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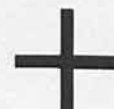


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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

A/R 481

Registered file number

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DIVISION

NAVAL LAV

FOR REGISTER

ADM 1

SUBJECT

COMMANDER L.K.P. CRABB
Documents to be kept in head of NL's Sa

Referred to	DATE	Referred to	DATE	Referred to	DATE	Referred to
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DECISIONS AND PRECEDENTS NOTED UNDER:—

NOTES:—

	<u>Doc.</u>
Brief issued by CNI to cover Crabb statement (27.4.56)	1
Note from Hd of NL to Secretary (20.9.56)	2
Note from Hd of NL to Secretary (27.9.56)	3
Letter from Capt. EA Blundell (VERNON) to Director of Naval Intelligence (11.6.57)	4
covering statement by W J McLanachan (Lt.)	4A
Letter from Rear Adm. Inglis (DNI) to Adm. Sir G. Grantham, C in C, Portsmouth (17.6.57)	5
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Hd of NL's note to CNI re forthcoming Inquest (21.6.57)	9
Mr. Stephenson letter of 22.7.57 to Hd of NL covering 2 copies of evidence given at Inquest	10
Message 270938Z June 1957 (Adm. to C in C used for Sir John Lang)	11
Top Secret Personal Minute to Dep Sec from DNI dated 21 st June 1956	12
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Volume 552
No. 153



Monday
14th May, 1956

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF COMMONS OFFICIAL REPORT

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Navy Estimates, 1956-57

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Motion to reduce Vote—[Mr. J. Griffiths]—on a Division,
negated

THE CASE OF COMMANDER CRABB [Col. 1757]:

Motion to reduce Vote—[Mr. Gaitskell]—on a Division,
negated

PENSIONS (INCREASE) BILL [Col. 1793]:

Lords Amendments agreed to

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE [Col. 1796]:

Colonial Sterling Balances

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS :

Aircraft Near-Collision (Report of Inquiry)

LONDON
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
NINEPENCE NET

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That a further sum, not exceeding £20, be granted to Her Majesty, towards defraying the charges for the year ending on 31st March, 1957, for the following Votes in connection with the case of Commander Crabb, namely:—

CIVIL ESTIMATES, 1956-57 AND NAVY ESTIMATES, 1956-57

	£
Class I, Vote 4, Treasury and Subordinate Departments	10
Navy Estimates, Vote 12, Admiralty Office	10
	<hr/>
	£20

THE CASE OF COMMANDER CRABB

8.18 p.m.

Mr. Hugh Gaitskell (Leeds, South): On 29th April, the Admiralty announced that Commander Lionel Crabb, R.N.V.R., was presumed dead after failing to return from an underwater trial. The statement went on to say that he did not return from a test dive which took place in connection with the trials of certain underwater apparatus in Stokes Bay, in the Portsmouth area, about a week before. Commander Crabb is the central figure in this strange episode which we are discussing in this very short debate this evening.

Therefore, I think it will be appropriate, since I suppose we must accept the conclusion of the Admiralty, if, at the start, on behalf of all of us, I were to pay a tribute to a very gallant officer. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] He was, of course, awarded the George Medal in 1944 for gallantry and undaunted devotion to duty. Whatever may be the circumstances in which he met his death, all of us will agree that this country would be the poorer if it were not for men like Commander Crabb.

In opening this debate, there are certain things I want to make clear about the attitude of the Opposition. First, we recognise the unfortunate necessity, in present conditions, for secret services. Every great Power has such services and, obviously, as with other defences, we cannot do without these. Also, we fully appreciate that details of the activities of these services cannot be disclosed as are the activities of other Government Departments, because to do so would make nonsense of their work. However, I must add this: Parliament accepts that

situation, and refrains from pressing these matters, and, of course, Ministers, exercising their undoubted rights, refuse to give information on what I think may be regarded as certain generally accepted assumptions.

These assumptions are: first, that the operations of these services are ultimately and effectively controlled by Ministers or by a Minister; secondly, that their operations are secret; thirdly, that what they do does not embarrass us in our international relations. And perhaps one might add, fourthly, that what they do appears, as far as we can make out, to be reasonably successful—[*Laughter.*—]—in this sense, that if there were a widespread feeling that the secret services were extremely incompetent and inept, then it would be the duty of hon. Members to raise the matter.

It is an unfortunate fact that, in the episode which we are discussing, none of these four conditions appears to have been fulfilled. The statement of the Prime Minister makes it plain—at any rate, it gives me the impression—that in this instance Ministers were not ultimately and effectively in control. Secondly, nobody could say that the operations were especially secret. Thirdly, it is a regrettable fact that there has been some embarrassment to international relations. There may be some doubt about success, but I will leave that on one side.

This is one reason why we on the Opposition benches could not be content with the statement made by the Prime Minister last week. Because, cryptic though it was, it revealed through the disclaimer of direct responsibility and through the reference to disciplinary steps, that some wrong action had been taken by a Government servant without the authority and, indeed, apparently contrary to the desires of Ministers.

Now may I say a word about Ministerial responsibility in this matter. It is the custom for Ministers to cover up any decision by a civil servant; that is to say, normally the Minister not merely takes responsibility but appears to have taken that decision himself, whether, in fact, he did so or not. Even when this is not done and, of course, there are quite a number of occasions when it would be pedantic to insist that it should be done; when, in fact, a Minister comes to the House, and says, "One of my

[MR. GAITSKELL.] officials made a mistake," thereby implying that he, the Minister, was not directly responsible for that mistake, nevertheless it is a sound and vital constitutional principle that the Minister takes responsibility for what has happened.

That is a principle which I venture to say is fundamental to our democracy, because if we were to depart from it, it would imply that the Civil Service in some way or other was independent and not answerable to this House. Of course, the extent to which we condemn a Minister for an act of one of his officers, or a failure by one of his officers, obviously depends on the circumstances. There are minor occasions when a Minister admits that something has gone wrong and the House accepts it and the matter is left.

Another reason why we felt that we had to discuss this matter further was that other Departments apart from the Secret Service are apparently involved. There is no doubt that the Admiralty was heavily involved. Indeed, one newspaper goes so far as to say today that the Naval Intelligence Department was probably at the centre of the whole thing, and it may be that the Home Office also was involved—

The Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister for Welsh Affairs (Major Gwylim Lloyd-George) indicated dissent.

Mr. Gaitskell: I see the Home Secretary shaking his head, but I would draw his attention to one incident where police officers were involved.

Finally, may I explain that we are discussing this matter on this Motion with particular reference to the salary of the Prime Minister because, first, the right hon. Gentleman himself decided, in answering the Question last Wednesday, to take responsibility for this matter and, therefore, if we wanted to discuss it, that was the correct thing to do; and, secondly, if we had discussed it on the Admiralty Vote alone that would have narrowed the scope of the debate unduly.

Whatever we may feel about this incident, or series of incidents, none of us would ask that the Prime Minister should disclose what ought not to be disclosed, either because it might endanger our agents—one may as well use the word

for the people in our Secret Service—or because it would involve giving information away to a foreign Power, information which, in the opinion of the Government, should be kept from a foreign Power.

Subject to this, I venture to say that it is the duty of any Opposition in this democracy of ours to probe any weakness or what appear to be blunders or mistakes in Government administration. I feel confident that if hon. Members on the other side of the Committee had been in opposition, and a similar episode had occurred, they would, in pursuance of their duty, certainly have raised the matter in the House of Commons.

Subject to the qualification, an important one, which I made about security, I very much hope that the Prime Minister will tonight say all he possibly can to clear up the matter and allay the remaining anxieties. Whether or not we divide the Committee on this issue turns, frankly, entirely on what he can say to us this evening.

I now turn to the case itself. We have very little time and I certainly do not propose to go through the facts, or the apparent facts, in great detail, but the following seems reasonably clear. On 18th April, Commander Crabb went to Portsmouth and stayed at the Sallyport Hotel with another gentleman who registered in the name of Mr. Smith. The next day both of them left the hotel, Mr. Smith returning later to pay the bill and collect the luggage. From then onwards, Commander Crabb disappears. Two days later, the Portsmouth police appear at the hotel and tear out four pages of the hotel register, which of course, included the names of Commander Crabb and his companion. Ten days later the Admiralty issued the statement part of which I read to the Committee at the beginning of my remarks.

On 3rd May—four days afterwards—the Soviet Government sent a Note of protest to the British Government, and in this they made it plain that a protest had been made much earlier by the commanding officer of the Soviet ships in conversation with the chief of staff of the Portsmouth naval base. On that occasion, according to the Soviet Note, the Chief of Staff, who is Rear-Admiral Burnett, categorically rejected the possibility of the appearance of a frogman alongside the Soviet ships and stated that

at the time indicated there were no operations in the port involving the use of frogmen. The comment that I feel bound to make at this point is that this was clearly completely contrary to what the Admiralty itself was to say on 30th April.

The British Government in a Note which, according to Moscow, was delivered on 9th May, and presumably, therefore, was sent before the Prime Minister made his statement to us, expressed regret for the incident, a matter which, curiously enough, the Prime Minister did not mention in his statement to us the other day. Finally, we have the Prime Minister's statement to us, which is in the recollection of all of us and to which, therefore, I need not refer in detail. That is all I propose to say about the story of these events.

I wish now to make a few comments. I do not propose to go into great detail, as the newspapers have done. I do not propose to ask every conceivable question, such as, for instance, "Where did Commander Crabb get his diving gear?", "Why was not a younger man sent down if somebody had to go?", and, "What was it that Commander Crabb was trying to find out?" All these questions, and many others, have been asked in the newspapers. I repeat that I am not concerned with anything more than the central features of this business. Nor do I propose to say much about the international aspect of the matter. As the Prime Minister has made clear to the Soviet Union, it is a very regrettable episode, but for my part I fully accept, as I am sure we all do, the Prime Minister's disclaimer of Ministerial knowledge or approval. I should like to say that I am sure that that should be accepted as complete evidence of absolute good faith by the Soviet Government as well.

Nor do I feel, though others may differ from me on this, that this episode, serious as it is in certain aspects, and, indeed, deplorable as it was when one first heard about it, is likely to do permanent damage to our relations with the Soviet Government. We all know that the Russians are realists in these matters. There is not very much doubt that they, like other Governments, have their agents, and there have been various stories in the newspapers of similar

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occasions to which I will make no further reference.

I am concerned more with what appears to be the situation in the secret service and the forces which work with them because it seems to me that what has been suggested, at any rate by the Prime Minister's statement, and by what we know, reveals a very grave lack of control at home and, indeed, a most unsatisfactory state of affairs within this service.

It seems to me that a great deal turns upon the question of the level at which the decisions were taken. There was an idea at one time when the great bout of speculation was taking place in the Press that possibly the whole thing had been a private effort, that Commander Crabb, financed by a mysterious private organisation, had gone on this investigation and, indeed, that the Government had had nothing to do with it whatever.

Unfortunately—I say, "unfortunately"—the Prime Minister's statement shows, I think, conclusively that that cannot have been so. At least, if it were so, I can only say that it is a great pity that the Prime Minister did not make it clear earlier. I think that we must conclude from his statement—he will correct me if I am wrong—that presumably the Secret Service or a secret service and the Admiralty must have been mixed up in the plan from the start. Again, I ask at what sort of level was the decision taken, if a decision were taken, to make this kind of investigation. In particular, I think that the Prime Minister might be able to tell us how far this was a matter in which the Admiralty took the initiative.

Having said that, I would wish to pose, if I may, a few central questions which, I repeat, I hope that the Prime Minister will be able to answer within the limits that security permits. We all of us recall that when Mr. Bulganin and Mr. Khrushchev were coming here, a very great deal of attention was concentrated upon the security precautions in connection with their visit and Questions were asked in the House about the number of guards they were to have, and so on. One presumes that in taking these precautions, which we did not criticise and which we accepted, it must have been, must it not, the duty of the Admiralty to guard the Soviet vessels?

[MR. GAITSKELL.]

