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ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....
I agree with the proposal's suggestion that the statue be placed at the site of the original monument. I feel that there is no other possible option.
B
27.7.77

I agree with the recommendation at A and B but not to have the statue at the site of the original monument. I feel that there is no other possible option.
B
27.7.77

Statue of Roger Casement

1. *The* Remains of Roger Casement were returned to Ireland in 1965. A ~~the~~ State Funeral was accorded for the re-interment of the remains at Glasnevin.
2. The Sculptor, Oisín Kelly, was commissioned to execute an effigy of Casement, heroic-size in bronze, with a simple podium or pedestal of stone to be erected at the grave. In due course a quarter-scale plaster model of the statue was seen by the Government and approved; a form of inscription in Irish and English was also approved for the pedestal.
3. The question of an unveiling ceremony was considered and the anniversary of Casement's death - 3rd August - was suggested as a suitable date. The President (Mr. de Valera) indicated that he would be willing to perform the ceremony. [1971]
4. There appears to have been no further action on the matter until the Minister for Finance indicated in the Autumn of 1973 that he wished to have the statue erected without ceremony. In June 1974, the Minister for Finance wrote to the Taoiseach indicating his wish to have the O.P.W. go ahead with the erection of the statue without formal unveiling and there is a note on file dated 31 July, 1974 that the Taoiseach agreed this with the Minister.
5. The matter has now arisen because the Arts Council are organising a retrospective exhibition of Oisín Kelly's work and they have asked the Office of Public Works to lend the Casement statue which is stored at the O.P.W. central workshops at Ladd Lane, Dublin. That Office has sought a direction from the Tánaiste and the Department of Finance, ^{who} in turn have asked for our observations ~~on~~ their letter of 16 December, 1977.
6. I think there is no question but that the statue should be given on loan for this major exhibition of a reputable and distinguished Irish artist's ~~work~~ work. I think this permission should be given right away - I understand that the catalogue is being held up pending clearance - even though it will show up the fact that after 12 years we have still not erected a memorial at the graveside.

A


/...

ROINN AN TAOISIGH

Uimhir.....

-2-

7. *flagged,* The arguments in favour of having a formal ceremony of unveiling at Glasnevin are set out in my minute of the 7th November, 1973 and in the Secretary's minute of 12th November, 1973. Since then, publication of a major work on Casement by a distinguished Anglo-Irish writer, Brian Inglis, has tended to give credence to the allegation that Casement was a homosexual. The response to the book would suggest that public opinion is not unduly concerned by that and does not regard it as diminishing the idealism and patriotism of the man. The real disgrace in the episode is seen to be ^{the} tactic of the British authorities at the time in revealing Casement's perversion in those quarters which might have helped to secure his reprieve.
8. Since 1973 there is also, perhaps, another consideration: following the reappraisal of 1916 there developed a less jingoistic attitude to Irish nationalism, ^{that is reflected} ~~and~~ ^{in the} ~~in~~ ^(former) the Government's decision to reduce national commemoration ceremonies to one day - St. Patrick's Day.- which never in fact caught on. But there has grown, too, a feeling that the pendulum has swung too far on this and that we have reached the stage of almost apologising for the deeds of our patriot dead. In this context, the decision to erect Casement's statue by stealth or to allow it to remain in a store-room ^{would} seem particularly shabby.
9. *B* Even though the immediate decision is to grant permission for the exhibiting of the statue, I have dwelt on the question of its erection in Glasnevin because I believe that the Government should be aware of the implications and should have its mind made up in advance. I would go further and suggest that before the publicity of the exhibition arises, there should be an announcement that the statue is being erected in Glasnevin and a date (end of the exhibition in May or 3rd August) should be indicated. A small ceremony can be planned for that date.



20th December, 1977