted by the Commission at their meeting of the 17th January 1922, subject to his presenting to the Finance Committee a detailed report of such expenditure to be included in their report to the Commission every month."

The resolution was seconded by Sir William Garstin and agreed to.

MEETING OF COMMITTEE ON DEFINITION OF A WAR GRAVE.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN said that the papers were before the Commission. The Committee had not come to any conclusion but had adjourned. It was now suggested that the Commission should grant authority to the Committee to come to a decision on the question. The Committee had adjourned but would meet again.

COLONEL LORD ARTHUR BROWNE explained that the reason for the suggested resolution was to save time in case the Committee could come to a decision before the next meeting of the Commission. After some further discussion it was decided to pass no resolution.

MERCANTILE MARINE AND CIVIL ORGANISATIONS.

THE CHAIRMAN explained that this question was also connected with the definition of a war grave, but he thought it was ^{a matter} possible ~~to come to a decision.~~ *which could be decided*

COLONEL ELLISSEN explained that at the 31st Meeting the Commission had passed two resolutions, copies of which were before them, to the effect that the graves of members of the Mercantile Marine and certain civilian organisations would be regarded as war graves within the meaning of their Charter. The resolutions were subject to the consent of all the participating Governments

being obtained. That consent had now been received, but reservations had been made in two cases. The Treasury on behalf of the United Kingdom, Sir James Allen on behalf of New Zealand, had given their consent subject to certain limitations, which were the same in both cases:—^{The limitations here in the following terms} "Provided that in the case of both merchant seamen and civilians that death occurred during whole time service in the Mercantile Marine or the civilian organisation; in the case of merchant seamen that death was due to enemy action; and in the case of civilians that death occurred either overseas or from wounds inflicted overseas." ~~If the Commission accepted these limitations then~~ ^{The} expression "whole time service" would be interpreted as meaning, with regard to the merchant service, that a man must have signed on for the voyage and ^{being} on the ship's books; and ^{the expression} "civilian organisations recognised by the different Governments" would be interpreted as only including those organisations permitted by Army Headquarters to work in theatres of war in connection with the armed forces.

MR. SHEPHERD raised the question of the organised munition workers which had been sent from Australia.

Some discussion followed as to whether these workers should be regarded as enlisted soldiers or as civilians.

THE CHAIRMAN pointed out that if they were not soldiers they would come into the class of ~~soldiers, and in that case they would be~~ regarded as members of civilian organisations, ^{Their} whose death occurred overseas ^{and if} ~~if~~ they were members of an organisation recognised by the Australian Government as ^{belonging to an organisation} permitted by ^{permitted by} Army Headquarters to work ^{in theatres of war,} they would be ~~regarded as~~ entitled to ~~a~~ war graves.

The following resolution was moved by Mr. Shepherd:

- (5) "That the Commission having considered a minute from the Principal Assistant Secretary dated 16th March 1922

No. 16/C/305/S.1 and Resolution No. 3 of the 31st Meeting of the Commission, resolve:

(1) That the Commission take note that the Governments represented on the Commission have agreed to the terms of the said resolution of the 31st Meeting of the Commission.

(2) That it be an instruction to the Commission's officials to carry the said resolution of the 31st Meeting of the Commission into effect, provided that in the cases of both merchant seamen and civilians that death occurred during whole time service in the Mercantile Marine or the civilian organisation; in the case of Merchant Seamen that death was due to enemy action; and in the case of civilians that death occurred either overseas or from wounds inflicted overseas."

The resolution was seconded by Sir Edgar Walton and agreed to.

THE CHAIRMAN said that a suggestion had been put before him that a Committee should be set up to advise with regard to memorials to the members of the Mercantile Marine.

COLONEL LORD ARTHUR BROWNE explained that the duty of the Committee would be to consider and make recommendations for the erection of memorials to members of the Mercantile Marine who lost their lives during the war and had no known graves, on the same lines as memorials to men of the Navy lost at sea.