That is one of the extraordinary features of the whole business, because if it were the Admiralty's responsibility to guard these vessels, how was it that Commander Crabb, if it was he, was able to approach these vessels? One is bound to ask the question: Was the security guard very, very inadequate or was the guard in the secret of Commander Crabb's exploit?

Again, I come back to the question of the level. It is very difficult to understand how, that being the background, this kind of exploit could have been permitted unless it had been known to some fairly high-ranking officers. I put that as a supposition, and as the honest conclusion to which at the moment, I think, we are drawn by the facts. The second question I would like to ask is, first, what steps were taken, if I may repeat it, to guard these ships? The second question is, who authorised the Admiralty statement on 29th April, which is now seen to have been at variance with the statement of the Chief of Staff at Portsmouth to the Russian admiral, and which, incidentally, was also very much at odds with the Prime Minister's later statement? The third question that I want to put to the Prime Minister is about the strange business of the Portsmouth police descending upon the Sallyport Hotel and tearing out four pages of the register.

Can the Prime Minister tell us under what authority these officers acted? I have made some inquiry into the legal position, with the help of one or two of my hon. Friends, and, as I understand, this is the position. Under the Aliens Order, it is an obligation on any hotel keeper to keep a register of all persons over 16 years old staying at the premises. It is also an obligation on any person of this kind to enter his name, nationality and date of arrival, and the keeper of the hotel has to require him to do so. Furthermore, the keeper of the hotel has to preserve the register for a year after the last entry in it, and it is, of course, open to inspection by any police officer or person authorised by the Home Secretary.

The Portsmouth police came in—in fact, they seized part of this register, although, under the Aliens Order, it was the property of the hotel keeper who is under a statutory duty to preserve it. It

is indeed very hard, therefore, to see what right the police officers had to make the hotel keeper break the law in this way.

There is, of course, the additional piece of information—if it is correct—that the police officers warned the hotel keeper that if he resisted and refused to give up the register they would proceed against him the Official Secrets Act. In exactly what way would the Official Secrets Act come into this? There is, of course, provision under the Official Secrets Act under which it is an offence for a person to retain certain documents when the person having such a document in his possession or control retains it

"when he has no right to retain it or when it is contrary to his duty to retain it or fails to comply with any directions issued by"

lawful authority

"with regard to the return or disposal thereof."

I think we ought to take that as referring to Civil Service documents and documents of that kind. I am bound to say that it is very difficult to see how a hotel register can come within that particular Section. I would ask, if I may, because this is an important point, what explanation the Prime Minister can give us. I repeat that we realise the need for a Secret Service. We realise that the members of that Service have to go about their work in queer ways, but it is a matter of enormous importance that they should not be above the law. What, then, was the law under which they operated?

The next point I wish to ask relates to the Prime Minister's statement about disciplinary steps. Can the right hon. Gentleman tell us against whom and in what manner those steps have been taken? Were any steps taken, for instance, against Service personnel?

Finally, there is a question which I feel I must put out of regard for the relatives of Commander Crabb. Can the Prime Minister say whether the commander—on the assumption, of course, that he was the person involved—believed that the action which he took was fully approved, or did he realise that it was, as it were, purely a private enterprise undertaking? Did he know that there would be this very serious consequence if, in fact, it were discovered?

I will refer here against, if I may, to the statement of the British Government, or



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rather the letter of the British Government, to the Russian Government which seems to imply—as I say, I think out of fairness to Commander Crabb's relatives this is something that should be cleared up—that he swam to the Russian vessels without permission. The Note says:

"The frogman, who, as reported in the Soviet Note, was discovered from the Soviet ships swimming between the Soviet destroyers, was to all appearances Commander Crabb. His presence in the vicinity of the destroyers occurred without any permission whatever, and Her Majesty's Government express their regret for this incident."

If that were true and if, in fact, he had gone to Portsmouth simply on genuine trials not connected in any way with the Soviet vessels and had, on his own initiative, swum off to them, that, I think, is something which the Government ought to make plain. If it is not so, then, of course, it is a different matter.

To draw the conclusions, such as they are, which one can from this business, it is impossible for us on the hard information available to pass any final judgment. I do not seek to do so. I would still hope, frankly, that a fuller and more reassuring explanation were forthcoming from the Prime Minister, but I must tell him that so far, by what has been published in the Press, by what he has said and by what is in the exchange of Notes with the Soviet Government, an impression has been created, first, of the most deplorable lack of co-ordination and control between the Foreign Office, the Secret Service and the Admiralty; and, secondly, that an impression of unusual technical incompetence has also been created.

The business of the hotel register, which was bound to attract public attention to the whole matter, the way in which, apparently, before Commander Crabb went to Portsmouth there was a great deal of free talk by all sorts of people, the questioning at a later stage of Commander Crabb's friends, which is reported in some of the Press—none of this, I must say, gives one much confidence in the technical efficiency of the Service. Thirdly, I think that it gives an impression of a degree of political unawareness which is almost frightening.

I repeat that a lot depends on at what level these decisions were taken, but particularly in regard to the political aspects if, in fact, the decisions were taken at a

high level. Then it shows, as *The Times* said in a very penetrating leader:

"irresponsibility just where irresponsibility should not exist."

If, on the other hand, it was at a lower level, it suggests that the people there, the officers there, have got altogether out of hand.

I must say this to the Prime Minister, and I know he will accept it: it is his burden and responsibility to look after the Secret Service. These matters of which I have spoken and the reflections on the efficiency of Service co-ordination, and so on, which I have mentioned are essentially matters for the Prime Minister. I would ask him, is he satisfied in the light of what has happened with the staffing of the security services? What steps is he taking, or has he taken, to prevent this sort of thing happening again? Is he satisfied—I am sure he will not take offence at this at all—that he, the Prime Minister of the day, who has these enormous responsibilities over the whole field of government, is really in a position to be the only Minister to keep an adequate control on the Secret Service? Can he, in fact, do this job as it should be done directly himself?

Those are the questions we should like the Prime Minister to answer bearing in mind, I repeat, the security aspect, which cannot be overlooked. I have tried to put our case and our anxieties on this in as responsible a manner as I can. I realise to the full the delicate nature of the subject we are discussing very briefly this evening, but, while we must be careful and while we must be cautious, democracy also must be made to work. We, as the Parliament in a democracy, have the right to have our fears allayed, our anxieties extinguished; or at any rate we have the right to be satisfied that the Government are taking steps to put matters right.

8.49 p.m.

The Prime Minister (Sir Anthony Eden): The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Leeds, South (Mr. Gaitskell) has reminded us—and rightly reminded us, if I may say so—that it is a very rare proceeding to refuse to disclose public events or events which have become talked about merely on the ground that in the Government's judgment it is not in the public interest to do so.

[THE PRIME MINISTER.]

Of course, we live, as we all know, in an age of publicity, and in some quarters it seems to be thought that there is nothing which should be withheld from public examination, discussion and debate. That was not, I was glad to note, the right hon. Gentleman's position tonight. Nonetheless, Parliament has preserved the long-established convention that a responsible Minister may decline to give information, if, in his judgment, it is not in the public interest to do so.

We are dealing tonight, I must say frankly to the House, with circumstances in which no Government here or in any other country, I believe, would say more than I am prepared to say to the House tonight; nor is there anything contrary to our practice, as the House knows, in taking this action. It is often done in defence. A classic example was the atomic bomb, where the whole expenditure—£100 million—was concealed in the Estimates for a number of years.

Similarly in international affairs—let me say this, because the right hon. Gentleman asked a question—it is often contrary to the public interest to disclose the details of correspondence with a foreign Government or to reveal the course of negotiations with a foreign Government leading up to treaties or other agreements, and it is in any event the immemorial custom not to publish the receipt of a Note until the reply has been returned and received by the Power which sent the Note. I shall have something more to say about that in a moment.

Again, to take our domestic affairs, there are many things which my right hon. and gallant Friend the Home Secretary, for instance, is not obliged to state publicly. He has not to disclose the grounds on which he has decided to deport an alien or those on which he grants or refuses a certificate of naturalisation. I say this to show that I agree with the right hon. Gentleman; I think we are in agreement that there can be no dispute about the general principle that there are certain things which it is against the national interest to disclose.

The right hon. Gentleman has spoken very freely about the secret services and speculated about their control, their organisation, and their efficiency. I am

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sorry to have to say that I am not prepared to discuss those matters in the House. It is easy—and I am not complaining—for the right hon. Gentleman to suggest or imply that all is not well. I could not answer him, because I could not answer him either generally or in detail without disclosing matters which, as he must recognise, must remain secret. That is why it is not the practice and it never has been the practice to discuss these matters openly in the House, and I am not prepared to break that precedent.

I think it must be clear that it must be left to the discretion of Ministers to decide these matters. Only the Minister can judge; his discretion in this particular respect is absolute. It should be clear from this practice that the Minister cannot disclose the reasons for his decision. Obviously, if he were to disclose his reasons, it would be disclosing what he judged to be contrary itself to the public interest.

That is certainly the position in this instance, and therefore on this particular aspect of the matter I must tell the House now that I have not one word more to say than I announced on Wednesday. But I should like to comment on the second part of the statement which I made in the House last week and to which the right hon. Gentleman referred.

I then took the exceptional course of making it plain that what was done was done without the authority of Her Majesty's Ministers. That, of course, includes all Her Majesty's Ministers and all aspects of this affair. We all know, in fact, that many actions are taken by servants of the Crown for which the authority of Ministers is not asked and, of course, that must always be so in any complex society such as ours today. The right hon. Gentleman is perfectly correct in saying that on these occasions it is nonetheless accepted that Ministers of the Government, collectively, are responsible to Parliament for the actions of officials.

I pondered long before I departed from that axiom in this case, and I think that the Committee is, perhaps—if I may say so, entitled to know more of this topic in the light of what the right hon. Gentleman said. In this instance there were special circumstances which, I judged, compelled me to state that what happened, or was thought to have happened, had been done without the authority of Ministers.

At that time my colleagues and I had been conducting important discussions with the Soviet leaders. We were completely unaware of any episode of this kind. Had I not made that clear publicly, doubt would inevitably have been thrown on the sincerity of our position during those discussions. That is a very serious and a very exceptional situation, but it explains to the House why, on that account, I thought it right to take the very unusual course I did of making that statement.

That brings me to the third part of the statement which I made last week and to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred. Having made it clear that what was done without the authority of Ministers I also found it necessary to let it be known that disciplinary steps were being taken. That in itself is, in part, an answer to what the right hon. Gentleman has just said. It shows that the Government are determined that the proper measures of control and authority should be exercised by Ministers in all matters of this kind.

It has been suggested—and this was another point which the right hon. Gentleman made; and it has been made very much, too, in the Press—that by not informing the House on Wednesday last of our receipt of the Russian Note and of our reply thereto I was in some way holding back information of which the House ought to have been made aware. Of course, that was not so. The Soviet Note was delivered to the Foreign Office by messenger on Friday night, 4th May. The Foreign Secretary being away ill, I myself approved the answer to the Soviet Government on Wednesday morning. Of course, I was aware when I spoke to the House on Wednesday that the Soviet Government could not by then have received our reply. It would have been discourteous, to say the least, to have disclosed diplomatic correspondence in such circumstances, and I did not do so. So far as I know that has been the absolutely normal practice followed by all civilised Governments from the beginning of time.

At the same time, as the Committee will see, there is nothing in the least inconsistent between the reply we have given to the Soviet Government and my statement to the House. I carefully compared the two myself. The only difference

—and it is a difference—is that the reply to the Soviet Note deals with the actual queries raised in the Soviet communication, whereas my reply to the House was couched as a Parliamentary Answer.

Now, as to the later publication of the Note, I realised, of course, that the Soviet Government might publish both communications. Of course, I understood that. But even so, I submit to the Committee that it would not have been possible for me to communicate either the facts or the texts of the Notes in advance of the receipt of our reply by the Soviet Government.

But in this business I do not rest only on the national interest. The national interest is of first importance to us in the House of Commons, but there is also in this business a very important international interest, and I confess that all I care for is that the outcome of our discussions with the Soviet leaders should in truth prove to be, as I have said, the beginning of a beginning. I intend to safeguard that possibility at all costs. I believe that that is also in the minds of the Soviet leaders, and it is for that reason that I deplore this debate and will say no more.

