

C. S.

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|---|
| Naval & Military.<br>(Miscellaneous).<br>Miscellaneous.<br>(Miscellaneous). |
| No. 59/44.  |

DEF/FID/6#13

19 44.

The President.

SUBJECT.

19 44.  
24th January,

Previous Paper.

BRITISH EMPIRE SERVICE LEAGUE.

MINUTES.

1. Letter from President, British Empire Service League of 24.1.44
2. Minute to O/C, F.I.D.F., of 8.5.44.
3. Minute from O/C, F.I.D.F., of 11.5.44.  
(4).

O.C.  
F.I.D.F.  
~~Can I have the printed Constitution of the B.E.S.L. have please?~~  
KB  
15/5.

Honourable Colonial Secretary.

Returns herewith. KB, O.C. F.I.D.F.  
17.5.44

(6).  
Y.F. There seems to be no inclination to respond to this suggestion, nor do those concerned see any merit in arguing for the possible affiliation of the Defence Force Club with the B.E.S.L. I agree that there is not much point here. Y.F. may wish to write to Lord Louis & tell him.  
KB  
19/5/44

Subsequent Paper.

B.V. post bellum  
 23/4/45  
 21

# BRITISH EMPIRE SERVICE LEAGUE



Patron-in-Chief - HIS MAJESTY THE KING

Patron - H.R.H. THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER

Grand President - Field-Marshal LORD MILNE, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

Uniting the Ex-Service Organizations of the

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE  
25 APR 1944  
WELBECK ISLAND

Hon. Treasurer:  
BRIG-GEN. SIR ARCHIBALD HOME,  
K.C.V.O., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

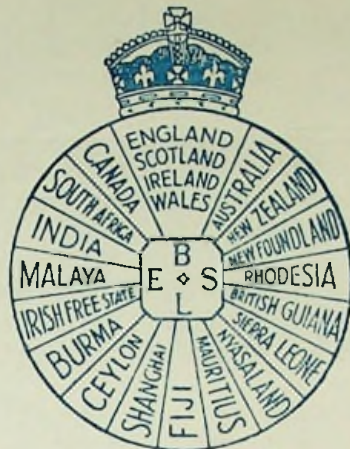
Hon. Secretary:  
~~CAPTAIN SIR DONALD SIMON, K.B.E.~~  
Major E.S. Harston

EMPIRE SERVICE.  
EMPIRE SETTLEMENT.  
EMPIRE TRADE.

"Our Empire" Magazine.  
"Lest we forget" Diary.

Our Ref. \_\_\_\_\_

Your Ref. \_\_\_\_\_



Telegrams:  
"LOYALTY, WESDO, LONDON."

Telephone:  
~~2775~~  
WELbeck 8559/0

"BERWYN,"  
ST. MARY'S ROAD,  
LONG DITTON,  
SURBITON,  
SURREY.  
13, Manchester Square,  
LONDON, W.1.

24th January, 1944.

Honorary Vice-Presidents:

Major-General  
The Earl of Athlone,  
K.G., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O.,  
D.S.O.

The Secretary of State  
for the Dominions.

The Secretary of State  
for the Colonies.

The Secretary of State  
for India.

The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Derby,  
K.G., G.C.B.

Col. The Lord Wigram,  
G.C.B., G.C.V.O., C.S.I.

~~The late Major Sir Abe Bailey,  
Bart., K.C.M.G.~~

The Rt. Hon. Lord Portal,  
D.S.O., M.V.O., D.L.

~~The Rt. Hon. Lord Austin,  
K.B.E.~~

The Rt. Hon. Lord Iliffe, C.B.E.

Admiral Sir Lionel Halsey,  
G.C.V.O., K.C.I.E., C.B., G.C.M.G.

The Rt. Hon.  
Viscount Leverhulme.

The President of  
the British Legion.

The President of  
the British Legion (Scotland).

