

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

at the 599th MEETING of the

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

held at

2 MARLOW ROAD, MAIDENHEAD

on

WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 1994

Present:

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL SIR JOSEPH GILBERT KCB CBE

(Vice-Chairman of the Commission) - in the Chair

HIS EXCELLENCY THE HON DR NEAL BLEWETT

High Commissioner for Australia

HIS EXCELLENCY MR ROYCE FRITH QC

High Commissioner for Canada

DAME JANET FOOKES DBE MP

THE VISCOUNT RIDLEY KG GCVO TD

MRS LLIN GOLDING MP

SIR HAROLD WALKER KCMG

GENERAL SIR JOHN AKEHURST KCB CBE

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN KERR GCB

MR MORAY STEWART CB

Representing the Secretary of State for Defence in the United Kingdom

MISS DINAH NICHOLS

Representing the Secretary of State for the Environment in the United Kingdom

BRIGADIER RAKESH DHIR

Representing the High Commissioner for India

COMMODORE JOHN PEDDIE

Representing the High Commissioner for New Zealand

MR HENRY SHORT

Representing the High Commissioner of the Republic of South Africa

## ADVISERS

PROFESSOR GHILLEAN PRANCE MA DPhil FRS FLS  
Honorary Botanical Adviser

## SECRETARY

MR DAVID KENNEDY, Director-General

Also in attendance:

MR TERENCE PENFOLD, Assistant Secretary, Deputy Director-General (Administration)

MR ROGER DALLEY, Assistant Secretary, Deputy Director-General (Operations)

MR GRAHAM REDDIE, Legal Adviser and Solicitor

MR DAVID PARKER, Director of Personnel

MR ALAN COOMBE, Director of Works

MR PHILIP NOAKES, Director of Finance

MR JEREMY GEE, Director of Information and Secretariat

MR DEREK PARKER, Director of Horticulture

MR ANDREW OWEN, Secretariat & External Relations Officer

MRS DORIS BOULET, Department of Veterans Affairs, Canada (Observer)

## APOLOGIES

The CHAIRMAN reported that apologies for absence had been received from Sir Nigel Mobbs, Professor O'Neill and Professor Shepherd. Professor Shepherd was in hospital and it was agreed that a letter should be sent wishing him a speedy recovery.

## WELCOME

The CHAIRMAN welcomed the Australian High Commissioner, The Honourable Dr NEIL BLEWETT, and the Canadian High Commissioner, The Honourable ROYCE FRITH QC, both of whom were attending a meeting of the Commission for the first time. The CHAIRMAN also welcomed Brigadier RAKESH DHIR, representing the Indian High Commissioner, and Mrs DORIS BOULET from Veterans' Affairs Canada who was attending the meeting as an observer.

## DEATH

THE CHAIRMAN reported the death of a serving member of staff, Mr John Moores, who had been a Gardener Caretaker 1st Class in Northern Europe Area, and Mr John Phillips, who had been an Administrative Assistant at Head Office.

599.1 MINUTES OF THE 598th MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

599.1.1 The minutes, which had been circulated together with amendments to sub paragraphs 598.4.5 and 598.6.4, were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

599.2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 598th MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

Cemeteries in Iraq

599.2.1 Mr DALLEY reported that the Indian Ambassador to Iraq had visited four Commission sites and reported that, although horticulture had been neglected, structural features were generally intact and sound. The Indian Ambassador had taken up the Commission's concerns with the Iraqi Minister for Religious Affairs in Baghdad and Mr DALLEY reported that there continued to be contact with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London regarding a possible visit to Iraq. The CHAIRMAN said that he would write to the Indian Ambassador to thank him for his efforts on behalf of the Commission.

Visit by VC and DG to Pakistan and India

599.2.2 Referring to his recent visit to Pakistan and India with the Director-General, the CHAIRMAN reported that he had been able to discuss the question of Pakistan resuming membership of the Commission with the Defence Minister, Mr Salim Abbas Jilani, and the Foreign Secretary, Mr Najmuddin Sheikh. Mr Sheikh had been well briefed but unable to give a firm response. His attitude had, however, been reassuring which had given some cause for optimism.