9.2 p.m.

Mr. F. J. Bellenger (Bassetlaw): May I say this by way of preface. The Soviet Government is the last Government on earth to make an incident out of this affair. But, listening to the Prime Minister this evening, I would personally have been quite content if he had stopped short at the first part of his statement last week. If he had said that this was a matter of public security, I do not think anybody could have questioned him on his judgment.

The Prime Minister, however, went on to open all sorts of speculative fields, as he has done in the Press. Incidentally, it seems a paradox that only the public Press can discuss this matter more fully than Parliament. The Prime Minister can apparently get up and say, as he said tonight, "I have nothing to say," and Parliament is gagged at once. But the public Press is allowed to chase all sorts of hares and to question all sorts of people.

Where, possibly, the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister has made a mistake is in saying that he was going to take disciplinary action and not tell the

[MR. BELLENGER.]

House what that action was to be. We may be stopped from questioning the Prime Minister, I understand, because of public security considerations, but surely Parliament has a right to ask the Prime Minister whether he is acting rightly in taking disciplinary action against some person or persons unknown.

After all, Parliament is the protector of the individual, and, for all we know, the Prime Minister may be making a mistake, as the Government has done before, notably in the Burgess and Maclean case, which to a certain extent disclosed similar errors of judgment on the part of officials, and Parliament has no method of redress. All that can happen is that a committee of Privy Councillors is set up, some whitewashing statement is made and Parliament has to accept it.

I do not want to question the Prime Minister any more than my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, South (Mr. Gaitskell) did about the public security issue. What I say to the Prime Minister is this. Having been in charge of a Service Department myself, I should like to know whether he is quite sure that Ministers, and Service Ministers particularly, have complete control over their Secret Service, their Intelligence, as he led us to believe in what he said tonight. I should not be at all surprised if Service Ministers, in particular, do not know what their Intelligence does. Yet they are asked to take complete responsibility, even to signing for the expenditure of these secret service sections of their Departments, without knowing one iota of what is happening.

If we are to have a Secret Service, surely it should be secret. In this case, it has been nothing of the sort; the newspapers have been allowed to speculate. The Prime Minister may say we would surely not ask him to exercise any control over the public Press. He asks Parliament to be discreet; why does he not ask the newspapers to act in the same way? Every morning, as the Prime Minister knows, there is a conference at the Foreign Office which journalists are able to attend and question the official spokesmen. Why, therefore, can the Prime Minister, or somebody else, not make sure that not only is Parliament stopped from pursuing these matters fully,

but, also, that some restraint is exercised by the public Press, especially the popular Press, which may do a great deal of damage to international and national security?

Obviously, we cannot pursue this matter further by asking the Prime Minister to divulge what actually did happen; but, in spite of what he said, the public are disturbed at something happening which ought not to have happened, and the public is further of the opinion—as, I think, are many hon. Members of this Committee—that neither the Prime Minister nor his Departmental Ministers have over the Secret Service that control which Parliament voting the money would expect.

I would, therefore, ask the Prime Minister whether he can take some action to ensure that bureaucrats and public officials do not cut right across the policy of the Government of the day and cause international tension, as might have been possible in this case, which has enabled the Soviet Government to hold this country and Her Majesty's Government up to ridicule.

9.7 p.m.

Sir Patrick Spens (Kensington, South): I want to say a few words tonight on the constitutional aspect of this debate. I am old enough, and I have been long enough a Member of the House, to have been present on many an occasion when the House desired to get information from Ministers of the Crown and the Ministers claimed they were quite unable to answer on the ground of public security. Time after time, when that has happened, that has been an end of the matter. This is the first time in my experience that a responsible Opposition has, through a most responsible leader, in a most responsible speech, none the less done what I consider to be a most irresponsible thing. It has followed the line which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bassetlaw (Mr. Bellenger) condemns in the Press. It has tried to get information on a matter of public security by baiting the Prime Minister by a series of questions.

I very nearly rose on a point of order when the debate began, because I believe that this debate is contrary to all our precedents. I do not believe that ever before, when a solemn answer has been given on one day of the week that to

give information to the House will be against public policy and against the public interest, has the matter been carried further—still less, by a planned debate of this nature.

Mr. Percy Collick (Birkenhead): Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman think this Chamber is the Reichstag?

Sir P. Spens: Once the responsible Minister of the Crown, accepting full responsibility upon himself, has said it is impossible to give the public information because public security is involved, it behoves no other responsible citizen, be he inside or outside this Committee, to attempt to carry the matter further in this way. It is the responsibility of Ministers, and always has been to give, such a considered answer when the occasion arises. Until this debate was opened tonight, that practice had never been challenged in the way in which it is being challenged tonight.

Mr. Donald Chapman (Birmingham, Northfield) *rose*—

Sir P. Spens: Let me finish.

Responsibility lies with Ministers of the Crown for the safety of the country. It does not matter who the Ministers are. When they are in office and they make a statement that it is impossible to give information because to do so would be against public security, it is hopeless for the House, by a series of questions, by digging at the Minister concerned, to try to get him to go against his considered opinion. There was not one single question which was asked of the Prime Minister tonight, by either of the right hon. Gentlemen opposite, which had it been answered would not have resulted in my right hon. Friend disclosing the very thing that he has said he will not disclose.

Mr. Chapman: What about the police?

Sir P. Spens: The police are just as much a matter of public security as anything else. There is nobody who has lived as long as I have, and who has had as much to do with the law as I have, who does not know that time after time the police have to take action in the interests of public security.

Mr. Chapman: They are above the law.

Sir P. Spens: Of course, they are not above the law—they are right within the law. They are acting on their orders, but the orders which are given to them have been given them and cannot be disclosed for reasons of public security.

This goes to the very root of democracy. We have a General Election and we elect a Government, and we put into the seat of Government men whom the country chooses and trusts. They are responsible for the safety and security of the country. When they give their considered view that the details of something cannot be disclosed because it is a question of public security, then I say that every responsible citizen, inside the House and outside, must accept that, and accept it willingly, as the very basis of public security.

9.13 p.m.

Mr. John Dugdale (West Bromwich): The Prime Minister's statement that it was deplorable that there should be a debate has been answered by the very responsible manner in which my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition raised the debate. Had we not raised this subject, we as an Opposition would have been guilty of a grave dereliction of duty in not probing a little further into this affair.

The Prime Minister says that he cannot answer certain questions—of course, he cannot. We agree there are many questions he cannot answer.

Mr. Sydney Silverman (Nelson and Colne): But there are some questions which he can answer.

Mr. Dugdale: Yes, there are some questions which he can answer. Some of the questions which my right hon. Friend asked him he could answer.

The thing we are concerned with is what appears to be the great lack of co-ordination between different Departments. What was the aim of this operation? Its aim, apparently, was to get information for the Navy, and yet the Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth did not want the operation to take place. Surely he must have had some say. Surely somebody pays attention to what he says. When it was known, as it was known—it must have been known—by the Admiralty that this operation was to take place, surely the information should have been conveyed to the First Lord of the Admiralty.



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[MR. DUGDALE.]

The Prime Minister says that the First Lord of the Admiralty did not know. Naturally, I accept the Prime Minister's word for it, but that is a deplorable state of affairs when it is the First Lord of the Admiralty who has to make political decisions, if he has to do anything at all in the Admiralty. Surely he should be the person to make the decision.

How do we know that the naval officers at Portsmouth did know about it? Commander Crabb asked to borrow equipment from H.M.S. "Vernon" and he was refused. It was said there, "We shall not lend you the equipment". Obviously, he wanted to get accommodation of the most convenient character, and, naturally, he would have stayed in an Admiralty establishment, or else in a private house belonging to an officer of the Admiralty, if he could, but the Admiralty did not want him to do so, and the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, did not want him to. So he had to resort to this extraordinary business of staying in an hotel, and signing the register, while his companion signed it with the wrong name.

If the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, had really wanted this to take place, surely he would have given some help to Commander Crabb. Apparently, no help was given. If he did not want it to take place he would have conveyed his disapproval to the Admiralty. It seems very strange that one of the high rank of the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, should not be able somehow or another to reach a member of the Board of Admiralty. I cannot understand where the stoppage took place en route, but, apparently, there was a stoppage somewhere, and, apparently, the information never reached the Board of Admiralty.

These are some of the things for which we condemn the Government. I do not say we want to know about them. We shall not ask any questions about them. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh, no."] We will not. However, we do ask the Prime Minister to see that the Admiralty and the Secret Service are reorganised in such a way that these things do not occur again. Plainly, there has been a stoppage in the flow of information which should have flowed to the top, where decision lies, and it is the responsibility of the Prime Minister to see that this sort of thing does not happen again.

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The right hon. Gentleman says that he is not responsible for the details of Secret Service work. Of course he is not, and we do not want to ask him questions about them, but we do say he has the responsibility for choosing the people who should be at the top of the Secret Service, and we want to know that he has confidence in their judgment. We want to know, in particular, that when he says that disciplinary action has been taken it has been taken not against junior people but against those at the top for failing to control those below them. Perhaps these things have been done. I do not know. However, it seems to me likely that they may not have been done.

A few years ago there was a case which was called the Cichel Down case. It was a very different type of case, but as in this case a Minister was apparently misled by his officials and got into a great deal of difficulty. He had the courage to accept responsibility, and he resigned. His action was very creditable indeed, and we on this side of the Committee respect him for it, as, I think, many hon. Friends of his opposite do.

I think that the Prime Minister should have given us a very much clearer explanation, and that he must reassure us, if we are to rest content with what he says, that steps are being taken so to reorganise both the Secret Service and the Admiralty that this sort of thing can never happen again.

9.19 p.m.

Lieut.-Colonel J. K. Cordeaux (Nottingham, Central): The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bassetlaw (Mr. Bellenger) was deploring the publicity that this unfortunate episode has obtained in the Press. I am sure we all agree with him about that. However, I am sure we should not all agree with him when he suggests that it might have been obviated by a hint from Ministers. I think that would have been deplored by most people. The fault for that publicity lies mainly, I am sorry to say, with the members of the various secret services concerned.

In former times it was the first rule for all members of those services that the nature of their work must never be disclosed to another man or woman. In fact, it was their duty to carry the secrets of their adventures and triumphs with them to the grave. Unfortunately, lately

there have been some people who have not been living up to that tradition, but have been cashing in on their knowledge of secret work in the form of film rights, newspaper articles and books. Of course, if they do that, they cannot complain too much when equal publicity is given to their blunders and failures.

It was only last November that we were debating in the House another episode which concerned one of our secret services, in that case our security service. We were debating the failure in the Burgess and Maclean case, a failure which seemed all the worse when taken in conjunction with the previous cases of Dr. Nunn May, Dr. Fuchs, and Professor Pontecorvo, which lead us, in conjunction, to feel that we were engaged in dealing with a new type of enemy agent—the man who works, not for the old reason of personal gain, but because he puts loyalty to a political ideology before loyalty to his own country.

I believe that it would be wrong for us to lose faith in the services that are at present in the dock—that is to say, our positive espionage work—because, after all, this particular case, unlike the case of Burgess and Maclean, is, I suggest—there is certainly nothing to suggest otherwise—an isolated case. I do not think that on the strength of that we have any right to condemn our positive espionage services, whatever they may be, as inefficient.

Indeed, in answer to the right hon. Member for Leeds, South (Mr. Gaitskell), who did criticise them for inefficiency, I should like to condense what I wanted to say by quoting to him some remarks which were made about them by one of the very best known counter-espionage officers in Germany. He was the head of the German counter-espionage forces in Holland during the last war—a man who was himself responsible for one of the greatest disasters that ever befell our own underground forces. His name was Giske, and what he had to say about them was this:

"I was now facing my own problem, to peer westwards and discover what secret enemy activity was taking place beneath those stars, on those dark waters, and in the air above them—activity of an enemy famous for his long experience and unexcelled in his skill at the conduct of underground warfare. We had a whole series of instructive lessons the previous year in France, Norway and Greece, which had shown me clearly what it might

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mean to face the experienced toughness of the British Secret Service in combination with an *élite* of Dutch volunteers willing to risk their lives."

