



11, PARLIAMENT STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

*With Compliments*

19 March 1998

23 March 1998

David Winnick MP

I wrote arising from a letter from a former Irish deputy.

I thought you would wish to see the response from the Prime Minister.

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON, SW1A 0AA



February about the war memorial which is  
planned to commemorate the 50,000 Irishmen  
killed in both World Wars through the cemeteries and memorials erected and  
maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The United  
Kingdom's contribution is over £20 million per year.

The Government has continued the long-standing

policy of successive Governments that the cost of war memorials is not met from public funds. The Government already contributes to the commemoration of those killed in both World Wars through the cemeteries and memorials erected and maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The United Kingdom's contribution is over £20 million per year.

The Commission also maintains memorials erected by Regiments and formations such as divisions, which were originally put up at private expense. There is already such a memorial to the 16th (Irish) division on Messines Ridge outside the village of Wytschaete. In addition, the Ministry of Defence sponsors and funds a second memorial to the 16th (Irish) Division at Guillemont on the Somme and a memorial to the 10th (Irish) Division at Rabrov in former Yugoslavia (this Division fought in Serbia in 1915). Two memorials to the Royal Munster Fusiliers, one in France and one in Belgium, are also looked after under these arrangements.



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

19 March 1998

*Dear David,*

Thank you for your letter of 18 February about the war memorial which is being erected on Messines Ridge in Flanders to commemorate the 50,000 Irishmen killed in the First World War, and your request that the Government might wish to match the contribution of £150,000 being pledged by the Irish Government.

As you probably know, this Government has continued the long-standing policy of successive Governments that the cost of war memorials is not met from public funds. The Government already contributes to the commemoration of those killed in both World Wars through the cemeteries and memorials erected and maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The United Kingdom's contribution is over £20 million per year.

The Commission also maintains memorials erected by Regiments and formations such as divisions, which were originally put up at private expense. There is already such a memorial to the 16th (Irish) division on Messines Ridge outside the village of Wytschaete. In addition, the Ministry of Defence sponsors and funds a second memorial to the 16th (Irish) Division at Guillemont on the Somme and a memorial to the 10th (Irish) Division at Rabrov in former Yugoslavia (this Division fought in Serbia in 1915). Two memorials to the Royal Munster Fusiliers, one in France and one in Belgium, are also looked after under these arrangements.



It would be extremely difficult for the Government to make an exception to the long-standing policy of not providing public funds towards the erection of war memorials, particularly as the UK has for many decades maintained the graves and memorials of all Irishmen killed in the Great War. Nevertheless, I know that Paul Murphy has had a useful meeting with some of those involved with the project. We are looking closely at other practical ways in which we can help with the Memorial's construction.

Yours ever  
Tary

David Winnick Esq MP