599.2.3 The CHAIRMAN added that the issue had subsequently been raised by the British Secretary of State for Defence with the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mrs Benazir Bhutto during her recent visit to London. Having been informed by one of her officials that Pakistan was keen to rejoin but that the financial position had yet to be resolved, she expressed her hope for a speedy and successful conclusion to this matter. The CHAIRMAN reported that nothing further had yet been heard from Islamabad and appropriate follow-up action would be taken early in 1995.

599.2.4 Mr KENNEDY informed the Commission that he would be accompanying the President on a visit to Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka in March/April 1995 and, should the issue remain unresolved at that time, the President might be prepared to raise it again in Islamabad.

599.2.5 Mr FRITH said that Pakistan's contribution had been apportioned amongst the member governments and that, should Pakistan resume membership, Canada would expect a reduction in its contribution. He questioned, therefore, the statement made in paragraph 3 of the paper which had been put to the Commission meeting in September. In reply, Mr KENNEDY explained that Pakistan had argued that it would be more equitable for all Commonwealth countries to contribute to the cost of the Commission's work. As the United Kingdom was, in effect, paying on behalf of all the other Commonwealth countries, such an increase in membership of the Commission would not, therefore, affect the contributions of the other member governments. Their contributions would however reduce if Pakistan resumed membership. Mr FRITH was satisfied with this explanation but asked for the discussion to be recorded in the minutes.

599.2.6 The CHAIRMAN further reported that after lengthy discussions in Delhi with the Additional Secretary, Mr Rao, and the Joint Secretary, Mr Goel, at the Ministry of Defence, the Indian contribution for 1994/95 had been paid and proposals for the method of payment of future contributions had been made. Useful discussions had also taken place with Mr Singh at the Ministry of External Affairs. There had been a constructive exchange of information and views which he believed had done much to improve liaison with the Indian government.

#### Appointment of Trustee of the IWGC Endowment Fund

599.2.7 The CHAIRMAN reported that the appointment of Mr Andrew Barker as a trustee of the Imperial War Graves Commission Endowment Fund had been approved by the President, and completed on 22 November.

#### Anniversaries of VE and VJ Day

599.2.8 Following attendance by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales at the ceremony to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Arnhem, where local children laid flowers on the graves of Commonwealth casualties, Viscount RIDLEY asked the Commission, at the suggestion of the Prince of Wales, to consider commemorating the anniversaries of VE and VJ day by organising or encouraging similar ceremonies in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. He believed that this would result in much favourable publicity for the Commission. In support of the idea the CHAIRMAN drew the Commission's attention to a letter received from Professor Kirkwood of Oxford University, suggesting such action.

599.2.9 Mr STEWART reported that the British government's plans to commemorate VE and VJ day, with the accent on youth, were to be announced in January. Admiral KERR thought that VJ day would, for the Commission, be the most appropriate time. He considered it an admirable idea to encourage local children to lay flowers on graves. Dame Janet FOOKES supported the idea with enthusiasm.

599.2.10 Mr GEE reported that the new Commission film would be completed and launched in the Spring with publicity for the Commission very much in mind. Admiral Kerr's suggestion that the new Commission film might be offered to the BBC for a showing at a suitable time was met with general approval. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Commission that, with the exception of the 75th Anniversary, it did not normally organise such ceremonies and that funds were provided only for its Charter tasks. He believed that, although the Commission would wish to take part, it would not be able to take the initiative. Mr KENNEDY added that such events should be encouraged but that the Commission should be wary, particularly in the light of logistical problems, of organising such events. Mr STEWART agreed, saying that it would be more appropriate for the Commission to give its approval and support to events arranged by other bodies. Furthermore, he asked that the Commission should keep the World War II Commemoration team informed of any events to which it had lent its support.

599.2.11 While confirming that the World War II Commemoration team was liaising with local authorities, Mr STEWART believed that, due to the specialist nature of some of the events being planned, it was acting mainly as a coordinating body. He gave a short resume of the events planned by government at a national level but said that other events at a local level were also being encouraged. He felt it appropriate that the Commission, working with the World War II Commemoration team, should make some appropriate suggestions and canvass local opinion. Admiral KERR

said that letters were being sent to the Lord Lieutenants of all counties and that the Commission might be able to take advantage of such correspondence.