From that, I do not mean that I am trying to excuse the conduct of the operation which we have under discussion tonight. It would be impossible to do so. It seems to me that it was approved mistakenly and rashly and was ineptly carried out. Indeed, one feels alarmed for the higher direction of whatever service might be concerned when we consider that, after all, although initiative is one of the greatest qualities required in any such service, it seems incredible that such an operation could have been sanctioned except by the head of whatever organisation it was. It is strange and unfortunate that it was done even by such a person without informing someone of still more importance.

To the non-technical critic it seems that the positive information that might be obtained would in no way be commensurate with the seriousness of the act and the natural embarrassment to international relations which would follow. Lower down the scale in the planning and conduct of the operation, Commander Crabb was of an age where he should hardly have been chosen for an operation so hazardous and difficult. The entry in the hotel register and the clumsy attempt at deletion suggest a quality in trade craft to which it is best not to refer.

I referred just now to the embarrassment to international relations which such a failure might cause. I am certain that no stronger phrase would be here applicable. After all, the duty of every intelligence service is to obtain information about the war potential of other countries and it is the duty of secret intelligence services to obtain such information secretly. Every major Power, ourselves, the United States, Russia and all the rest, as the right hon. Member for Leeds, South said, employs such services and such services have been employed since the beginning of history.

Other weapons have come and gone. In the course of a few hundred years we have seen the bow and arrow give way to the cannon ball and gunpowder, and from that we have gone to high explosive, aircraft, tanks, poison gas and guided missiles to the final horror of the hydrogen bomb; but espionage has remained constant and an essential branch

[LIEUT.-COLONEL CORDEAUX.]
of war. The spy—the secret agent it is better to call him—has remained and has always been the oldest of all weapons, indeed, dating from 3,400 years ago, as we can read in Joshua, Chapter 2:

" . . . Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly. . . ."

For that reason, I am absolutely convinced that the Russians will attach very little importance to this episode. The right hon. Member for Leeds, South said so in so many words. I think that the Russians will be very little irritated by it, just as they will not expect us to be particularly irritated by the episode of Burgess and Maclean.

The two episodes were the same in that they were normal—I think I can use the word "normal"—use of espionage. They differed in that the Russian employment of Burgess and Maclean was brilliantly successful, whereas our effort to inspect the hull of the Russian cruiser was not. They differed in another respect, namely, that the Russian Government did know of the employment of Burgess and Maclean, whereas my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister did not know of the employment of Commander Crabb.

It is perfectly obvious that the Russians have neither the right, nor are they likely to object—I do not think that that is putting it too high—even in their hearts to what has happened. This unfortunate episode is, therefore, not in the least likely in any way to impair the value of the Russian visit to this country, nor in any way to detract from the magnificent job which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has done, not merely in organising that visit, but in the brilliant manner in which he conducted the negotiations here.

Finally, I want to add my tribute to the central figure of this operation. Whoever may have employed Commander Crabb, he obeyed his orders, he was a patriot and he was a brave man. In paying my tribute to him I would like to think that I am also paying it to all the thousands of other men of his profession, the other agents who have served and died for this country.

The secret agent in war, though not always in peace, is the bravest man of all. The ordinary soldier, sailor and airman face danger willingly, but they

face it in comradeship. The secret agent faces it alone. The soldier, the sailor and the airman face death willingly, but death is the worst thing they face. To the secret agent who is captured death is probably not to him the ultimate sacrifice which he hopes to avoid, but the merciful relief for which he prays. So I hope very much that though this unfortunate episode, the last in Commander Crabb's life, may be forgotten as soon as possible, he and his former record will never be forgotten.

9.32 p.m.

Mr. George Wigg (Dudley): If the obituary notice in *The Times* is to be believed, Commander Crabb rejoined the Royal Navy over a year ago. So I join with my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, South (Mr. Gaitskell) in paying a tribute to the memory of a very gallant officer.

When I listened to the concluding words of the Prime Minister I felt that this was a masterly exposition by a great Parliamentarian. The right hon. Gentleman had control of the House and was saying to us that the national interest must be paramount but, over and above that, the one thing he wanted is to get agreement with the Russians. That is the recipe of the Prime Minister tonight, his excuse for trying to rescue his party from a difficult position—[An HON. MEMBER: "Try to rescue yourself."] I shall come to that in a moment, with no holds barred.

Those noble words were not the words of the handout issued by the Conservative Party Central Office of his Perth speech last week. There the right hon. Gentleman could not resist a cheap party jibe. The Prime Minister said:

"To be strong you do not need to be mute; to be firm, you do not need to be rude."

There, of course, the Prime Minister was not talking about Anglo-Soviet relations as something that transcended even the national interest; the right hon. Gentleman was seeking to make party capital at the lowest possible level. I do not complain of that but, of course, if the right hon. Gentleman says that at Perth and then makes the peroration that he does tonight, perhaps I shall be forgiven if the thought passes through my mind—he is an able Parliamentarian but he is also a complete humbug.

What the hon. and gallant Member for Nottingham, Central (Lieut.-Colonel Cordeaux) said spelled out for the right hon. Gentleman that neither the First Lord nor the First Sea Lord should be holding their present offices. Because, without pressing the Government on any point of secrecy, it is undeniable that on the night of 29th April a senior Member of the Board of Admiralty, either political or naval, must have authorised the statement that Commander Crabb had met his death. If, therefore, a Service Department has to disclose to the country and to the world that operations have been undertaken at a delicate stage of international negotiations without the knowledge or consent of either the political or the Service chiefs, then either or both, without waiting for any prompting from Conservative back benchers, should tender their resignations to the Prime Minister.

The central point of this story is not what Commander Crabb was up to or who instructed him, but the communiqué of the night of 29th April, because there the Admiralty, without being pressed and without any Press prompting, volunteered the information that it was responsible for what happened to Commander Crabb.

There is one other very serious matter which I ask the Prime Minister to believe that I feel about as sincerely as he does. I am desperately concerned about the state of the defences of this country. I believe our defences to be deplorably weak in all aspects despite the fact that very large sums of public money have been spent. It is my belief, as I watch the continuous stream of propaganda that is being poured out, that the Admiralty is fighting a rearguard action to justify an annual expenditure of £350 million.

What did Commander Crabb and those who instructed him hope to find out? Surely it was in the hope of trying to justify the Admiralty view that is being put across to the public that the Russian fleet is a menace, which justifies the maintaining of our expensive naval forces. I believe that such an undertaking places the public interest in jeopardy, for decisions as to how defence expenditure is to be made is a matter for calm and deliberate choice. Therefore, from every point of view this opera-

tion and the Government's attitude must be condemned.

Turning to the speech of the right hon. and learned Member for Kensington, South (Sir P. Spens), I must say that I really was shocked. He is a learned and highly respected Member of this House. I am very loath indeed to say this, but the arguments that he used were the kind of arguments that a lickspittle in the Nazi Party would have used if he had wanted to curry favour with Hitler.

9.37 p.m.

Sir James Hutchison (Glasgow, Scotstoun): The main burden of the speech of the right hon. Member for Bassetlaw (Mr. Bellenger) rested on his criticism that the lack of further information from my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister prevented hon. Members from being able to do what the Press is able to do, namely to probe and speculate. I think that criticism has been very completely answered by the speeches which have been delivered from both sides of the Committee, in which speculation has run riot.

I should like to make an appeal. This is a period of restraint and of appeals for restraint, and I think that nothing but good could come if we followed that example after the debate is concluded. I would go further and ask that the whole theme be muted down. We have paid our tributes to a gallant man, and I think that thereafter the whole story should be allowed to lapse into the shadows which are its proper background.

My reasons for asking that are as follows. First, let us be realists. I think that most hon. Members who have spoken tonight have recognised that we are not by any means the only nation with a secret service. All nations have secret services, and the job of these services is to get secret information. Believe me, the Russians are no amateurs in this. Can that be why they are so little worried by the whole incident?

I was greatly puzzled to discover from the speech by my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Nottingham, Central (Lieut.-Colonel Cordeaux) whether he felt that this was a matter of great irritation internationally or that it would count for nothing at all. At the beginning of his speech he said the first thing, and at the end he said the second.

[Sir J. HUTCHISON.]

It seems to me that the Russian leaders have treated the incident in its proper proportion. It is true that a protest was made and an apology was sent, but they appear to be much more prepared to allow the matter to fade into the background where it belongs than are our Press and the Opposition tonight. The longer this matter goes on the more chance is there of friction being developed—international friction which, I believe, both sides of the House are anxious to dispel.

There is no doubt that the visit of the two Russian leaders did good. In this matter protocol has been followed properly in the relationship and the messages which have passed between the two countries. Is it for this reason that one of the newspapers was able to write that Marshal Bulganin and Mr. Khrushchev were too pleased with the London visit to make an issue out of this curious and unexpected lapse? That is the answer, I think, to the right hon. Gentleman who was so worried, in the speech which we listened to this evening, as to whether in fact international friction had been created.

Mr. Chapman : Did not the Prime Minister end by saying that what he cared for most was that this matter should not disturb international relations and, therefore, on that account, refused to talk about the matter any further?

Sir J. Hutchison : I am saying that that that is the proper way to treat it. The more we argue about a thing like this the more we tend to upset international relations.

The other reason why I think that this matter should be treated with restraint and, indeed, with oblivion is that this thirst for unusual and rather obscure knowledge does nothing but harm to the Secret Service itself. Either we have a Secret Service or we do not. If we are going to have one, do not let us go on trying to persuade it to do a sort of striptease act and cast aside one veil after another. The methods and organisation of the Secret Service are very important matters, and the more we discuss and probe them, the more we tend to reveal, as would have happened if my right hon. Friend had been led on a little further, and that does nothing but damage to the service. We are making the task of

those who are serving and those engaged on a delicate and sometimes dangerous task all the more difficult. Discussion and limelight can do nothing but harm, and limelight is the very last thing that any one employed in this sort of work could possibly want to have.

What good, then, is this debate going to do? If it was a question of showing up gaucherie—and there has been gaucherie—that has been noted and will be put right. If it was disciplinary action that was wanted that has already been announced, and surely the right hon. Gentleman will accept that if disciplinary action is used it will be used on the person on whom it should fall and not on some one else. [An HON. MEMBER: "Which one?"] There can be no purpose in using disciplinary action in any other way. If, on the other hand, the purpose is to diminish the stature of the Prime Minister, the debate has failed, or if hon. Gentlemen opposite are seeking for another Minister's head on a charger then the debate will equally have failed. There can be no good purpose in deepening this probe any further, and I hope that the matter will be allowed to fade into oblivion.

9.44 p.m.

Mr. R. H. S. Crossman (Coventry, East): I think that the best answer given to the hon. Member for Scotstoun (Sir J. Hutchison) was given by his hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Nottingham, Central (Lieut.-Colonel Cordeaux). I think that my right hon. and hon. Friends will agree with me when I say that it is no disparagement of them to say that no speech was more full of intimate, expert knowledge. Here was someone who knew what he was talking about, someone very close to Intelligence who could be splendidly frank, splendidly indiscreet and really tell the Prime Minister what was wrong. We need only to read that speech in HANSARD tomorrow to see the very serious problems which we raised, and they are not to do, as the hon. and gallant Member rightly says, with the Secret Service.

I want to concentrate on the part played by the Admiralty in this affair. My hon. Friend the Member for Dudley (Mr. Wigg) partly raised this point and I want to go on from where he left off. With regard to the communiqué of 29th April, is it really said that the First Lord



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of the Admiralty or the gentlemen down here did not know about it? Is it said that they had absolutely no knowledge of it, and that it is the sort of thing for which, if one has no knowledge of it, one refuses responsibility?

