

to explain to the House what the situation is.

Those who have lost relatives in the war derive a great deal of comfort and consolation in being able to visit the graves of their dead, and as time grows on such a pilgrimage will become increasingly the custom. On the 13th of April, 1917, an organization known as the Imperial War Graves Commission was constituted by resolution passed by the Imperial War Conference, which consists of a large number of representative men. Canada's representative in that organization is the High Commissioner for Canada, Sir George Perley. There are 160,000 isolated graves on the battlefields of France and Belgium, and the total number of graves of British soldiers in those areas is comprised as follows: United Kingdom, 452,730; Canada, 43,631; Australia, 35,131; New Zealand, 11,393; South Africa 4,450; South African Native Labour Corps, 535; Newfoundland, 888; India natives, 5,665; and British West Indies, 956. This represents a total of British graves in France and Belgium of 555,379.

There are, as I have said, a hundred and sixty thousand isolated graves on the battlefields of France and Belgium, and for some time before the armistice was signed, and ever since that date, soldiers from the Dominions of Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and Imperial soldiers, have been exhuming the bodies of the soldiers in those graves, and placing them in cemeteries. I am glad to say that Canada has done her full duty in this respect, and I believe Australia has also. I fancy that the British authorities have had more difficulty in carrying out their duty in this regard, owing to the fact that there were a far larger number of bodies of British soldiers than of overseas soldiers buried in these isolated graves. I would like to say that we have a corps of approximately six or seven hundred soldiers who since the armistice have devoted themselves to the work of exhuming bodies and placing them in regularized cemeteries. That duty fell largely to the soldiers who came over to Great Britain under the Military Service Act. It is greatly to their credit that they were willing to do this work and that they have done it faithfully and well. About the time I visited France the intention was to relieve these men of the work, and call for volunteers to take their places from the soldiers who were in England and had come over under the Military Service Act, promising them that they would not be detained any longer on account of this work, and that they would be demobilized when their turn came and their

time would be occupied while they were awaiting demobilization. I have since been told that the thousand men that were asked for readily came forward and have since been sent over to France and are carrying out this duty. A great many of the cemeteries which I have visited were in excellent condition; others were not in such a good state. I fancy that after the soldiers have all returned from France it will be necessary, in some way or other, to employ civilian labour to assist in carrying on this work.

As any one who has studied the question at all will realize, the disposition of the property and equipment belonging to the Canadian Government was one of considerable concern to myself and to the members of the staff in England. In time of war, and when the fighting has ceased, especially in the case of this particular war, considerable quantities of stores are piled up, and when hostilities are at an end they are of very little value indeed. They are in such tremendous quantities that they constitute a burden; there is no place in which to store them and if they are left out in the open they rust and decay. We had to take this question up and see what was the best thing to do under all the circumstances.

In the first place we had a considerable surplus of ordnance stores—clothing, equipment, and all the articles that the soldier uses and wears, and that are necessary to the carrying on of war—which run into thousands of different things. About the month of July last, or at any rate several months before the signing of the armistice, I felt that the time must come when we would have to face this question, and the Government would be under considerable loss unless some system for the disposition of these stores was organized. Therefore, I communicated with the Secretary of State for War with respect to it. We had, for instance in connection with ordnance stores, in England a corps of about six hundred men to attend to these stores. I asked the Secretary of State for War if the Imperial authorities would take these stores over and allow us the value. Then we would draw our supplies from the Imperial ordnance stores, and release the six hundred men referred to for other duties, or release them altogether. After considerable negotiations the proposition was assented to, valuations were put on the work, and stock was taken. When the armistice was signed on November 11th last, the transaction had been practically completed