The following resolution was moved by Mr. Shepherd:-

(6) "That it be referred to a Committee to consider and make recommendations for the erection of memorials to commemorate the members of the Mercantile Marine who lost their lives through enemy action during the war.

That the Committee consist of Vice Admiral Sir Morgan

Singer, Mr. H. Gosling and Sir Edgar Bowring."

The resolution was seconded by Sir George Macdonogh and agreed to.

BOUNDARY PILLARS ON THE WESTERN FRONT.

COLONEL ELLISSEN explained that they had had a communication from the British Ambassador in Brussels through the War Office to know whether the British Government would take part officially in a scheme set on foot by the French and Belgian Touring Clubs in respect of certain pillars which they proposed to erect to show the high-water mark in the German invasion.

SIR WILLIAM GARSTIN AND SIR ROBERT HUDSON thought it was doubtful if the Commission could spend money on it.

COLONEL ELLISSEN thought that was so unless it could be ^{done} ~~worked~~ in in connection with ^a ~~the~~ scheme for commemorating the Missing. If the Commission thought the proposal ought to receive consideration it might be convenient to refer it to the Committee on Memorials to the Missing.

SIR GEORGE MACDONOGH suggested that it should be referred to the Advisory Committee, who he thought were better fitted for considering the question than the Imperial War Graves Commission.

(7) After some further discussion it was decided that the Secretary be instructed to return the papers to the War Office with ^{as not being} ~~a statement that the proposals were not~~ within the powers of the Charter.

DESIGNS FOR CEMETERIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

THE CHAIRMAN said that at their previous meeting they had agreed to ^{obtain} ~~some~~ principles with regard to the treatment of ^{crowded} cemeteries in the United Kingdom, and it had been decided that a resolution should be drafted for this meeting.

COLONEL ELLISSEN explained that whenever the design of a cemetery was put before the Finance Committee which did not provide for the erection of headstones in the usual manner, it had been

customary to refer the design back to the Commission in order that it might be approved. In point of fact, in dealing with cemeteries where it was not possible to erect headstones, ~~it was usual to design a plot, either with a kerb on which the particulars could be engraved, or ~~else~~ a wall with panels,~~ ^{the design usually took the form of} and the suggestion was that the Commission should authorise the Finance Committee to accept designs on these lines as being designs drawn up according to the principles laid down by the Commission. ^{capitals.} Sir Frederic Kenyon explained the principles. There would be just the same latitude in designing such cemeteries as in the case of cemeteries abroad. The Commission ^{had} accepted certain principles of design, and he certified on each plan as it came up that the design was in accordance with the scheme which had been authorised by the Commission. Variations would, of course, be still possible in the details, according to the circumstances of each case. There would ~~still~~, no doubt, be special cases which would have to be referred to the Commission, but under ordinary conditions it would save trouble if ^{his} ~~a~~ certificate on the ^{design} ~~back~~ could be accepted instead of each case being brought before the Commission.

The following resolution was moved by Sir Edgar Walton:-

- (8) "Having regard to the special designs for nine cemeteries in the United Kingdom which were approved by Resolution 6 (a) and (b) of the 42nd Meeting of the Commission and Sir Frederic Kenyon's suggestion that such designs should be authorised as a general principle in designing crowded cemeteries in the United Kingdom, resolve:-
That the Finance Committee be authorised to accept without further reference to the Commission the designs of cemeteries in the United Kingdom when accompanied by a certificate from Sir Frederic Kenyon that such designs are in accordance with the principles approved by the Commission at their 42nd Meeting."

The resolution was seconded by Mr. Shepherd and agreed to.

STAFF OF THE COMMISSION.

THE CHAIRMAN said there were the usual formal resolutions before them:-

PROMOTIONS.

