

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS-

DRAFT.

CONFIDENTIAL

at the  
274TH MEETING  
of the  
IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION  
held at  
32, GROSVENOR GARDENS, LONDON, S.W.1  
on  
THURSDAY, 18TH OCTOBER 1945.

-----  
PRESENT:

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

Colonel E.H. JONES, D.C.M., E.D.  
Representing the High Commissioner for Canada.

V.C. DUFFY, Esq., M.V.O.  
Representing the High Commissioner for Australia.

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

I.T. MEYER, Esq.  
Representing the High Commissioner for South Africa.

D. JAMES DAVIES, Esq., C.B.E., J.P.  
Representing the Government of Newfoundland.

E.L. POUNDE, Esq.  
Representing the High Commissioner for India.

General Sir RONALD ADAM, Bt., K.C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E.,  
Adjutant-General.

General Sir ROBERT GORDON-FINLAYSON, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

Admiral Sir MARTIN DUNBAR-NASMITH, V.C., K.C.B.

Colonel Sir JOHN SHUTE, C.M.G., D.S.O., J.P.

Air Chief Marshal Sir ARTHUR LONGMORE, G.C.B., D.S.O., D.L.

Colonel the Lord WIGRAM, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., C.S.I.

-----  
There were also present:

Lieut.-Colonel Sir FREDERIC KENYON, G.B.E., K.C.B.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir HERBERT ELLISSEN, C.B.E. (Adviser on Post-War  
Organisation and Reconstruction).

Brigadier J.K. McNAIR, C.B.E. (Director of Graves Registration  
and Enquiries, War Office).

Brigadier F. HIGGINSON, C.M.G. (Controller).

Lieut.-Colonel H.F. CHETLE, C.M.G., O.B.E. (Director of Records).

F.C. SILLAR, Esq. (Assistant Secretary, Finance).

Lieut.-Colonel R.W. BATEMAN. (Director of Works).

Captain H.P.R. FOSTER. (Legal Assistant).

Major R.W. MURPHY, M.B.E. (Area Superintendent, United Kingdom).

Captain F. TYRRELL, M.B.E.

Lieutenant O.D. HOLT.

The VICE-CHAIRMAN said that the Minutes of the 272nd Meeting had been circulated and if they were approved he would sign them.

The Minutes were agreed and signed.

The VICE-CHAIRMAN said that the Minutes of the 273rd (Special) Meeting had also been circulated and if no amendments were desired he would sign them.

The Minutes were agreed and signed.

The VICE-CHAIRMAN said that he had received apologies from the Chairman, who had intended to be present at the meeting, but had been prevented at the last moment as his attendance was required at a Cabinet meeting. Apologies had also been received from Sir Samuel Runganadhan, who was attending the International Labour Conference in Paris; from Colonel Cole, who was at Liverpool meeting liberated prisoners of war and interned civilians arriving from the Far East; from Sir William Halcrow; and from Sir John Kennedy. Sir John Kennedy, who had been unable to attend a number of recent meetings, had written to say that he felt that as it seemed unlikely that he would be able to attend meetings regularly in the future he thought it better that his place should be taken by somebody else. He (the Vice-Chairman) was discussing the question of a successor with the Chairman.

Members would wish to extend a welcome to Lord Wigram, who was attending a meeting of the Commission for the first time. Lord Wigram had an intimate knowledge of their work dating from the last war, when he had accompanied King George the V on two memorable pilgrimages: to France and Belgium in 1922, and to Italy in the following year.

Members would have heard with regret and feelings of personal loss of the death on September 7th of General Sir Walter Braithwaite, who, as Adjutant-General to the Forces, had been a member of the Commission from 1927 to 1931. If members agreed he would like to send on their behalf a letter of sympathy and appreciation to General Braithwaite's family.

This was agreed.

#### REVIEW OF RECENT EVENTS

The VICE-CHAIRMAN said that in answer to a letter which he had written to General de Gaulle, with the consent of the Foreign Office, he had received a very cordial reply. General de Gaulle had written that it was his desire to bring the Anglo-French Committee into being again, since it had done so much both for the cause of honouring the dead and for Anglo-French relations; and he would see that the vacancy caused by the death of General de Castelnau was filled by a personality - to quote his own words - "de premier plan".