I can appreciate refusing responsibility for an act of the Secret Service, but I cannot understand shelving the responsibility for issuing a public communiqué which has been proved to be a lie, a deceit, issued by the Admiralty in grave contradiction to what had been stated to the Russian visiting admiral. This is not a question of the Secret Service, but either of the incompetence or lies of Ministers. Either they did not know that the communiqué was being issued and the services trusted them so little that even at that late hour they did not inform the Minister of the disasters going on, ostensibly under their responsibility, or they knew and they were not telling the whole truth.

I must say that the more I heard in this unctious debate about national and international safety, the more I gravely suspected that there were some party interests being defended. I began to suspect that when the Prime Minister took over the matter. It was a very convenient way to prevent questions being put to representatives of the Admiralty who might have defended themselves very much worse than the Prime Minister who, whatever his other defects, is a brilliant Parliamentarian. His was a magnificent performance. He thought only of international interests.

The right hon. Gentleman never dreamed of considering the problem of the First Sea Lord, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Civil Lord or the Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty. Nothing to do with them. The right hon. Gentleman was thinking solely in terms of international interests. He was not thinking about the unfortunate Home Secretary. What has it got to do with Anglo-Russian interests to discover that those four pages were torn out of the register? Nothing whatever. Have we heard why the police went to the hotel? No, this is all in the realm of international interest. But it is not at all.

I support one other thing said by the hon. Gentleman opposite. I think it is very hard lines on people who work in secret departments. When something goes wrong they are blamed. If this

business had gone right, would there have been all this talk of disciplinary action? Supposing that Commander Crabb had come back safely from the mission, should we then have had the Prime Minister outraged by what he had done? What odious hypocrisy. There would have been medals for success, but when there is a slip-up, and Ministers are in trouble, then we have all the security and all the hocus-pocus about "I cannot tell you." Because somebody who is a politician and also an official is in trouble, the cover-up starts.

I think that the people of this country have a perfect right, when they suspect something as dirty as that, to express their anxieties. Of course, we cannot ultimately know the truth, but is it really the Opposition's fault that this matter has come to light? There has been a deluge of publicity on the Secret Service from the Admiralty. The Admiralty did that and the Prime Minister then contradicted the Admiralty and made matters worse confounded by giving his own peculiar version of his own self-sacrifice. He said that if any Minister had known, if any responsible civil servant had known, they would never have dreamt of allowing this to happen. I wonder.

We have lived for a long period in the cold war. Speeches have been made in this House describing the Russians as the enemy, and saying that there is no possibility of negotiating with them. Speeches were made by the Prime Minister, a short time ago, describing as appeasement what he is now doing. For years we have lived in an atmosphere in which the idea of treating the Russians not as an enemy to be spied on was positively disloyal. I cannot find it surprising that some members of the Secret Service have not caught up with the change of front of the Government, which, suddenly, is all enamoured of negotiation.

I can remember the time when the right hon. Member for Woodford (Sir W. Churchill) first suggested a high-level conference and his Tory colleagues howled him down and tried to sabotage the conference. They succeeded in preventing us having a conference for years. [HON. MEMBERS: "Nonsense."] I suspect that some members of the Secret Service, and possibly some high officials in the Admiralty, are just a bit old-fashioned. They are still living in the

[**MR. CROSSMAN.**] cold war and taking seriously the directive of the Tory Government when they came to power. Even some of my colleagues have constantly told me that the Russians must be regarded simply and solely as enemies of civilisation who understand nothing but the language of strength, and with whom it is hopeless to believe that the word "peace" is possible. If that is true, what is wrong with sending frogmen under their cruisers? If it is not true, some hon. Members opposite will have to withdraw thousands of words they have been speaking in the last ten years.

Mr. Cyril Osborne (Louth): Surely the hon. Member will agree that in the last three years there has been a change of Government in Russia and a different policy there.

Mr. Crossman: The hon. Member and I are in surprising agreement on this subject. We probably agree with the right hon. Member for Woodford who tells us that the Russians ought to join in the spirit of N.A.T.O. The hon. Member and I agree at the moment, but other hon. Members opposite will only agree two years later. That is the point I am making. He and I have gone far on this subject, but the Prime Minister was not one of the advance guard, nor were the other right hon. and hon. Members on the Front Bench. They were by no means in the advance guard, and it ill becomes them to rebuke members of the Civil Service who just do not understand the new world of international co-operation in which the Prime Minister so fervently believes.

If the Prime Minister believes that it was outrageous to send that frogman then there are one or two other outrageous things which he might polish up at the same time. We seem to be still scared stiff of the Russians disarming for fear they might be tricking us into something. If it is really a crime

to send a frogman underneath their ships and the Prime Minister has dismissed those who are responsible, I begin to see other changes which might be made in our foreign policy. If they are now our friends, I hope there will be full support for the speech of the right hon. Member for Woodford at Aachen, but I have not heard a word of support from the Prime Minister for that. The Prime Minister says that we must treat the Russians as allies in the noble venture of resisting aggression all round. If that is the Prime Minister's new spirit, I see great beginnings in this debate—but, of course, I do not believe a word of it. I know that this is a cover-up. I know perfectly well that if it had been successful and the whole affair had not leaked out, no disciplinary action would have been taken whatever. I know that this is merely the blundering of a politician in the Admiralty. [**HON. MEMBERS:** "And the First Lord".] We will not mention the First Lord.

That is the whole problem; that is why we have all these solicitudes for international relations in order to cover up one of the biggest bungles ever committed by a Service Department.

Mr. Gaitskell: To mark our disapproval of what the hon. and gallant Member for Nottingham, Central (Lieut.-Colonel Cordeaux) so well described as "this ill-conceived and unhappy operation," and in protest against the Prime Minister's complete refusal to answer any of our questions, many of which, in our opinion at least, could well have been answered without endangering public security at all, we shall be obliged to divide the Committee.

I beg to move, That Class 1, Vote 4, Treasury and Subordinate Departments, and Navy Estimates, Vote 12, Admiralty Office, be reduced by £5.

Question put, That a sum not exceeding £15 be granted for the said Service:—

The Committee divided: Ayes 229, Noes 316.

Division No. 181.]

Ainsley, J. W.
Albu, A. H.
Allaun, Frank (Salford, E.)
Allen, Arthur (Bosworth)
Allen, Scholesfield (Crewe)
Anderson, Frank
Awbery, S. S.
Bacon, Miss Alice
Baird, J.

33 D 36

AYES

Balfour, A.
Bellenger, Rt. Hon. F. J.
Bence, C. R. (Dunbartonshire, E.)
Benn, Hn. Wedgwood (Bristol, S.E.)
Benson, G.
Beswick, F.
Bevan, Rt. Hon. A. (Ebbw Vale)
Blackburn, F.
Blenkinsop, A.

[9.56 p.m.]

Boardman, H.
Bottomley, Rt. Hon. A. G.
Bowden, H. W. (Leicester, S.W.)
Bowles, F. G.
Boyd, T. C.
Braddock, Mrs. Elizabeth
Brookway, A. F.
Broughton, Dr. A. D. D.
Brown, Rt. Hon. George (Belper)

Brown, Thomas (Ince)
 Burke, W. A.
 Butler, Herbert (Hackney, C.)
 Butler, Mrs. Joyce (Wood Green)
 Callaghan, L. J.
 Castle, Mrs. B. A.
 Champion, A. J.
 Chapman, W. D.
 Chetwynd, G. R.
 Clunie, J.
 Coldrick, W.
 Collick, P. H. (Birkenhead)
 Collins, V. J. (Shoreditch & Finsbury)
 Corbet, Mrs. Freda
 Cove, W. G.
 Craddock, George (Bradford, S.)
 Cronin, J. D.
 Crossman, R. H. S.
 Daines, P.
 Dalton, Rt. Hon. H.
 Darling, George (Hillsborough)
 Davies, Ernest (Enfield, E.)
 Davies, Harold (Leek)
 Davies, Stephen (Merthyr)
 Deer, C.
 de Freitas, Geoffrey
 Delargy, H. J.
 Dodds, N. N.
 Donnelly, D. L.
 Dugdale, Rt. Hon. John (W. Brmwh)
 Ede, Rt. Hon. J. C.
 Edelman, M.
 Edwards, Rt. Hon. John (Brighouse)
 Edwards, Rt. Hon. Ness (Caerphilly)
 Edwards, Robert (Bilston)
 Evans, Albert (Islington, S.W.)
 Evans, Edward (Lowestoft)
 Evans, Stanley (Wednesbury)
 Fernyhough, E.
 Finch, H. J.
 Fletcher, Eric
 Fraser, Thomas (Hamilton)
 Gaitskell, Rt. Hon. H. T. N.
 Gibson, C. W.
 Gordon Walker, Rt. Hon. P. C.
 Greenwood, Anthony
 Grenfell, Rt. Hon. D. R.
 Grey, C. F.
 Griffiths, David (Rother Valley)
 Griffiths, Rt. Hon. James (Llanelli)
 Griffiths, William (Exchange)
 Hale, Leslie
 Hall, Rt. Hon. Clennil (Coile Valley)
 Hamilton, W. W.
 Hannan, W.
 Hastings, S.
 Hayman, F. H.
 Healey, Denis
 Henderson, Rt. Hon. A. (Rwly Regis)
 Herbison, Miss M.
 Hobson, C. R.
 Houghton, Douglas
 Howell, Charles (Perry Barr)
 Howell, Denis (All Saints)
 Hughes, Emrys (S. Ayrshire)
 Hughes, Hector (Aberdeen, N.)
 Hunter, A. E.
 Hynd, H. (Ascrington)

Irving, S. (Dartford)
 Isaacs, Rt. Hon. G. A.
 Janner, B.
 Jay, Rt. Hon. D. P. T.
 Jeger, George (Goole)
 Jeger, Mrs. Lena (Holbn & St.Pnos, S.)
 Jenkins, Roy (Stechford)
 Johnson, James (Rugby)
 Jones, Rt. Hon. A. Creech (Wakfield)
 Jones, David (The Hartlepoons)
 Jones, Elwyn (W. Ham, S.)
 Jones, Jack (Rotherham)
 Jones, J. Idwal (Wrexham)
 Jones, T. W. (Merioneth)
 Kenyon, C.
 Key, Rt. Hon. C. W.
 Lawson, G. M.
 Ledger, R. J.
 Lee, Frederick (Newton)
 Lee, Miss Jennie (Cannock)
 Lever, Harold (Cheetham)
 Lever, Leslie (Ardwick)
 Lewis, Arthur
 Lindgren, G. S.
 Lipton, Lt.-Col. M.
 Logan, D. G.
 Mabon, Dr. J. Dickson
 MacColl, J. E.
 Melnes, J.
 McKay, John (Wallsend)
 McLeavy, Frank
 MacPherson, Malcolm (Stirling)
 Mahon, Simon
 Mallalieu, E. L. (Brigg)
 Marquand, Rt. Hon. H. A.
 Mason, Roy
 Mayhew, C. P.
 Mellish, R. J.
 Messer, Sir F.
 Mikardo, Ian
 Mitchellson, G. R.
 Monslow, W.
 Moody, A. S.
 Mori, D. L.
 Moss, R.
 Moyle, A.
 Mulley, F. W.
 Neal, Harold (Bolsover)
 Noel-Baker, Francis (Swindon)
 Oliver, C. H.
 Oram A. E.
 Orbach, M.
 Oswald, T.
 Owen, W. J.
 Paget, R. T.
 Palling, Rt. Hon. W. (Dearne Valley)
 Palling, Will T. (Dewsbury)
 Palmer, A. M. F.
 Pargiter, C. A.
 Parker, J.
 Parkin, B. T.
 Paton, J.
 Plummer, Sir Leslie
 Poppewell, E.
 Price, J. T. (Westhoughton)
 Price, Philips (Gloucestershire, W.)
 Probert, A. R.
 Proctor, W. T.