599.2.12 Dame Janet FOOKES hoped that the support and encouragement for events to be held in the United Kingdom would be duplicated in other member countries. She felt, however, that it was important to make it apparent that the Commission wished to support activities. Mr STEWART said that he would certainly communicate this to the World War II Commemoration team.

599.2.13 Sir John AKEHURST queried whether the support for local events went far enough to meet the suggestions made by Viscount Ridley.

599.2.14 Summarising, the CHAIRMAN said the focus of the Commission's attention should be on events marking VJ day. The Commission would liaise with the World War II Commemoration team and would seek to foster the idea of children laying flowers on war graves with local authorities in the United Kingdom and with those organising commemorative events in other member countries. A report would be made to Commissioners at the March meeting and His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales would be kept informed.

### 599.3 PROGRESS OF OPERATIONS AND FORECAST OF OUTTURN 1994-95

599.3.1 Introducing the paper, Mr DALLEY summarised recent developments and highlighted some of the major and interesting projects. He said that the Forecast of Outturn reflected the discussions at the Finance Committee and that, as a number of projects had been postponed, supplementary funding would not now be required. There was still an estimated deficit of £106,797 but, if necessary, this could be funded from the working balance.

599.3.2 Mr FRITH commended the work that had been undertaken to obviate the need for supplementary funding. This sentiment was shared by Mr STEWART who congratulated the staff on their financial management.

599.3.3 In response to Admiral Kerr, Mr PARKER explained that the 14.5% variance in staff support expenditure was due to a number of elements of which the reduction in the number of children at boarding school was the most significant.

599.3.4 The CHAIRMAN noted that, although the reduction in the estimated deficit was partly attributable to exchange rate adjustments, some projects had been postponed and the need for this work to be undertaken remained.

599.3.5 Viscount RIDLEY expressed his concern that, in view of the impending anniversary of the second world war, the Commission might receive adverse publicity because of delays in the programme of work. Mr DALLEY said that the projects postponed from the current year included irrigation projects in Tunisia and Italy, two base site buildings in France, wall building in Northern Europe and headstone beam repair work in Egypt. In response to Mrs Golding's objection to delays in the base site programme, Mr KENNEDY clarified that land was being acquired in both instances in the current year and it was hoped that the contracts for construction could be let early in 1995/56.

599.3.6 The Commission took note.

## 599.4 CORPORATE PLAN 1995-2000

599.4.1 Introducing the paper, Mr DALLEY said that at the request of the Finance Committee the historical element of the draft had been expanded. He highlighted the trend in recent years towards a greater amount of work being achieved by fewer staff through the increased use of machinery, and the effects of inflation and exchange rate movements.

599.4.2 Mr STEWART observed that the draft was a very readable paper although he noted it contained a large historical element for a forward plan. He said that government departments worked on annual efficiency targets of approximately 2½% and suggested that it would help the Commission's case if such projected efficiencies could in future be identified and quantified. Mr STEWART noted that from 1996 the British Civil Service would cease to negotiate rates of pay centrally for the majority of its staff and that the Commission, which had traditionally used such rates as an analogue, would have to set its own rates. This would place an additional burden upon the Commission's Personnel Department and affordability would have to figure prominently in their deliberations.

599.4.3 Mr KENNEDY explained that the historical information had been included at the request of the Finance Committee to indicate how the administration had managed to cope with an increasing workload with fewer staff. In response, Mr STEWART said that this was useful historical information but there was still a need to set objectives for the future.

599.4.4 In reply to Admiral KERR, who welcomed the paper, Mr PARKER explained that the impending move away from using the Civil Service as a marker would give the administration some flexibility to streamline the variety of differing pay structures, which were presently subject to different pay agreements. He believed that this, in conjunction with greater delegation to Areas for local pay agreements, and the reduction in the number of UK based staff overseas, would ultimately lead to some efficiencies. Responding to Admiral KERR's query on staff turnover, Mr PARKER said that this had largely been a consequence of the post-war generation retiring from the service of the Commission and that there was now a younger workforce, particularly in the gardening grades.

599.4.5 Responding to Sir John AKEHURST's query concerning the use of chemicals for the prevention of weed growth, Mr PARKER said that research to find alternative products to the currently used herbicides in Northern Europe was currently taking place in case restrictions currently applicable in the United Kingdom should be extended to the rest of Europe. There was also heightened awareness of the need to control the increasing usage of chemicals. Replying to Admiral KERR, Mr PARKER said that, although there would inevitably be some increase in costs, this would not be significant.