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The Rt. Hon.  
Viscount Bennett

---  
Colonel the Lord  
Sempill, AFC.

Your Excellency,

In its preparations for peace the Council of the British Empire Service League has under consideration the improvement of its organisation in various parts of the Empire and one of the questions under consideration is that of the formation of ex-Servicemen's Associations in those territories which so far do not appear to have any such organisation or, where they have, the organisation is not affiliated to the British Empire Service League and therefore is losing the valuable privilege of reciprocity for its members throughout the Empire and of having the assistance of these Headquarters in the many tasks that are undertaken for members overseas.

At the present moment, in addition to the Dominions, India, Burma and Newfoundland, organisations exist in the following territories and are affiliated to the British Empire Service League:-

|                                 |              |            |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| British Guiana                  | Malaya       | Ceylon     |
| Fiji                            | Nigeria      | Malta      |
| Mauritius                       | Sierra Leone | Nyassaland |
| Southern and Northern Rhodesia. |              |            |

The Council has, therefore, asked me, as Grand President, to write to each of the Governors of the remaining territories, asking if ex-Servicemen's organisations are being formed and suggesting the advantage of such associations being affiliated to the British Empire Service League. For further details I would refer you to the "Lest We Forget" Diary, a copy of which is being sent to you and also to the Constitution of the BESL, a copy of which is enclosed.

Briefly, you will see that the British Empire Service League is governed by an Empire Council, upon which the larger members have one or more representatives. Some of the smaller members dispense with this representation altogether, and in another case, you will see that one member of the Council does duty for two organisations. Membership of the Council, therefore, is not absolutely essential. Empire Headquarters,

situated in London, undertakes for its member organisations a great many tasks in connection with pensions, medals, lost relations, cases of need, migration, entertainment etc., etc. This involves correspondence running into thousands of letters per annum. Towards the upkeep of Headquarters, and for its various duties, subscriptions are paid each year by the various members on what is roughly a pro rata basis. The usual subscription in the case of the smaller member organisations is £10 per annum.

When peace is declared a Conference will, it is hoped, be held in London at which matters affecting ex-Servicemen from an Empire point of view will be brought up and discussed.

Perhaps, therefore, Your Excellency will be good enough to consider whether the formation of such an organisation in your territory is advisable and if it is decided to take the necessary steps for its formation, I hope it will be affiliated with the British Empire Service League. In choosing a title, may I suggest "The ..... Legion of the British Empire Service League"?

I should be most grateful for any action you feel you can properly take in support. If you do not wish to appear as taking the initiative yourself, you may be prepared to arrange for the matter to be discussed with local persons of standing who might be interested in the welfare of ex-servicemen, and to put me in touch with them. Any such assistance would be very much appreciated.

You can be assured of the willing co-operation and assistance of our Constituent Members throughout the Empire, as well as of Empire Headquarters.

I have the honour to be,

Your Excellency's obedient Servant,

*Milne*

GRAND PRESIDENT.

His Excellency Sir Allan Wolsey Cardinall, KBE, CMG,  
Governor and Commander-in-Chief,  
FALKLAND ISLANDS.

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**BRITISH EMPIRE SERVICE  
LEAGUE.**

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**CONSTITUTION, OBJECTS  
AND RULES.**

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13, MANCHESTER SQUARE,  
LONDON, W.1.

**CONSTITUTION, OBJECTS & RULES**

OF THE

**BRITISH EMPIRE SERVICE LEAGUE**

As Amended and Adopted at

**THE SECOND BIENNIAL CONFERENCE**

held at Ottawa, Canada, 1925.

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**1.—NAME.**

The organisation formed under these rules shall be known as the "BRITISH EMPIRE SERVICE LEAGUE" and the short title thereof shall be the "B.E.S.L."

**HEADQUARTERS.**

There shall be an Empire Headquarters of the B.E.S.L. to be situated in London.