A party of twelve gardeners had left for France and Belgium the previous day; this would be the last to leave for this area until the Spring. The first party had been sent across in January, and to date twelve parties had been sent out, comprising a total of 135 men. There were now 200 men working in the cemeteries. Four gardeners would be leaving for Germany later in the present month.

Captain Scholtz, the Secretary of the Commission's South African Agency, had been invited to visit this country for

consultations, chiefly the construction work which it was hoped would shortly begin in South Africa. The Commission had a high opinion of the work which Captain Scholtz had done since he had taken up office.

Major F.M. Little, the Secretary of the Gibraltar Agency for nearly three years, had returned to this country and had expressed his willingness to help the Commission in any way possible. He had been succeeded by Major H.F. Walls.

Anzio (Beach Head) and Anzio Military Cemeteries had been handed over to the Commission's Area Superintendent, Italy, on the 1st September.

Ceremonies were held at Albert and Ypres on September 3rd and 6th respectively to mark the anniversary of liberation. Members of the Commission's staff had attended and had laid wreaths.

He had received that morning a private letter from Lady Scobie, wife of the G.O.C. in Greece, in which she said that the Greeks took a touching interest in the British graves and frequently decorated them with wreaths.

The VICE-CHAIRMAN said the annual ceremony of laying a wreath in the Chapel of St. George in Westminster Abbey on behalf of the gardening staff had been arranged for 12 noon on Friday, November 9th. If any of the Commissioners would like to attend they would be very welcome. He himself would be broadcasting on the Commission's work from 10.15 to 10.20 a.m. on Sunday, November 11th.

REPORT OF THE 317TH MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

The VICE-CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had discussed a number of important questions; and he proceeded to refer to the outstanding items in the Report.

Item 4 concerned the cost of preparing a printed list of the names of Civilian War Dead for placing in the Memorial in Westminster Abbey.

In regard to Item 6, he would like members to know that the Special Committee which had been set up to deal with the question of the accommodation of Government departments in London had withdrawn their opposition to the return of a part of the Commission's organisation to London. As soon as alternative accommodation could be found for A.G.13 it would be possible for the Commission to re-establish their headquarters at 32 Grosvenor Gardens, which would be occupied by an administrative staff of 25 to 30 people. There remained, however, the problem of finding room at Wooburn for the additional staff required to carry out the Commission's new commitments resulting from the war, and it was for this purpose that authority was required for the construction of two additional huts in the grounds at Wooburn House.

Other items of interest included in the Report were: the supply of electricity and telephone services at the Canadian Reception Room at Brookwood Cemetery; repairs to the Menin Gate Memorial; the construction of two Crosses of Sacrifice for Tobruk and Sollum Cemeteries; new motor transport and horticultural machinery; the appointment of a new Deputy Director of Works and Horticultural Officer; and the appointment of Major W.J. Chalmers as Administrative Assistant, Finance Department, on his release from the Army.

The last item in the Report dealt with the appointment of an Inspector who would undertake a tour of duty in India and Burma and report to the Commission on the steps that should be taken to carry out their duties satisfactorily in those countries. The Commission had received great help from the High Commissioner for India in making arrangements, and the candidate whom he had thought the most suitable had been selected. The officer chosen was Brigadier H.N. Obbard, R.E., who had served in India for twenty years and had a wide knowledge of the country.

It was proposed by General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON, seconded by Colonel JONES, and carried unanimously:

3. That the Report of the 317th Meeting of the Finance Committee be adopted.

#### IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES ENDOWMENT FUND

Sir Herbert ELLISSEN, in reply to the VICE-CHAIRMAN, said that the Trustees of the Imperial War Graves Endowment Fund had the Balance Sheet of the Fund before them at their meeting on the 16th October. This showed the amount of the Fund at 31st March 1945 to be £6,002,840. 14. 6d, being an increase compared with the position on the 31st March 1944 of £531,883. 4. 8d. The increase was made up by a capital contribution from the United Kingdom Government of £520,000 (their final contribution to the Endowment Fund) and a profit of £11,833. 4. 8d realised on the sale of a holding of £202,753. 12. 10d Australia 3½% Stock 1945/75. That sale was decided on in view of the fact that the Government of Australia had called the Stock for redemption in April of this year. The proceeds had been reinvested in Australia 3½% Stock 1961/66.