599.4.6 Sir Harold WALKER welcomed the draft Corporate Plan and thought that the historical information was most useful. He agreed with Mr Stewart, however, that wherever possible it was desirable for the Commission to quantify the economies they hoped to achieve. Secondly, he expressed a belief that in the future the role of the Commission would become less evident to the general public and thus there was a need to introduce historical notices into those Commission sites where there were none at present. Mr KENNEDY said that consideration was presently being given to this matter and also to the form of construction of the notices which had not always proved to be satisfactory.

599.4.7 Mr FRITH said that, on behalf of Canada, he had been asked to note the changes to the draft Corporate Plan and to commend the efforts of the administration. Further to the contents of the letter from Veterans Affairs Canada, which had been shared with the Finance Committee, Canada was still interested in prioritising projects and having a fundamental review of the Commission's duties carried out.

599.4.8 The Commission adopted the draft as its corporate plan.

599.5 ESTIMATE OF EXPENDITURE 1995-96

599.5.1 Introducing the paper, Mr NOAKES explained that the estimates were based on a programme of work which had been carefully scrutinised and adjusted by technical, finance and personnel departments. Further adjustments for exchange rate fluctuations had been made. Projects delayed from the current year had since had a knock on effect. The combination of artificially low funding in 1994-95, due to the cuts made in the estimate for that year and the high balance carried forward from the previous year, inflation, and a fall in the value of sterling, had resulted in estimated funding for 1995-96 being almost £3 million more than in 1994-95.

599.5.2 In response, Mr STEWART, Mr FRITH and Mr SHORT accepted the estimate. Commodore PEDDIE, however, said that the New Zealand government had difficulty with the estimate and explained that his country's contribution came from a government department's budget which had recently been cut by 1½%. Savings would, therefore, have to be found in the department's budget for the Commission's estimate to be met. Commodore PEDDIE expressed a preference, as an alternative, for a separate case to go through the New Zealand Treasury to Cabinet, supported by papers from the Commission. He said, however, that the prognosis was that this would not be supported by Treasury and was unlikely to succeed in Cabinet.

599.5.3 Whilst agreeing the estimate in principle, Dr BLEWETT said that there was some concern at the size of the increase although he believed that the stance taken by the British and Canadian governments was most useful.

599.5.4 Mr STEWART explained that the British government had been impressed by the efforts made to manage within the original authority for the current year and that this had created an atmosphere of confidence which had helped in the negotiations for 1995-96.

599.5.5 Commodore PEDDIE thanked Mr Stewart for his helpful remarks and expressed regret for the response that the New Zealand government had given. In the light of the responses from the other member governments, he would ask his government to reconsider its decision.

595.5.6 Brigadier DHIR said that although an increase in contributions would almost certainly pose problems for India he would approach his government and he expressed hope that, particularly in view of the recent visit by Vice-Chairman and Director-General, there would be a favourable outcome.

599.5.7 Mr KENNEDY explained to the Commission that the current strength of the Dutch guilder, the German mark and the Belgian franc had led the banks to advise that these currencies should be bought forward at fixed rates rather than on the basis of cylinder options. On the other hand the French franc and the Italian lire were relatively weak and there were advantages to be gained in forward purchase by

cylinder options. The combination of these methods would enable the estimate to be protected while giving some possibility of exchange rate gains.

599.5.8 In reply to Sir John AKEHURST, Mr KENNEDY explained that a cylinder option had agreed floor and ceiling rates. This enabled the Commission to purchase currency, as it was required, at the spot rate whenever it lay between the two limits. Should the spot rate fall below the floor rate, the Commission could insist on buying at the floor rate and conversely, the bank could insist on selling at the ceiling rate should the spot rate rise above it. Mr KENNEDY explained that, in contrast to fixed rates where the Commission had to buy an agreed amount of currency each month at the agreed exchange rate, cylinder options gave greater flexibility.

599.5.9 The CHAIRMAN hoped that the Commission could approve the estimate of net expenditure while accepting that each government would then have to address the issue of funding. Mr STEWART believed, however, that member governments would find it difficult to approve the estimate, knowing that there was a funding problem. Mr FRITH suggested that it would be more appropriate to note the estimate, with which Mr STEWART agreed. Mr KENNEDY pointed out that there was a need to enter into forward purchase contracts immediately in order to protect the estimate and this could not be done without an agreement to fund.