**2.—POLICY.**

The policy of the B.E.S.L. shall be national, non-sectarian, and in relation to party politics, non-partisan.

**3.—OBJECTS**

The objects of the B.E.S.L. shall be:—

- (a). To assist the constituent organisations to carry out the objects set forth in their respective constitutions, in so far as such objects are not inconsistent with the policy of the B.E.S.L. and to secure united action upon points of common interest.
- (b). To further the ideal of comradeship, as opposed to force, as the arbiter between nations.
- (c). To recognise actively the vital necessity for complete preparedness for the adequate defence of the Empire.

- (d). To perpetuate the memory of the gallant men and women who have suffered or died for the Empire.
- (e). To foster and maintain that spirit of self-sacrifice which in the late War inspired all members of His Majesty's Forces to subordinate their individual welfare to the interests of the common weal.
- (f). To inculcate and perpetuate a spirit of comradeship and patriotism throughout the Empire.
- (g). To provide for a policy of reciprocity as between the constituent organisations, and an equitable system of transfer of membership.
- (h). To hold periodic conferences on matters of concern to the Empire and to ex-Service men.
- (i). To do all such other things as may be considered incidental or conducive to attaining the above objects and to promote generally, by all constitutional means, the interests of the Empire and the B.E.S.L.
- (j) To take steps to assist British ex-Service men's migration to the British Dominions and Colonies.

#### 4.—CONSTITUTION.

The B.E.S.L. shall consist of:—

- (a). The Conference as hereinafter constituted.
- (b). An Empire Headquarters situated in London, with the Grand President and the Empire Council.
- (c). National Headquarters for England, Scotland, North Ireland and Wales, which shall be the Headquarters of the British Legion in those countries.
- (d). Dominion Headquarters in each Dominion or Territory having an organisation being a member of the B.E.S.L., which Dominion Headquarters shall be the Headquarters of the constituent organisation concerned.
- (e). The several National or Dominion Headquarters shall exercise within their respective areas all such powers as shall not be specifically given by the Conference to the Empire Headquarters.

#### 5.—MEMBERSHIP.

(a). The following organisations and such other organisations as may from time to time be admitted by the Conference shall be constituent organisations and members of the B.E.S.L. :—

- 1.—United Kingdom—British Legion (embracing England, Scotland, North Ireland and Wales).
- 2.—Australia—The Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia.
- 3.—British Guiana—British Empire Service League (British Guiana).
- 4.—Canada.
- 5.—India—Ex-Services Association (India and Burma).
- 6.—Irish Free State—British Legion (Ireland).
- 7.—Malaya.—Ex-Services Association of Malaya.
- 8.—Newfoundland—The Great War Veterans' Association of Newfoundland.
- 9.—New Zealand—New Zealand Returned Soldiers' Association.
- 10.—Nigeria—British Empire Service League (Nigeria).
- 11.—Rhodesia—British Empire Service League (Rhodesia).
- 12.—South Africa—British Empire Service League (South Africa).

(b). Organisations of ex-Service men within territory not covered by the above constituent organisations may be admitted to membership upon such terms as shall be decided by the Empire Council, whose decision shall be subject to the ratification of the Conference next ensuing.

For information—The following is the present Membership :—

- Australia—The Returned Sailors' & Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia.
- British Guiana—The Ex-Service Men's Association of British Guiana.
- Canada—The Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League.
- Ceylon—Comrades of the Great War (Ceylon) Association.
- England, North Ireland and Wales—British Legion.
- India—Ex-Services Association, India and Burma.
- Irish Free State—British Legion (Irish Free State Area).
- Malaya—Ex-Services Association of Malaya.

Mauritius—Ex-Service Association of Mauritius.  
 Newfoundland—The Great War Veterans' Association of Newfoundland.  
 New Zealand—New Zealand Returned Soldiers Association.  
 Nigeria—British Empire Service League (Nigeria).  
 Rhodesia—British Empire Service League (Rhodesia).  
 Scotland—British Legion (Scotland).  
 Shanghai—The United Services' Association (Shanghai).  
 Sierra Leone—British Empire Service League (Sierra Leone).  
 South Africa—British Empire Service League (South Africa).