Pryde, D. J.
 Pursey, Cmdr. H.
 Rankin, John
 Redhead, E. C.
 Reeves, J.
 Reid, William
 Robens, Rt. Hon. A.
 Roberts, Albert (Normanton)
 Roberts, Goronwy (Caernarvon)
 Robinson, Kenneth (St. Pancras, N.)
 Rogers, George (Kensington, N.)
 Ross, William
 Shawcross, Rt. Hon. Sir Hartley
 Short, E. W.
 Shurmer, P. L. E.
 Silverman, Julius (Aston)
 Silverman, Sydney (Nelson)
 Skelington, A. M.
 Slater, Mrs. H. (Stoke, N.)
 Slater, J. (Sedgefield)
 Smith, Ellis (Stoke, S.)
 Snow, J. W.
 Sorensen, R. W.
 Sparks, J. A.
 Steele, T.
 Stewart, Michael (Fulham)
 Stokes, Rt. Hon. R. R. (Ipswich)
 Stones, W. (Consett)
 Strachey, Rt. Hon. J.
 Strauss, Rt. Hon. George (Vauxhall)
 Stross, Dr. Barnett (Stoke-on-Trent, C.)
 Summerskill, Rt. Hon. E.
 Swingle, S. T.
 Sylvester, C. O.
 Taylor, Bernard (Mansfield)
 Taylor, John (West Lothian)
 Thomas, Iorwerth (Rhondda, W.)
 Thomson, George (Dundee, E.)
 Timmons, J.
 Tomney, F.
 Turner-Samuels, M.
 Ungood-Thomas, Sir Lynn
 Viant, S. P.
 Warbey, W. N.
 Watkins, T. E.
 Weitzman, D.
 Wells, Percy (Faversham)
 Walls, William (Walsall, N.)
 West, D. C.
 Wheeldon, W. E.
 White, Mrs. Eirene (E. Flint)
 White, Henry (Derbyshire, N.E.)
 Wigg, George
 Wilcock, Group Capt. C. A. B.
 Wilkins, W. A.
 Willey, Frederick
 Williams, David (Neath)
 Williams, Rev. Llywelyn (Ab'tillery)
 Willie, Eustace (Edinburgh, E.)
 Wilson, Rt. Hon. Harold (Huyton)
 Winterbottom, Richard
 Woodburn, Rt. Hon. A.
 Woolf, R. E.
 Yates, V. (Ladywood)
 Younger, Rt. Hon. K.
 Zilliacus, K.

TELLERS FOR THE AYES :
 Mr. Simmons and Mr. Holmes.

NOES

Agnew, Cmdr, P. G.
 Aitken, W. T.
 Allan, R. A. (Paddington, S.)
 Alport, C. J. M.
 Amery, Julian (Preston, N.)
 Amory, Rt. Hon. Heathcoat (Tiverton)
 Anstruther-Gray, Major W. J.
 Arbuthnot, John
 Armstrong, C. W.
 Ashton, H.
 Astor, Hon. J. J.
 Atkins, H. E.
 Baldeek, Lt.-Cmdr. J. M.

Baldwin, A. E.
 Baimiel, Lord
 Banks, Col. C.
 Barber, Anthony
 Barlow, Sir John
 Barter, John
 Baxter, Sir Beverley
 Bell, Philip (Bolton, E.)
 Bell, Ronald (Bucks, S.)
 Bennett, F. M. (Torquay)
 Bennett, Dr. Reginald
 Bevins, J. R. (Texteth)
 Bidgood, J. C.

Biggs-Davison, J. A.
 Birch, Rt. Hon. Nigel
 Bishop, F. P.
 Black, C. W.
 Body, R. F.
 Boothby, Sir Robert
 Bossom, Sir A. C.
 Boyd-Carpenter, Rt. Hon. J. A.
 Boyle, Sir Edward
 Braine, B. R.
 Braithwaite, Sir Albert (Marrow, W.)
 Bromley-Davenport, Lt.-Col. W. H.
 Brooks, Rt. Hon. Henry

Brooman-White, R. C.
 Browns, J. Nixon (Craigton)
 Bryan, P.
 Buchan-Hepburn, Rt. Hon. P. G. T.
 Bullus, Wing Commander E. E.
 Burden, F. F. A.
 Butcher, Sir Herbert
 Butler, Rt. Hon. R.A. (Saffron Walden)
 Campbell, Sir David
 Carr, Robert
 Cary, Sir Robert
 Channon, H.
 Chichester-Clark, R.
 Churchill, Rt. Hon. Sir Winston
 Clarke, Brig. Terence (Portsmouth, W.)
 Cole, Norman
 Conant, Maj. Sir Roger
 Cooper, Sqn. Ldr. Albert
 Cordeaux, Lt.-Col. J. K.
 Corfield, Capt. F. V.
 Craddock, Beresford (Spelthorne)
 Crouch, R. F.
 Crowder, Petre (Ruislip—Northwood)
 Cunningham, Knox
 Currie, C. B. H.
 Daneo, J. C. G.
 Davies, Rt. Hon. Clement (Montgomery)
 D'Avigdor-Goldsmid, Sir Henry
 Deedes, W. F.
 Digby, Simon Wingfield
 Dodds-Parker, A. D.
 Donaldson, Cmdr. C. E. McA.
 Doughty, C. J. A.
 Drayson, C. B.
 du Cann, E. D. L.
 Dugdale, Rt. Hon. Sir T. (Richmond)
 Duncan, Capt. J. A. L.
 Duthie, W. S.
 Eccles, Rt. Hon. Sir David
 Eden, Rt. Hon. Sir A. (Warwick & L'm'tn)
 Eden, J. B. (Bournemouth, West)
 Emmet, Hon. Mrs. Evelyn
 Erroll, F. J.
 Farey-Jones, F. W.
 Fell, A.
 Finlay, Graeme
 Fisher, Nigel
 Fleetwood-Hesketh, R. F.
 Fletcher-Cooke, C.
 Fort, R.
 Foster, John
 Fraser, Hon. Hugh (Stone)
 Fraser, Sir Ian (M'ombe & Lonsdale)
 Freeth, D. K.
 Gammons, Sir David
 Garner-Evans, E. H.
 George, J. C. (Pollak)
 Gibson-Watt, D.
 Gover, D.
 Godber, J. B.
 Cough, C. F. H.
 Cower, H. R.
 Graham, Sir Fergus
 Grant, W. (Woodside)
 Grant-Ferris, Wg.Cdr. R. (Nantwich)
 Green, A.
 Cresham Cooke, R.
 Crimston, Hon. John (St. Albans)
 Crimston, Sir Robert (Westbury)
 Grosvenor, Lt.-Col. R. G.
 Curden, Harold
 Hall, John (Wycombe)
 Hare, Rt. Hon. J. H.
 Harris, Frederic (Croydon, N.W.)
 Harris, Reader (Heston)
 Harrison, A. B. C. (Malden)
 Harrison, Col. J. H. (Eye)
 Harvey, Air Cdre. A. V. (Macclesfield)
 Harvey, Ian (Harrow, E.)
 Harvey, John (Walthamstow, E.)
 Harvie-Watt, Sir George
 Hay, John
 Head, Rt. Hon. A. H.
 Heald, Rt. Hon. Sir Lionel
 Henderson, John (Guthart)
 Hicks-Beach, Maj. W. W.

Hill, Mrs. E. (Wythenshawe)
 Hill, John (S. Norfolk)
 Hinchingsbrooke, Viscount
 Holland-Martin, C. J.
 Hope, Lord John
 Hornsby-Smith, Miss M. P.
 Horobin, Sir Ian
 Horsbrugh, Rt. Hon. Dame Florence
 Howard, Gerald (Cambridgeshire)
 Howard, Hon. Grville (St. Ives)
 Howard, John (Test)
 Hudson, Sir Austin (Lewisham, N.)
 Hudson, W. R. A. (Hull, N.)
 Hughes Hallett, Vice-Admiral J.
 Hughes-Young, M. H. C.
 Hulbert, Sir Norman
 Hurd, A. R.
 Hutchison, Sir Ian Clark (E'b'gh, W.)
 Hutchison, Sir James (Seotstoun)
 Hyde, Montgomery
 Hylton-Foster, Sir H. B. H.
 Iremonger, T. L.
 Irvine, Bryant Godman (Rye)
 Jenkins, Robert (Dulwich)
 Jennings, J. C. (Burton)
 Jennings, Sir Roland (Hallam)
 Johnson, Dr. Donald (Carlisle)
 Johnson, Eric (Blackley)
 Johnson, Howard (Kempdown)
 Jones, Rt. Hon. Aubrey (Hall Green)
 Joseph, Sir Keith
 Joynson-Hicks, Hon. Sir Lancelot
 Kaberry, D.
 Keegan, D.
 Kerby, Capt. H. B.
 Kerr, H. W.
 Kershaw, J. A.
 Kimball, M.
 Kirk, P. M.
 Lagden, C. W.
 Lambert, Hon. G.
 Lambton, Viscount
 Lancaster, Col. C. G.
 Langford-Holt, J. A.
 Leather, E. H. C.
 Leavey, J. A.
 Legge-Bourke, Maj. E. A. H.
 Legh, Hon. Peter (Petersfield)
 Lennox-Boyd, Rt. Hon. A. T.
 Lindsay, Hon. James (Devon, N.)
 Lindsay, Martin (Solihull)
 Linstead, Sir H. N.
 Llewellyn, D. T.
 Lloyd, Rt. Hon. G. (Sutton Coldfield)
 Lloyd, Maj. Sir Guy (Renfrew, E.)
 Lloyd-George, Maj. Rt. Hon. C.
 Longden, Gilbert
 Low, Rt. Hon. A. R. W.
 Lucas, Sir Jocelyn (Portsmouth, S.)
 Lucas-Tooth, Sir Hugh
 McAdden, S. J.
 Macdonald, Sir Peter
 Mackeson, Brig. Sir Harry
 Mackie, J. H. (Galloway)
 McLaughlin, Mrs. P.
 Maclay, Rt. Hon. John
 Maclean, Fitzroy (Lancaster)
 Macleod, Rt. Hon. Iain (Enfield, W.)
 MacLeod, John (Ross & Cromarty)
 Macmillan, Rt. Hon. Harold (Bromley)
 Macpherson, Niall (Dumfries)
 Maddan, Martin
 Maitland, Cdr. J. F. W. (Horncastle)
 Maitland, Hon. Patrick (Lanark)
 Manningham-Buller, Rt. Hon. Sir R.
 Markham, Major Sir Frank
 Marlowe, A. A. H.
 Marples, A. E.
 Marshall, Douglas
 Mathew, R.
 Maude, Angus
 Maudling, Rt. Hon. R.
 Mawby, R. L.
 Maydon, Lt.-Comdr, S. L. C.
 Medlicott, Sir Frank

Milligan, Rt. Hon. W. R.
 Molson, A. H. E.
 Moore, Sir Thomas
 Morrison, John (Salisbury)
 Mott-Radelyffe, C. E.
 Nabarro, C. D. N.
 Nairn, D. L. S.
 Neave, Airey
 Nicholls, Harmor
 Nicholson, Godfrey (Farnham)
 Nicolson, N. (B'n'm'th, E. & Chr'oh)
 Nield, Basil (Chester)
 Noble, Comdr. A. H. P.
 Nutting, Rt. Hon. Anthony
 Oakshott, H. D.
 O'Neill, Hn. Phelim (Co. Antrim, N.)
 Ormsby-Core, Hon. W. D.
 Orr, Capt. L. P. S.
 Orr-Ewing, Charles Ian (Hendon, N.)
 Orr-Ewing, Sir Ian (Weston-S-Mare)
 Osborne, C.
 Page, R. G.
 Pannell, N. A. (Kirkdale)
 Partridge, E.
 Peyton, J. W. W.
 Pickthorn, K. W. M.
 Pilkington, Capt. R. A.
 Pitman, I. J.
 Pitt, Miss E. M.
 Pott, H. P.
 Powell, J. Enoch
 Price, Henry (Lewisham, W.)
 Pricr-Palmer, Brig. O. L.
 Profumo, J. D.
 Raikes, Sir Victor
 Ramsden, J. E.
 Rawlinson, Peter
 Redmayne, M.
 Reas-Davies, W. R.
 Remnant, Hon. P.
 Renton, D. L. M.
 Ridsdale, J. E.
 Rippon, A. G. F.
 Roberts, Sir Peter (Heeley)
 Robertson, Sir David
 Rodgers, John (Sevenoaks)
 Roper, Sir Harold
 Ropner, Col. Sir Leonard
 Russell, R. S.
 Sandys, Rt. Hon. D.
 Schofield, Lt.-Col. W.
 Scott-Miller, Cmdr. R.
 Sharples, R. C.
 Shepherd, William
 Simon, J. E. S. (Middlesbrough, W.)
 Smithers, Peter (Winchester)
 Smyth, Brig. Sir John (Norwood)
 Soames, Capt. C.
 Spearman, A. C. M.
 Speir, R. M.
 Spence, H. R. (Aberdeen, W.)
 Spens, Rt. Hon. Sir P. (Kens'gt'n, S.)
 Stanley, Capt. Hon. Richard
 Stevens, Geoffrey
 Steward, Harold (Stockport, S.)
 Steward, Sir William (Woolwich, W.)
 Stewart, Henderson (Fife, E.)
 Stoddart-Scott, Col. M.
 Stuart, Rt. Hon. James (Moray)
 Studholme, H. G.
 Summers, G. S. (Aylesbury)
 Sumner, W. D. M. (Orpington)
 Taylor, Sir Charles (Eastbourne)
 Taylor, William (Bradford, N.)
 Teeling, W.
 Thomas, Leslie (Canterbury)
 Thompson, Kenneth (Walton)
 Thompson, Lt.-Cdr. R. (Croydon, S.)
 Thorneycroft, Rt. Hon. P.
 Thornton-Kemsley, C. N.
 Tiley, A. (Bradford, W.)
 Tilney, John (Wavertree)
 Turner, H. F. L.
 Turton, Rt. Hon. R. H.
 Tweedmuir, Lady
 Vane, W. M. F.