599.5.10 In reply to Dame Janet FOOKES, Mr KENNEDY said that the shortfall in funding as a result of New Zealand and India not being in a position to agree to the increased figures was approximately £128,000. Mrs GOLDING pointed out, however, that due to the proportional nature of funding, the potential shortfall was close to £3 million. Mr STEWART said that he was confident that this would not arise and urged early negotiations with the governments concerned.

599.5.11 Mrs GOLDING expressed her concern over the unsatisfactory outcome. She believed that it could create a precedent which could have even more serious implications in future years. Agreeing, the CHAIRMAN reminded the Commission that the purpose of the Finance Committee was to discuss and to come to an agreement on the question of funding and he had assumed that, since funding requirements were made known at that meeting, the administration would have been informed of any serious potential difficulties. Mr STEWART said, however, that it had been evident at the Finance Committee that some member governments had been concerned at the size of the increase and that all governments were being compelled to examine their expenditure critically.

599.5.12 Replying to Mr FRITH, Mr KENNEDY explained that the contributions requested from member governments varied each year, depending on the programme of work, fluctuations in exchange rates, inflation and balances carried forward from previous years. In this case the 1994-95 funding had been suppressed by an amount of £1.1 million carried forward from 1993-94 and an imposed cut of over £600,000. This accounted for more than £1.7 million of the increase while a further £1.1 million was due to inflation and poorer exchange rates. Mr KENNEDY suggested that those member governments who had indicated that they would fund the increase would only do so if all member governments agreed to do so. He noted, therefore, that he only had a mandate to spend this year's level of funding and that he would not be able to protect the estimate to the same degree as he could have done had the additional £3 million been agreed.



599.5.13 Commodore PEDDIE expressed regret that he had only received the response from his government the day before the Commission meeting. He suggested that the Commission should consider how this situation might be avoided in future. In this instance, he believed that there was still hope that the New Zealand government might be prepared to agree to the increase if a good case, supported by the other governments, could be made.

599.5.14 **The Commission**

- a. took note of the estimate of net expenditure for the financial year 1995-96 in the sum of £29,669,182
- b. took note of the willingness of four member governments to provide the necessary funding and agreed to pursue the question of funding with the New Zealand and Indian governments
- c. took note of the proposed methods of forward purchase of foreign currency.

599.6 **COMMISSION MEMORIALS: REFERENCE TO THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THOSE COMMEMORATED**

599.6.1 Introducing the paper, Mr GEE said that, in asking the Commission to consider the matter, the Secretary of State for Defence had not suggested that he personally supported the proposal put forward by Mr Hughes, but wished to indicate that the subject had been considered at the highest level. He continued by saying that, whilst the Thiepval Memorial could not be considered in isolation, few would consider the memorial a specifically christian edifice. The only symbols of a religious nature were the integral cross on the sovereign's crown and the small cross on the register box door. Mr GEE advised Commissioners that the question of a symbol to represent non-christians had been considered as early as 1917, when Sir Frederick Kenyon had been asked to consult religious bodies on the subject of commemoration and, in his subsequent report to the Commission, had supported the recommendation made by Sir Edwin Lutyens that a major non-denominational symbol, the Stone of Remembrance, should be utilised as a focal point of remembrance. Such a Stone was prominently placed beneath the central arch of the Thiepval Memorial.

599.6.2 As Sir Peter SHEPHEARD was unable to attend the meeting he had asked for his views to be made known to Commissioners. Mr GEE reported that, whilst Sir Peter accepted that the issue was not an artistic one, the matter was fundamental to the Commission's historic means of commemoration. In Sir Peter's opinion the Stone of Remembrance was, by its very design, non-denominational and embraced the beliefs of all those commemorated on the memorials or buried in the war cemeteries where the feature was located. Sir Peter wished Commissioners to be aware of his opposition to the suggestion.

599.6.3 In voicing her support for the re-affirmation of the existing policy, Dame Janet FOOKES recommended that a full explanation of the historical background to the Commission's policy be sent to Mr Hughes. Mr STEWART agreed, adding that in the reply the role of the deliberate non-denominational nature of the Commission's structural features should be emphasised.