The accumulated Fund was represented by the investments shown in the Balance Sheet standing at cost of £6,002,840. 14. 6d. Their market value on the 29th March 1945 was £6,417,352, showing an excess over cost of £414,511. 10. 9d.

Of the total Fund of £6,002,840. 14. 6d the amount of £1,034,580. 7. 3d was attributable to contributions received from the Dominion Governments and £4,968,260. 7. 3d to contributions received from the Government of the United Kingdom.

The amount of interest received during the accounting period was £198,447. 13. 7d which included a small balance of £885. 19. 9d in hand at 31st March 1944. Of this the Trustees had paid over to the Commission £197,365. 13. 4d, leaving a balance in hand at 31st March 1945 of £1,082. 0. 3d.

The annual interest payable on the securities held in the Fund on the 31st March 1945 amounted to £204,906. 4. 0d, and represented an interest yield of £3. 8. 3d per cent on the amount of the accumulated Fund.

The VICE-CHAIRMAN said that members would be well satisfied with the state of the Fund and he thought that with Sir Edward Peacock and Colonel Gore Browne looking after their interests matters would continue to develop satisfactorily. There was one point he would like to mention and that was that the Commission had at present no investments in South Africa or Canada.

Sir Herbert ELLISSEN said that until the outbreak of war the Trustees had a full quota of the Fund invested in Canadian Stocks and the same applied to South Africa, but both these Dominions had now called up their Stocks for redemption. As

was known, Canada was a dollar country and the Trustees could not buy its Stocks however much they might wish to. The law forbade them from acquiring the dollars. In the case of South Africa, similar considerations applied. He had always understood from the Trustees that it was their intention as soon as Exchange conditions permit to rearrange the investments of the Fund so that it might hold a proper quota of the securities of these two Dominions. At present it would be seen that the only Dominions represented were Australia with £280,529. 14. 10d 3½% Stock 1961/66 and New Zealand with £83,853. 6. 5d New Zealand 5% Stock 1949. He was afraid that the latter would not be represented by that Stock much longer as it would no doubt be called for redemption on that date.

Admiral Sir Martin DUNBAR-NASMITH asked when the two wars were likely to be treated under one financial heading.

The VICE-CHAIRMAN said that at present the greatest care was being taken to keep the two accounts separate, because the money represented by the Endowment Fund had been raised to ensure as far as was humanly possible that the graves of the last war should be maintained for all time. It appeared from the course of events that the Commission's original estimate of the annual cost of maintenance was substantially accurate. It remained to be decided whether the Commission would ask for an Endowment Fund for the graves of the present war.

#### GRAVES IN JAPAN AND OTHER ENEMY COUNTRIES

*omit* [ The VICE-CHAIRMAN said that members would be glad that the Adjutant-General was present at the meeting to help and advise on the question of the treatment of graves in Japan. They would remember that the Commission had been asked for an expression of views on the policy to be followed, since there was evidence of a feeling of dislike among relatives and others of the idea of the graves remaining in Japanese territory. The Dominion representatives had been invited to communicate with their Governments by telegram, in the terms agreed at the last meeting; the only reply so far received was that of New Zealand, which favoured the removal of the graves into the nearest British or Allied territory.

The Canadian Government had raised the question whether the decision against the repatriation of bodies announced on October 4th applied also to ashes. He understood that there had been a few cases of the removal of ashes from Japanese territory. There was no doubt that the Commission had power to include ashes in the prohibition; as guardians of the graves their duty to prevent any interference with them was clear. But where a body had actually been cremated and not buried he thought it would be difficult to prevent a relative from bringing the ashes home. It was, however, clearly understood by the Army Graves Service - and Canadian Army Orders were also quite clear on the point - that the prohibition extended to ashes.

Brigadier McNAIR, in reply to the VICE-CHAIRMAN, confirmed that as far as the Services in the field were concerned no distinction had been made between ashes and bodies, and the rule was clearly understood. But unfortunately during the last few days evidence had come to light - though it was somewhat confused - that the ashes of a number of deceased prisoners of war in Japan had been embarked on two of His Majesty's ships for repatriation to the United Kingdom, though the whereabouts of the two ships concerned could not for the present be ascertained. This situation, if the

report was accurate, had probably arisen because the Admiralty, he believed, had not promulgated the decision against repatriation to Commanders in Chief; nor were the Graves Registration Services yet working in Japan.