Volume 552
No. 150



Wednesday
9th May, 1956

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

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TUESDAY, 8th MAY, 1956

[Continuation of Proceedings]

RESTRICTIVE TRADE PRACTICES BILL [Col. 1167] :
Considered in Committee

WEDNESDAY, 9th MAY, 1956

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS :

Differential Speed Limit (London Traffic Area) [Col. 1223]

COMMANDER CRABB (PRESUMED DEATH) [Col. 1226] :

The Prime Minister's Statement

FINANCE (No. 2) BILL [Col. 1233] :

Read a Second Time

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS :

Gibraltar (Constitutional Reform)

LONDON
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
NINEPENCE NET

Although the Committee was only concerned with London, I consider the principle of a 40 m.p.h. speed limit to be equally applicable to the rest of the country. I am, therefore, consulting the local authority associations and other interested bodies.

As regards recommendation 14, which refers to the special speed limits for vehicles, I note that the Committee recognises there are many considerations other than those of traffic flow which have to be borne in mind. I will, however, take the Committee's views into account in considering this difficult problem.

Recommendations 16-22 (General matters). I accept that a maximum speed limit on all roads is not required. I do not propose to copy the American system of *prima facie* speed limits, but I will give further consideration to the possibility of adopting the idea of "zonal" speed limits. I do not intend, at least for the present, to adopt different speed limits for different traffic lanes on the same road.

I strongly endorse the view expressed in recommendation 20 regarding the physical separation of pedestrians from the traffic, and will bear this in mind in regard to the current road programme.

I subscribe to the view expressed in recommendation 21 that roads specially built for through traffic should not be allowed subsequently to become built-up. Development of land is, however, subject to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Acts. I have power to direct local planning authorities to refuse permission for development adjacent to trunk roads, but I can only give advice in respect of county roads if called upon to do so. I propose to draw the attention of my right hon. Friend the Minister of Housing and Local Government to this recommendation.

I also accept the recommendations, that further studies should be made with regard to lane discipline, the use of traffic lights for the control of speed, the approaches to pedestrian crossings and the accuracy of speedometers.

I have noted the Committee's views in regard to the production of high-powered cars.

Viscount Hinchingsbrooke: Now that my right hon. Friend has assured himself that there would be no material adverse criticism of the increase in speed as such, will he raise the speed limit of commercial vehicles from 20 to 30 m.p.h.?

Mr. Watkinson: That is a different question.

One-Way Working, Lime Grove—Pennard Road

56. **Mr. Tomney** asked the Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation when he expects to be able to make a decision in regard to a unilateral parking system in Lime Grove, Shepherds Bush, W.12.

Mr. Molson: The Commissioner of Police tells me that he proposes to try an

experiment with one way working in Lime Grove and Pennard Road in the next few weeks. My right hon. Friend will ask the London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee to consider, in the light of that experiment, whether any restrictions on waiting are desirable.

COMMANDER CRABB (PRESUMED DEATH)

The Prime Minister (Sir Anthony Eden): With your permission, Mr. Speaker, and that of the House, I will make a statement on the subject raised by Question No. 9.

It would not be in the public interest to disclose the circumstances in which Commander Crabb is presumed to have met his death.

While it is the practice for Ministers to accept responsibility I think it necessary, in the special circumstances of this case, to make it clear that what was done was done without the authority or the knowledge of Her Majesty's Ministers. Appropriate disciplinary steps are being taken.

Mr. Dugdale: Is the Prime Minister aware that that is one of the most extraordinary statements made by a Prime Minister in the House of Commons and that, whatever he may say to the contrary, it is a complete evasion of Ministerial responsibility? May I ask him one or two questions? Whether he will answer them or not appears doubtful. First, why was Commander Crabb diving in the close vicinity of the Soviet cruiser which was here on a friendly visit? Secondly, why, and under whose authority, was a police officer sent to the hotel at which Commander Crabb was staying, and why did he order the leaves to be torn from the register showing the names both of Commander Crabb and of the man with whom he stayed? Further, what was the name of that other man and why did the police officer threaten the hotel keeper with action under the Official Secrets Act if he did not allow that to be done?

The Prime Minister: I thought it right to make the statement which I have made to the House, and I have nothing to add to it.

Mr. Gaitskell: Is the Prime Minister aware that a great deal of information



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has already been published in the Press about this matter? Does he not think, on reflection, in view of the amount of speculation which undoubtedly will continue in the absence of any information from the Government—[An HON. MEMBER: "It will increase."]—and, as my right hon. Friend has said, will increase, that it really would be wiser, and in the general interest, if a full explanation were given?

The Prime Minister: I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that I have given the fullest consideration to this matter. I can also assure him that there are certain issues which are the responsibility of the Prime Minister himself. Having given this all reflection and having given all the information at our disposal, I thought it my duty, as I have said, to give the House the Answer that I have given; and I must tell the House that I cannot vary the Answer I have given.

Mr. Gaitskell: Is the Prime Minister aware that that answer is totally unsatisfactory? Is he further aware that while all of us would wish to protect public security, the suspicion must inevitably arise that his refusal to make a statement on this subject is not so much in the interest of public security as to hide a very grave blunder which has occurred.

The Prime Minister: The House and the country must draw their conclusions from what I have said—[HON. MEMBERS: "They will."]—of course, and also from what I have declined to say. Naturally, any right hon. Gentleman will understand that I have weighed all these considerations; and they weighed heavily in the Answer I have given. But I repeat—and as right hon. Gentlemen, with their experience, know—there are some decisions which only a Prime Minister can take and I am convinced, after the most careful reflection, that the decision I have taken was the right and the only one.

Mr. Gaitskell: Are we really to take it that in the absence of any further statement from the Prime Minister, and in the light of what he has just said about the public drawing their own conclusions, officers were engaged, or an officer of Her Majesty's Forces was engaged, on the business of espionage during the Russian visit?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman, if I may say so with respect, is perfectly entitled to put any wording he likes upon what I have said. My words stand as they were, without any gloss that anyone could put on them.

Mr. Shinwell: The right hon. Gentleman has just told the House that he proposes to take disciplinary action. Those were his words. Will he be good enough to say against whom he is taking disciplinary action, and for what reason he is taking this disciplinary action?

The Prime Minister: No, Sir. What I have said in my statement was that disciplinary steps are being taken. That is so.

Mr. Shinwell: Would the right hon. Gentleman be good enough to enlighten hon. Members on this matter? Against whom is he taking disciplinary steps? Is it against an individual, or individuals, who gave instructions to Commander Crabb? Against whom is the action being taken and for what reason is he taking action? Is it because they defied authority, or is it because they acted without consulting Her Majesty's Ministers? What is the reason for the action?

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to add to the Answer I have given.

Mr. Dugdale: In view of the Government's most unsatisfactory Answer, I beg leave to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 9 to call attention to a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the failure of Her Majesty's Government to give a satisfactory explanation to the country about the events connected with the disappearance of Commander Crabb.

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Member asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 9 to call attention to a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the failure of Her Majesty's Government to give a satisfactory explanation to the country about the events connected with the disappearance of Commander Crabb.

This application is covered by authority. When a Minister refuses to answer a Question on the grounds of public interest it has been ruled in the past—and I adhere to it myself—that that is a matter which cannot be raised under the

[MR. SPEAKER.]

Standing Order. Therefore, I must decline to admit the right hon. Member's application.

Mr. Wigg : With respect, Sir, the Question was tabled for answer by the First Lord of the Admiralty. It really was a matter for him because a naval establishment had been used. The Prime Minister's reply makes that quite clear. It would, therefore, appear to be an abuse of the rules of the House that the Minister, who, clearly, has a responsibility in this matter, passes it to the Prime Minister, not, Mr. Speaker, in the interests of the country, but of the political interests of the Government.

Mr. Speaker : Order. There is no point in that at all. The Prime Minister is quite entitled to answer the Question.

CYPRIOIS (DEATH SENTENCES)

Mr. Fenner Brockway : I am sorry to delay the House, Mr. Speaker, but I want to ask your permission to move the Adjournment of the House on another matter, of which I have given you notice. I ask permission, under Standing Order No. 9, to move the Adjournment of the House on a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the decision of the Governor of Cyprus to maintain the execution of two Cypriots, the effect of which may be disastrous to the furtherance of a peaceful settlement.

May I say, Sir, that I am aware of the rule of the House which says that we must not discuss the fate of men sentenced to death before either a reprieve is granted or the execution takes place. I wish to raise this matter not primarily because of the fate of the men, but because of the serious effects that it will have in Cyprus in relation to the furtherance of a settlement there.

Mr. Speaker : The hon. Member asks permission under Standing Order No. 9 to move the Adjournment of the House on a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the decision of the Governor of Cyprus to maintain the execution of two Cypriots, the effects of which may be disastrous to the furtherance of a peaceful settlement.

The hon. Member was good enough to say that he was aware of the rule of

32 K 34

the House which prevents the House from discussing on the Adjournment or otherwise a sentence of death before its execution. It is an old-established custom of the House.

A very clear and considered Ruling on this matter was given by my predecessor in the Chair on 10th March, 1947, when dealing with another colonial case. That clearly lays down the practice of the House, by which I am bound, that such a matter cannot be raised on the Adjournment of the House.

With regard to the other matters which the hon. Member attaches to this, the really definite matter is that of the capital sentences. The other matters are not definite or urgent. Therefore, I am bound by the rule of the House to decline to find that this comes within the Standing Order.

Mr. Shinwell : I was under the impression, Mr. Speaker, that the rule to which you have just referred, which is familiar to hon. Members, applied almost exclusively in the case where the Home Secretary is involved; that is to say, in a case where a civilian in this country has been sentenced to death and is at the point of execution. Obviously, the matter cannot be raised in such an instance.

Surely this is a quite different matter. This is a matter quite outside the Prerogative or jurisdiction of the Home Secretary. It is a matter concerning the action taken by a Governor, who, presumably is responsible either to the Colonial Secretary or to Her Majesty's Government as a whole. Surely in those circumstances the rule does not apply.

Mr. Speaker : If the right hon. Gentleman will consult the Ruling of my predecessor to which I have referred—that was a colonial case—he will find the argument which he has put before the House and before me dealt with and rejected. The real point is that it is a question of the Royal Prerogative. Insofar as the Secretary of State for the Colonies has any responsibility for advising Her Majesty as to any residuary Prerogative which she may have in the matter he is in exactly the same position as the Home Secretary would be had it been the case of a capital sentence of a subject in this country.