599.6.4 **The Commission re-affirmed its existing policy of not referring to the faiths of those commemorated on its memorial.**

## 599.7 ALTERNATIVE COMMEMORATIONS

599.7.1 The Commission approved the alternative commemoration of three war burials as summarised in the paper.

## 599.8 DIARY

Chungkai War Cemetery and Kanchanaburi War Cemetery

599.8.1 The CHAIRMAN reported that the President had visited these cemeteries and, subsequent to the circulation of the papers, he had also visited Sai Wan War Cemetery and Stanley Military Cemetery in Hong Kong. He also reported that the President would be visiting India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in the Spring of 1995. The President's visit to Chungkai and Kanchanaburi War Cemeteries was preceded by a visit in September by Sir Nigel Mobbs.

50th Anniversary of the Battle of Arnhem

599.8.2 The CHAIRMAN expressed his gratitude to Lord RIDLEY for his attendance, on behalf of the Commission, at the ceremony to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Arnhem at Arnhem (Oosterbeek) War Cemetery. In return, Lord RIDLEY expressed his gratitude to the Director and staff of Northern Europe Area for their efforts in preparing the cemetery for the ceremony. Mr GEE assured Lord Ridley that representations had been made to the media who incorrectly named the venue as Arnhem British Cemetery.

Gibraltar (North Front) Cemetery

599.8.3 Arising from her visit in September, Mrs GOLDING reported on the poor state of the cemetery. As a result she had sought the agreement of the Parliamentary representative in London to include the cemetery on the next issue of the tourist map and to erect a signpost to the cemetery. She considered that the use of recumbent markers in the main plot, the lack of horticulture and the surrounding poorly maintained area created a poor impression. She suggested that this should be remedied and that the presence of war graves should be clarified by appropriate plaques and notices. In reply, Mr KENNEDY said that these matters would be pursued.

Harare (Pioneer) Cemetery and Harare Park Memorial

599.8.4 The CHAIRMAN thanked Sir Harold WALKER for his visit in November.

Remembrancetide Ceremonies

599.8.5 The CHAIRMAN thanked Dame Janet FOOKES, Sir John AKEHURST and Sir Harold WALKER for their respective representation at the ceremonies at Plymouth Naval Memorial, Portsmouth Naval Memorial and Tower Hill Memorial.

## 599.9 EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES

599.9.1 The CHAIRMAN explained that he had asked the permanent staff, other than Director-General, to withdraw because he thought that this would provide a better opportunity for Commissioners to air their views openly and frankly, without being inhibited by the presence of the staff.

599.9.2 Mr KENNEDY introduced the paper by speaking from a pre-prepared statement, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

599.9.3 In response, Mr FRITH said that Canada was still interested in the prospect of Canadians being seconded into the Commission's service but the financial implication would need careful consideration. He added that he had paid close attention to what Director-General had said and would ensure that his government remained sensitive to the factors involved, particularly those relating to morale and the need for a career structure.

599.9.4 Dr BLEWETT thought that the paper set out the issues very fairly and thanked Director-General for his frank views. The Australian government was firmly committed to improved Commonwealth participation in the work of the Commission. He noted from the paper that three senior posts could be open to external competition within ten years and believed that this need not necessarily lead to the strains suggested by Director-General. In addition he welcomed the suggestion that the possibility of arranging one or two exchanges of staff, which could have benefits both for the Commission and the relevant member government, should be examined.

599.9.5 Commodore PEDDIE, Mr SHORT and Brigadier DHIR agreed broadly with the views already expressed.

599.9.6 Mr STEWART acknowledged the points made by Director-General and agreed that in an organisation such as the Commission it was more difficult to retain an appropriate career structure if external appointees were brought in on short term contracts. This would not, however, necessarily lead to a less effective organisation and, in the light of the feelings expressed by other member governments, it would be inappropriate for him to argue against the proposals. He thought that the notion of arranging exchanges in the shorter term was a particularly sensible one. The results could well provide valuable lessons on which future actions could be based.

