

C. P. U.S.  
Sir A. Pitt Rivers  
Mr. Hamilton  
Mr. Shaw ✓ *alter copy.*

HOME SECRETARY

FS/65/6

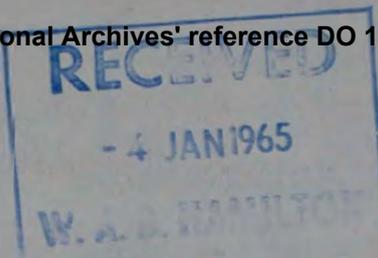
C A S E M E N T

Thank you for sending me a copy of your minute of January 1 to the Prime Minister proposing that you should agree to the transfer of Casement's remains to Ireland.

2. I have no objection to your proceeding on the lines suggested in paragraph 3 of your minute.
3. I am sending copies of this minute to the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Secretary.

Sd. Patrick Gordon Walker

January 7, 1965



Sir N. Ratchford  
 Mr Hamilton ✓  
 Mr Job. Shaw - action  
 copy  
 Mr H. J. Williams

PRIME MINISTER

CASEMENT

I have been considering the request of the Government of the Irish Republic for the removal of Casement's remains from Pentonville prison to Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin. Mr. Lemass sent you a personal message about this on 11th November.

2. It has previously been thought that the removal of the remains might on the whole have a harmful effect on relations between the United Kingdom Government, the Northern Ireland Government and the Government of the Irish Republic. The present position is as follows:-

- (a) The Northern Ireland Government raise no formal objection to the transfer of the remains to Glasnevin Cemetery, but they want us to be sure that the Government of the Republic do not contemplate, and will

not permit, any subsequent removal.

Although this cemetery is the one which the Government of the Republic have in mind, and a plot there was bought by Casement's sister for the burial of his remains, Casement himself wished to be buried at Murlough in County Antrim which is now in Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Government feel that there is some possibility of efforts by extreme nationalists to give effect to Casement's wishes, with consequent risks of public disorder and damage to relations between North and South.

- (b) The Ulster Members of the United Kingdom Parliament would not oppose a decision to remove the remains to Dublin, provided they stayed there.
- (c) The re-interment of the remains would undoubtedly be the occasion of some ceremony

and possibly demonstrations, and these might re-awaken old controversies between the United Kingdom and the Republic. But the Commonwealth Relations Office are satisfied that the balance of advantage is on the side of putting an end to this long-standing issue by agreeing to the transfer. The Government of the Republic strongly assert that the removal of this irritant would be warmly welcomed by all who wish to promote friendship between the United Kingdom and the Republic.

I conclude that there is no obstacle on this score to the removal of the remains to Dublin, provided that they stay there.

3. It was at one time thought that there was a legal obstacle to the removal of the remains; but I am advised that this is not so. I consider, therefore, that it would be right for me to agree to the transfer.

● Subject to satisfactory assurances being obtained from the Government of the Republic that they will not allow any subsequent transfer to Northern Ireland. The Government of the Republic would have to accept as Casement's any remains found in the grave in which he was buried without a coffin; and it would also be necessary to reach agreement with them on a number of details; the timing of the announcement of the Government's decision, the arrangements for the transfer of the remains, and any consultations that might be thought necessary with Casement's next of kin.

4. I should be grateful if you would let me know whether you agree that we should proceed on these lines and whether you wish me to raise the matter in Cabinet.

5. I should add that agreement to the transfer of Casement's remains will strengthen the case for allowing the reburial of other executed offenders. Once the Silverman Bill becomes law I think there

is little objection to this; and I propose to reply to requests now before me for the reburial of Timothy John Evans by saying that I will consider the matter if the Bill (which repeals the provision of the Capital Punishment Amendment Act, 1868, requiring the burial of executed murderers in prison) is enacted.

6. I am sending a copy of this minute to the Foreign Secretary and the Commonwealth Secretary.

(Sgd.) FRANK SOSKICE

1st January, 1965.