(9.A.) "That the Commission hereby approve the promotions of the under-mentioned officers and of the payment to them out of the funds of the Commission of the approved salaries as from the dates set out against their names."

| Name. | Appointment. | Salary. | Date. | Authority. |
|--------------|---|--|----------|--------------------------|
| Kohler, E. | Shorthand Typist (France) to Asst. Registration Officer | at £125 p.a. at £350 p.a. | 27.2.22. | F.C.Res.18/51 of 8.2.22. |
| Howard, C.V. | Clerk of Works, (Egypt) to Draughtsman. | at £360 p.a.(con.) at £432 p.a.(con.) | 1.3.22. | F.C.Res.10/51 of 8.2.22. |

RESIGNATIONS.

(9.B.) "That the Commission hereby accept the resignations of the under-mentioned officers from the dates set out against their names."

| Name. | Appointment. | Salary. | Date. |
|------------------|--|-------------|----------|
| Connor, A.W.G. | Professional Assistant, Land & Legal Dept. (London). | £400/25/500 | 13.3.22. |
| Keith, J.A. Maj. | Clerk of Works (Macedonia). | £300 p.a. | 31.1.22. |

TERMINATION OF APPOINTMENT.

(9.C.) "That the Commission approve the termination of the appointment of:-

| Name . | Appointment . | Salary . | Date . |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------|----------|
| Biffen, A.S. | Clerk of Works (Macedonia) | £300/15/350 | 16.3.22. |
| Cobran, L.H. | Clerk of Works "A" (France) | £300/15/350 | 23.9.21. |

The resolutions were proposed by Sir Robert Hudson, seconded by Sir William Garstin and agreed to.

ERRORS IN NAMES ON MEMORIALS TO THE MISSING.

THE CHAIRMAN explained that after the names of the Missing had been engraved on the memorials erected to their memory it might ~~be~~ *occur* that ~~the~~ graves belonging to those names would be identified. Four ~~of~~ such cases had already occurred in connection with the memorials to the Missing erected in Italy. The Commission were asked to decide:-

- (1) Whether the name on the memorial was to be expunged.
- (2) If not expunged, was any mark to be made on the Missing memorial indicating that the grave had been identified.
- (3) If a headstone to an unknown soldier had already been erected on the grave, was it to be replaced by an identified headstone.

Sir Frederic Kenyon had been consulted and was of opinion:-

- (1) That the name should not be expunged.
- (2) That no mark should be put against the name on the Missing memorial.
- (3) That a headstone to an unknown British soldier, if erected, should be replaced by an identified headstone.

(4) That beyond correcting the records no ^{other} action should be taken.

The facts were ~~laid down~~ ^{given in} on the paper No. 17/C/344/S1 which was before them.

MR. SHEPHERD proposed the following resolution:-

- (10) "That the Commission having considered a minute dated 17th March 1922, No. 17/C/344/S1, from the Principal Assistant Secretary, resolve:-
That it be an instruction to the officials of the Commission to carry out the policy therein laid down."

The resolution was seconded by Sir Edgar Walton and agreed to.

MESOPOTAMIA.

SIR GEORGE MACDONOGH said that the Secretary of the Commission had written to him recently to ask what the Army were doing in Mesopotamia. He had received a reply from the Commander-in-Chief in Mesopotamia the day before. The position was that the whole of the cemeteries would be handed over on or before the 31st March and that practically all the work was complete. There was one place at the mouth of the Hai where there were a large number of graves in which the bodies had been buried with ^aview to concealment, ~~There was a fear that the graves~~ ^{being a fear of desecration} ~~might be opened~~ by the Arabs. The result was that very few traces of the graves were to be found, ^{while} ~~and~~ the bearings and other ~~identification~~ ^{also} marks on record were ⁱⁿ many cases impossible to ~~work on~~ ^{identify}. All the bodies that could be found had been exhumed and reburied in the cemeteries. The Colonel in Charge of Administration had been personally put in charge of the matter and the cemeteries were to be handed over to the Imperial War Graves Commission before the end of the month.