#### 6.—CONFERENCE.

(a). The Conference shall be constituted of delegates from the several constituent organisations to be elected or nominated by such organisations as follows:—

(i.) United Kingdom—Not more than six delegates (England three, Scotland one, North Ireland one, Wales one);

(ii.) Not more than three delegates from the respective constituent organisations of each of the following:

Australia, British Guiana, Canada, India, Irish Free State, Malaya, Newfoundland, New Zealand, Nigeria, Rhodesia, South Africa,

and such other constituent organisations as may hereafter be admitted to membership of the B.E.S.L.

#### 7.—ELECTION OF DELEGATES.

Each constituent organisation shall elect or nominate such delegates as are referred to in Rule 6, in accordance with the method to be decided upon by the said organisation.

#### 8.—MEETINGS OF THE CONFERENCE.

The Conference shall meet biennially, in such place as each preceding Conference may decide. Special Conferences may be convened in the interim if a majority of the constituent organisations, upon the invitation of the Grand President, shall so decide.

#### 9.—PATRON.

The Conference shall elect a Patron, who shall hold office until a successor is appointed by the Conference.

#### 10.—GRAND PRESIDENT.

A Grand President shall be elected by the Conference at each meeting thereof and shall hold office until the succeeding meeting thereof, and shall be eligible for re-appointment. Should a vacancy occur in the office of Grand President when the Conference is not in session, such vacancy shall be filled by a person nominated by the Empire Council until the succeeding meeting of the Conference.

#### 11.—EMPIRE PRESIDENTS.

Each constituent organisation shall appoint a President who shall hold office at the discretion of the said organisation. Vacancies occurring in such offices shall be filled for the unexpired period in such manner as the organisation affected may determine.

#### 12.—EMPIRE VICE-PRESIDENTS.

Great Britain (which includes England, Scotland, North Ireland and Wales) shall elect four Vice-Presidents, and the remaining constituent organisations shall each elect one Vice-President.

Vacancies occurring in the office of Vice-President shall be filled for the unexpired period in such manner as the organisation affected may determine.

#### 13.—SECRETARIAT.

Until the Conference otherwise resolves, the necessary officials of the B.E.S.L. shall be appointed by the Grand President.

#### 14.—EXECUTIVE.

(a). The executive power of the B.E.S.L. shall be vested in the Grand President and the Empire Council. The said Empire Council shall consist of not more than two members from each constituent organisation, but power shall be given under this Constitution to the Grand President to add to this number provided that the persons so added shall be approved by the organisations to which they belong.

(b). The Executive shall have power to carry out and maintain this Constitution, and take all action that may be necessary under resolutions passed by the Conference, and the failure of any constituent organisation to appoint members of the Empire Council shall in no way affect the decisions of the said Council and the several objects thereof.

#### 15.—FUNDS.

(a). Each constituent organisation shall contribute to the general funds of the B.E.S.L. an annual subscription as follows:—

Great Britain, £200;

Canada, Australia, South Africa, £100 each;

New Zealand, £75;

Newfoundland, Rhodesia, India, Malaya, British Guiana, £25 each;

Irish Free State, £10;

and for constituent organisations admitted to membership such subscription as may be determined when such constituent organisation is so admitted.

(b). The financial year of the B.E.S.L. shall be from the 1st January to the 31st December, and the constituent organisations shall remit to the Honorary Treasurer of the B.E.S.L. before the 30th June, the subscription due for the current financial year.

(c). The Empire Council shall have power to fix the sum as the contribution for organisations admitted under Rule 5 (b). Such organisations may be affiliated to the B.E.S.L. by a subscription of not more than £25 per annum, but such affiliation shall not necessarily give them the right of representation at the Conference of the B.E.S.L.