599.9.7 Sir John AKEHURST admitted to having a strong attack of conscience for not speaking out on behalf of the staff at the last meeting and was not surprised to hear that morale had suffered because staff did not feel that they were being supported by Commissioners. He paid tribute to the staff and felt that Commissioners had a responsibility of loyalty towards them. While supporting the idea of exchanges, he considered that the Commission should tread warily in the context of the wider issue and do everything possible to reassure staff and refrain from undermining their morale and goodwill.

599.9.8 Dame Janet FOOKES recalled that she had always had reservations concerning practicalities although the principle was an admirable one. The inevitable consequence of increased cost would certainly be unwelcome in the current financial climate and this did not, therefore, seem to be the most appropriate time to embark upon such a venture. She was in favour of attempting to arrange one or two exchanges but very much against a rigid agreement to advertise all senior posts as suggested by the paper. Continuing, she thought that it would be preferable to attempt to bring in staff from other member countries at a lower level and allow them to progress naturally, so providing a much greater degree of flexibility and pragmatism. It was particularly important to preserve the existing authority of the Director-General to make decisions in respect of recruitment on the basis of circumstances at the time. It was vitally important that, following the meeting, the most tangible reassurances possible should be given to the

existing staff. She was, therefore, in favour of the principle but against pursuing, other than exchanges, the arrangements outlined in the paper.

599.9.9 Miss NICHOLS regretted that the views expressed by members at previous meetings seemed to have been misrepresented. They had requested a more flexible and imaginative approach without going to the extremes suggested by the present paper. She was very content to proceed gently with exchanges and secondments but did not support the more radical changes. Furthermore, this seemed to accord with the views already expressed at the current meeting.

599.9.10 At this juncture Mr KENNEDY pointed out that the paper presented to the last meeting had been very much along the lines supported by Dame Janet FOOKES but proposed widening the net for any necessary recruitment at more senior levels to include member countries. Although this had been thought to be what the Commission wanted, the paper had been rejected. Many different views had been expressed, without any kind of consensus being reached, and it had therefore been difficult to determine what was in fact required. The present paper was a genuine attempt to meet the more radical views expressed at the last meeting.

599.9.11 Mrs GOLDING opposed the paper and thought that its implementation would inevitably damage morale severely by prejudicing career prospects. This was unacceptable in an organisation where a career structure was vitally important. The loyalty of the staff had been very evident to Commissioners during their visit to France in June and she felt strongly that this should be reciprocated. She considered that a more measured approach was called for and that this had been reflected in the views of those who had already spoken.

599.9.12 The Viscount RIDLEY said that he was uneasy about reaching a conclusion in the absence of Professor O'NEILL, who had initiated the idea, and thought that his views, and reactions to what others had said, were needed. Mr STEWART agreed and suggested that the CHAIRMAN could perhaps speak to Professor O'Neill after the meeting.

599.9.13 Admiral KERR understood the need to maintain the morale of the staff but felt that if the Commission was to remain credible and attract support in the longer term, it needed to be broader in its base. In addition to exchanges and secondments it was therefore essential to open up some of the more senior posts to external competition from member governments.

599.9.14 Dame Janet FOOKES said that she was still concerned about the feelings of the current staff and was unhappy about leaving decisions until the next meeting.

599.9.15 When asked to comment on the views expressed by members, Mr KENNEDY said that he was heartened by many of the comments that had been made. He was very willing to consider exchange or secondment possibilities at any time but would need the help and cooperation of member governments. He would also be quite content to see the three most senior posts opened up to external competition but thought that the automatic consideration of external candidates for all the senior posts listed in the paper was too rigid an arrangement. In respect of those posts below Deputy Director-General level, this could be considered on a selective basis but Director-General should retain the flexibility to do so depending on circumstances. Miss NICHOLS said that she thought this was what had been requested but Mr KENNEDY pointed out that he had been asked to identify and make proposals in respect of all posts at Principal level and above.

599.9.16 The CHAIRMAN thought that this generally reflected the views of members. He summarised by saying that member governments should attempt to identify possibilities for exchanges or secondments in their respective countries and bring these to the attention of Director-General. Secondly, the Director-General should consider the position whenever a vacancy was about to arise and inform member government representatives accordingly. On this basis, the CHAIRMAN would speak to Professor O'Neill and report the result to the Commission.

599.10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

South African High Commissioner

599.10.1 Mr SHORT informed the Commission that the new South African High Commissioner was expected to take up post on 15 January 1995.