Colonel JONES said that he would like to make it clear that the enquiry of the Canadian Government did not have special reference to the situation in Japan, but to the general question.

Colonel Sir John SHUTE said that he thought that it would be difficult for the Commission to intervene in cases where a relative had decided to have the body cremated and wished the ashes to be returned to this country.

General Sir Ronald ADAM said that he did not think that relatives would have any opportunity to give effect to their wishes in the matter. The incident to which Brigadier McNair had referred was very unlikely to happen again, and certainly not on a large scale. The difficulty, as Brigadier McNair had said, was that there was no organisation yet working on the mainland of Japan, and though there might be a few cases in which a comrade in another Service might arrange for the removal of the ashes he did not see how the practice could become general. From the point of view of the Army it would undoubtedly be preferable to adhere to the rule that ashes and bodies should be treated in exactly the same way.

Admiral Sir Martin DUNBAR-NASMITH said that this was the first intimation he had had of this action by the Navy, and he would take the matter up immediately with the Admiralty.

Colonel Sir Frederic KENYON, in reply to the VICE-CHAIRMAN, said that he thought that ashes were in exactly the same position as buried bodies; there was always the possibility of a slight leakage like that just mentioned, but he thought that if removal was prohibited from the start the Commission would have exactly the same control over ashes as they had over bodies.

General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON suggested that when the Commission had received the views of the Dominion Governments the United Kingdom Cabinet should be invited to give a decision on the question of repatriating ashes exactly as they had done in the case of the graves in Germany. Policy in the matter must, in his opinion, be guided by the principle of equality of treatment.

General Sir Ronald ADAM said that the regulations of the Graves Registration Directorate laid it down quite clearly that ashes might not be removed. The Executive Committee of the Army Council had lately come to the unanimous conclusion that graves in Japan should be treated in exactly the same way as those in other enemy countries. It was felt that extra-territorial rights should be secured, similar to those granted in Gallipoli after the last war, governing the land occupied by British cemeteries and graves. Members of the Council could see little object in moving the bodies to the nearest British territory, for it would be just as difficult for relatives to visit them there as it would be in Japan. He understood that a Cabinet decision in the matter would be reached shortly.

Mr. KNOWLES said that he thought that the New Zealand Government would not be disposed to allow the transport of ashes; but he had in mind the case of two brothers, whose ashes were in this country awaiting repatriation to New Zealand, and he would like to ask what the Commission proposed to do with the ashes in this and similar cases.

Colonel CHETTLE, in reply, said that if they were handed to the Commission the ashes would be buried in a grave. The Commission had already decided that where ashes were buried in recognised graves a headstone would be put up in the usual way; otherwise the names would be engraved on panels at the crematoria. The Commission's responsibility for commemorating the War dead extended to burials and cremations alike.

General Sir Ronald ADAM said that he thought in a case such as Mr. Knowles had mentioned, where the bodies of Dominion Servicemen dying in this country had already been cremated and the Government would not permit the repatriation of the ashes, the caskets containing them should be handed over, not to the Commission, but to the Directorate for disposal.

#### GRAVES OF MEMBERS OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND FORESTRY UNIT

The VICE-CHAIRMAN said that the graves of members of this Unit were not war graves in accordance with the strict definition; but, as members were aware, the Commission had power, at their own discretion, to care for such graves at the request and at the cost of the Government concerned.

Mr. DAVIES said that since the paper before the meeting had been circulated he had received a cable from his Government in the following terms:

"Government strongly support request of Newfoundland Forestry Unit that Imperial War Graves Commission be asked to accept responsibility provision and maintenance graves of their deceased members in the same way that Commission maintain graves Servicemen and such Forestry Unit should be regarded as equivalent organisation to those included in memorandum issued 1943 Government consider strong case Commission should adopt course suggested."

Colonel CHETTLE, in reply to the VICE-CHAIRMAN, said that an important question was: who was going to pay?

The VICE-CHAIRMAN said that he thought there was little doubt that the Newfoundland Government would bear the cost when the position of the Commission in the matter was put to them.

In the short discussion which followed, it was agreed that reference to the question of payment by the Newfoundland Government for maintenance of these graves should be omitted from the draft resolution suggested by Colonel Chettle.