(d). In the event of the financial position of any one of the constituent organisations of the B.E.S.L. warranting such action, the Grand President and the Empire Council shall have power in any one financial year to remit such proportion of the annual subscription as they in their absolute discretion shall decide.

#### 16.—AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION.

No alteration, amendment, deletion or addition to this Constitution shall be made except by resolution of the Conference carried by a two-thirds majority of the delegates present and voting thereat and made upon notice thereof duly given in writing to and received by Empire Headquarters and each constituent organisation not less than three months previous to the date fixed for the opening of the Conference

#### 17.—CONFERENCE AGENDA.

Notice of motion of all matters to be brought before Conference not affecting the Constitution shall be despatched by registered post by the organisation giving notice thereof to Empire Headquarters and to each constituent organisation not less than three months previous to the date fixed for the opening of the Conference.

#### 18.—LEVIES.

Should the provision made under Rule 15 for the financing of the B.E.S.L. during the interim between the meetings of the Conference be insufficient, the Grand President and the Empire Council shall have power to levy the constituent organisations in equal proportions to their subscriptions to such extent as may be necessary provided that such levy shall not exceed in any one year 50 per cent. of the contribution due from a constituent organisation under Rule 15.

#### 19.—WITHDRAWAL FROM THE LEAGUE.

In the event of a constituent organisation deciding to withdraw from membership of the B.E.S.L., the Secretary of the organisation concerned shall inform the Empire Council of such desire, and, provided that the financial obligations of such organisation have been discharged, such withdrawal shall be sanctioned.

#### 20.—DISSOLUTION.

(a). The B.E.S.L. may be dissolved by the vote of not less than five-sixths of the delegates present and voting at



a special Conference convened on the basis of Rules 6, 7 and 8.

(b). Such special Conference, however, shall not be operative in regard to the dissolution of the B.E.S.L. unless 75 per cent. of the constituent organisations are represented.

(c). Should it be so determined to dissolve the B.E.S.L. the Grand President and Empire Council shall direct the realisation of the whole of the B.E.S.L.'s assets and, after discharging all lawful liabilities, shall devote the remaining assets (if any) according as the Conference authorising the dissolution may direct, or, failing such direction, shall divide the same amongst the constituent organisations in the proportion of their annual subscriptions to the funds of the B.E.S.L. over the previous three years.

Reprinted March, 1943.



No. 50/44

MINUTE.

(2)

(It is requested that, in any reference to this minute, the above Number and the date may be quoted).

8th May, 1944.

From Colonial Secretary,

To The Officer Commanding,

Falkland Islands Defence Force,

Stanley, Falkland Islands.

STANLEY.

*Red*

I enclose a copy of a letter to His Excellency from the Grand President of the British Empire Service League, together with the only copy received of the printed constitution of the League. The "Last we Forget" Diary has not yet arrived.

I should be grateful if you would get in touch with ex-service men of the Colony and would inform me whether there is any desire to form a local branch.

K. G. BRADLEY

Colonial Secretary.

Subject: BRITISH EMPIRE SERVICE LEAGUE.

(3)

Hon. Col. Secretary,  
Stanley.

Ref: 59/44

*Red 2.*

Referring to your Minute of the 8th.

I have consulted one or two ex-servicemen on this matter and, as I anticipated, there is no desire to form any such association. There are only some fifteen ex-servicemen (i.e. men who served other than in the Colony in the 1914 - 18 war) in the Colony, and some seven of these are in the Camp.

2. With one exception all the men concerned are members of the F.I.D.F. as are men who served locally in the last war. The Defence Force Club really fulfills the need of an Ex-Servicemen's Organisation and I cannot see that affiliation to the B.E.S.L. is needed.

*Quint Woodgate*

Lieutenant-Colonel,  
Officer Commanding,  
F.I.D.F.

Headquarters.  
11 May 44.