It was proposed by Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur LONGMORE, seconded by Mr. DUFFY, and carried unanimously:

4. The Commission, having considered a paper, reference A/27 dated 9th October 1945, and having heard a further statement from Mr. D.J. Davies on the question,

#### Resolve:

That the graves of members of the Newfoundland Forestry Unit dying in the United Kingdom be accepted as war graves.

## AUXILIARY ORGANISATIONS - NEW ZEALAND

Colonel CHETTLE, in reply to the VICE-CHAIRMAN, said that as a result of the inter-Services conference held on the 1st September 1942 the Commission had come to an agreement to treat certain organisations auxiliary to the Forces as entitled to war graves treatment. The Dominions had been invited to furnish similar lists which the Commission had from time to time approved. The list now before the meeting was of New Zealand organisations and followed similar lines to others already approved.

General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON said that he thought there ought to be some reference in the paper to the manner in which the persons concerned died.

Captain FOSTER, in reply to the VICE-CHAIRMAN, said that he thought that this point was covered by reference to the list of the corresponding United Kingdom organisations. The first organisation on the New Zealand list was the Women's Royal New Zealand Naval Service which corresponded to the W.R.N.S., and there could be no doubt as to the intention of the New Zealand Government that the members of this Service should be treated in the same way as members of the Forces. On the other hand, the Canteen workers mentioned would presumably only be accepted if they died elsewhere than in New Zealand.

It was proposed by General Sir Robert GORDON-FINLAYSON, seconded by Mr. DUFFY, and carried unanimously:

5. That the Commission, having considered a paper, reference A/33/5/3, dated 8th October 1945,

Resolve:

That the recommendation of the New Zealand Government as to certain auxiliary organisations to be accorded war graves recognition, particulars of which are set out in the paper before the meeting, be approved.

## CONFERENCE OF U.K. CEMETERY AUTHORITIES, LONDON - 19TH/20TH SEPTEMBER 1945

The VICE-CHAIRMAN said that the branch of the Commission's office dealing with the maintenance of the graves in the United Kingdom was doing very valuable work, in which Sir Arthur Longmore had been taking special interest. As a result of the efforts of Major Murphy and his District Inspectors the general standard of cemetery maintenance in this country was improving. The Conference at Brookwood, which was the subject of the paper under consideration, had been a most successful one.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur LONGMORE said that he could add little to the description given in the paper. He had heard the address given by Lord Chatfield on the first day of the Conference on the general question of war memorials, a matter in which there was considerable public interest at the present time. He had taken part in the visit of the delegates to Brookwood, and he would like to pay tribute to the first-class arrangements which had been made. The standard of maintenance at Brookwood was exceptionally high. Colonel Chettle had read a paper on the Commission's work and it was evident from the questions asked afterwards that the delegates had listened with close attention. They all seemed to be deeply interested in what they had seen and to have learned quite a lot.



Major MURPHY, in reply to a question from the VICE-CHAIRMAN, said that relations with the United States Authorities at Brookwood were very friendly, and the Commission had been able to give them a good deal of assistance in the way of supplying crosses, turving the plots and supplying trees and shrubs. The Commission's Principal Architect, Mr. Maufe, had also been invited by the Americans to advise on the general layout. The scheme of permanent construction at Brookwood was, however, governed by the question, not yet decided, whether repatriation would be permitted or not. He would like to emphasise that at the Conference which Sir Arthur had attended the delegates unanimously adopted a resolution giving an assurance that as far as lay within their power the graves of members of the Forces of the United Kingdom, Dominion and Allied countries buried in the special Service plots would all be maintained with equal honour.

MAINTENANCE OF WAR GRAVES, UNITED KINGDOM -  
12TH QUARTERLY REPORT

The VICE-CHAIRMAN said that he would like to draw attention to the item in the report which described the ceremony of sounding the "Last Post" at Brookwood Cemetery on the first Sunday of each month. This ceremony had been placed on a permanent basis by the formation of the Surrey "Last Post" Committee under the patronage of Sir Malcolm Fraser, Lord Lieutenant of the County. He had written afterwards to Sir Malcolm expressing the Commission's appreciation of the support which Sir Malcolm had given to their work by ensuring the continuance of this monthly ceremony. He would like to ask members at a later meeting to consider the question of continuing the sounding of the "Last Post" on the battlefields as after the last war.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held on Thursday, 15th November.

The meeting concluded at twenty minutes past twelve.