Mr. J. Griffiths : While being aware of and appreciating the Ruling which you

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covering

TOP SECRET

OS 10 Mr. Francis

We discussed this file and you agreed to have it reviewed forthwith. See computation on leaf.

OS 9 - Mr. Fletcher 27/1/78

Head of OS (AR)

Would you take these records on board please

[Signature]
27/1

Crabb Papers

I see no necessity for me to continue to hold these papers and would be grateful if you could take them into records in a special category.

In my view, all 3 criteria mentioned in the written Answer of 18 January 1978 apply, namely:

- (1) "exceptionally sensitive... disclosure of which would be contrary to the public interest on security grounds";
- (2) "containing information supplied in confidence, disclosure of which would ... constitute a breach of faith" and
- (3) "disclosure .. could cause distress".

P.T.O.

or embarrassment to living persons...!!-

My suggestion is that they should
not be disclosed for 75 years
from 1956, i.e. 2031.

R. Devineux

Head of NL

24 Jan. '78

The Secretary,
British Admiralty,
Portsmouth. Eng.

Mr. William Dexter
No 30 Dunlop
Commercial Road
Peterborough
Hotel, R. S. A.

15th Jan. 1975

Dear Sir,

During a period of time thinking
with "passed on" Spirit Persons, I saw
through my thinking power (clairvoyance)
a frogman figure surfacing in water.
I immediately received the person's identity
as Buster Corbette. He told me the following
incidents, that he thinks will help to
unfold the mystery of his disappearance.

hearing a light motor launch
I approached the Russian vessel, felt the
starboard side with flat hand palms and
then about turned. I knew nothing further
in the body of matter. Thinking later, I
realised that on about turning, my
oxygen bottle made contact electronically
a head jointed flap, about 6 feet long by
2 feet 6 inches wide opened upwards from
water level, sucked me bodily into a
long cavity chamber, with cross struts

in between two tapered steel walls. I passed
on into Spirit consciousness through
suffocation. On inspection, my body
was removed, heavily chained and
deposited about 14 miles north of Portsmouth
into the sea."

Buster Crabbe conversed this
incident clairaudiently on the Tuesday,
14th Jan 1975. He has gained immensely
in Spirit Power and his flashes of
clairvoyance (see also) indicated this.

I hope this letter will be of help
to the Admiralty, and Buster Crabbe
definitely wants this story to be known.

Yours Truly,
Maurice D. Curtis



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F 1 OCT 1974

DPR(N)

Head of NL ✓

THE LATE COMMANDER GRABBE

I attach for your information a copy
of a letter I have received from
Commander B C Hannen Royal Navy (Retd),
and of my reply.

P. R. KAY

DIRECTOR OF NAVAL SECURITY
MB Ext 3760

30 September 1974

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
218

Commander E C Hannen Royal Navy (Retd)
Vosper Thornycroft Ltd
Woolsten
SOUTHAMPTON SO9 5GT 30 September 1974

Dear Commander Hannen

Thank you very much for your letter
dated 26 September 1974 letting me know
about your telephone conversation with
Mr Stratton of the Portsmouth Evening News.

Yours sincerely

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F. R. KAY

E. C. Hannen
Commander, Royal Navy (Retd.)
Contract Manager. (NCAV)



N/NL 16

PS to US of S(RN)

Copy to:
DPR(N)

*Hidden copy to
DASY*

THE LATE COMMANDER CRABB

1. In response to your telecon yesterday, DPR(N) has traced the article which appeared in the Western Daily Press on Saturday, 14 September making sensational allegations about Commander Crabb still being alive. A telex transcript of the article is attached from which it will be seen that it has been inspired by an ex-fiancee of Crabb. An article in the Sunday Mirror of 15 September, presumably using the Western Daily Press source, is also attached.

2. There is little information about the Crabb affair in NL but I note that the (then) Prime Minister personally made a statement in the House of Commons on 9 May 1956 (Cols 1226-1229) in which he said:

"It would not be in the public interest to disclose the circumstances in which Commander Crabb is presumed to have met his death".

On 14 May (Cols 1757 to 1788) on a motion by the late Mr Hugh Gaitskell (who divided the House) the Prime Minister again refused to be drawn on the subject of Commander Crabb's death.

3. At an inquest held in Chichester on 26 June 1957 on human remains recovered from the harbour, the Coroner returned an open verdict. As regards identity he said he was satisfied the remains were those of Commander Crabb.

4. Commander Crabb is, therefore, officially dead and he is presumed to have died on 19 April 1956.

D K BOMFREY
HEAD OF NAVAL LAW DIVISION
MB 3362
17 September 1974

MP/27

M

MOD PRESS LDN

CO1 BRISTOL HERE I HAVE A VER Y LONG TELEX FOR YOU
HAVE YOU PLENTY OF PAPER IN YOUR MACHINE

TO: J MC DOWELL, RN PRESS OFFICE, MAIN BLDG, MIN OF DEFENCE, LONDON
FROM: IRVING, CO1, BRISTOL

EXTRACT FROM WESTERN DAILY PRESS OF SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 14

' 'WORLD EXCLUSIVE

DIVER LIVES, SAYS EX-FIANCEE

BUSTER CRABB SENSATION

NAVY SPY IN ' 'I'M COMING HOME' ' RIDDLE

BY CHRISTOPHER RUNDLE

COMMANDER BUSTER CRABB, THE NAVY SPY WHOSE DISAPPEARANCE ONCE
THREATENED EAST-WEST RELATIONS, MAY BE READY TO COME IN FROM THE
COLD

MRS PAT ROSE, THE SOCIETY BEAUTY WHO WAS ENGAGED TO CRABB WHEN HE
VANISHED, SAYS SHE IS CONFIDENT HE WILL BE RELEASED BY THE RUSSIANS
SOON

COMMANDER CRABB DISAPPEARED DURING THE KRUSCHEV-BULGANIN VISIT TO
BRITAIN IN 1956, WHILE SECRETLY INSPECTING THE HULL OF A RUSSIAN
CRUISER DOCKED IN PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR

THE ADMIRALTY OFFICIALLY LISTED HIM AS DEAD AFTER HE FAILED TO RETURN
FROM A DIVE IN THE HARBOUR

A HEADLESS, HANDLESS CORPSE FOUND 14 MONTHS LATER WAS SAID TO BE
COMMANDER CRABB. A POLITICAL STORM BROKE WHEN THE THEN PRIME
MINISTER ANTHONY EDEN REFUSED TO DISCLOSE DETAILS OF HIS DEATH

MESSAGES

MRS ROSE, WHO WAS BORN IN DUNSTER, SOMERSET, AND NOW LIVES IN NEARBY MINEHEAD, BELIEVES HIS DEATH WAS FAKED AND THAT HE IS STILL ALIVE

● IS WIDELY BELIEVED TO BE LIVING A DOUBLE LIFE IN THE RED NAVY AS AN AGENT, OSTENSIBLY DISOWNED BY THE BRITISH

MRS ROSE SAYS SHE HAS HAD A STEADY STREAM OF MESSAGES FROM HER FORMER FIANCÉ

THE LATEST CONTACT WITH A MESSENGER TOOK PLACE IN MINEHEAD FOUR MONTHS AGO. MRS ROSE WOULD NOT DISCLOSE WHAT SHE WAS TOLD

"I KNOW HE IS STILL ALIVE," SHE SAID. "I HAVE KNOWN IT FOR YEARS. BUT NOW I AM MORE SURE THAN I HAVE EVER BEEN

MEETINGS

"HE MAY BE UNWELL BUT HE IS STILL IN RUSSIA. AND I KNOW SOMETHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN SOON"

MRS ROSE TOLD ME OF SECRET MEETINGS WHEN STRANGERS WITH MESSAGES ABOUT COMMANDER CRABB WOULD ARRIVE AT HER HOME, GO UP TO HER IN THE STREET, OR SUDDENLY SIT NEXT TO HER ON TRAINS

NO COMPLETE ANSWER HAS EVER BEEN GIVEN TO THE STRANGE RIDDLE OF LIONEL 'BUSTER' CRABB, WHO WAS 47 WHEN HE VANISHED

THE CORPSE HURRIEDLY IDENTIFIED AS HIS IS BURED IN A PORTSMOUTH CEMETERY UNDER HIS TOMBSTONE

BUT, FOR EVERY PERSON WHO ACCEPTED THIS AS AN END TO THE STORY, THERE IS ANOTHER WHO IS FAR FROM SATISFIED

AND THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE PREPARED TO BELIEVE THE INFORMATION THAT HAS LEAKED FROM BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS

THE MISSION

THIS SUGGESTS THAT COMMANDER CRABB IS LIVING A REASONABLY HAPPY LIFE AS FIRST LIEUTENANT LEV KORABLOV OF THE RED NAVY, BUT THAT AS AN ABANDONED BRITISH DOUBLE AGENT HE IS STILL HOPING FOR REPATRIATION

COMMANDER CRABB WITH FOUR OTHER DIVERS SLIPPED INTO PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR EARLY ON THURSDAY APRIL 19, 1956

THEIR MISSION WAS TO INSPECT THE HULL OF THE RUSSIAN CRUISER ORDZHONIKIDZE, LYING AT ANCHOR FLANKED BY TWO RED NAVY DESTROYERS

THE DAY BEFORE, THE ORDZHONIKIDZE HAD BROUGHT SOVIET LEADERS MARSHALL BULGANIN AND NIKITA KRUSCHEV TO BRITAIN FOR A COURTESY VISIT

CRABB, A NAVAL DIVER WITH CONSIDERABLE WARTIME EXPERIENCE, HAD RESIGNED THE SERVICE THE YEAR BEFORE. BUT HE WAS STILL ON THE NAVAL RESERVE LIST

RUMOURS

HE WAS WEARING A SPECIAL RE-CYCLING BREATHING KIT, WHICH USED LIME AND OXYGEN TO PROCESS CARBON DIOXIDE BACK INTO BREATHABLE AIR, GIVING OFF NO BUBBLES WHICH WOULD HAVE BETRAYED THE PRESENCE OF A DIVER

A FEW YARDS FROM THE CRUISER, CRABB GAVE THE THUMBS UP TO HIS COMPANIONS, SURFACED ONCE, AND DISAPPEARED BELOW THE WATER. HE WAS NOT SEEN AGAIN

A WEEK LATER, THE RUSSIAN SHIP SAILED AMID INCREASING SPECULATION OVER CRABB'S DISAPPEARANCE

THE OFFICIAL STORY PUT OUT BY THE ADMIRALTY SAID HE HAD DIED AS A RESULT OF TRIALS IN THE STOKES BAY AREA, NEAR PORTSMOUTH

ON MAY 4, HOWEVER, THE SOVIET EMBASSY COMPLAINED IN AN OFFICIAL NOTE OF A FOREIGN FROGMAN BEING SIGHTED NEAR THE RUSSIAN SHIPS

A POLITICAL STORM QUICKLY BLEW UP, BUT PRIME MINISTER ANTHONY EDEN TOLD THE COMMONS THE GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED 'IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST' NOT TO DISCLOSE DETAILS OF COMMANDER CRABB'S DEATH

ON JUNE 9, 1957, THE CORPSE WAS FOUND ON A SAND BANK NEAR CHICHESTER HARBOUR. IT WAS WEARING A FROGMAN'S DRY SUIT SIMILAR TO THE ONE WORN BY CRABB

THE REMAINS WERE BADLY DECOMPOSED, BUT NONE THE LESS STATED TO BE THAT OF COMMANDER CRABB, DESPITE CONFLICTING EVIDENCE AT THE INQUEST

EVEN CRABB'S MOTHER, NOW DEAD, WAS UNCONVINCED AT THE TIME. BUT THE REMAINS WERE INTERRED IN MILTON CEMETERY UNDER A PLAIN MARBLE TABLET

AND THAT, APART FROM A MYSTERIOUS £100 PAID TO MRS CRABB SOME TIME AFTER BY THE ADMIRALTY, WAS THE END OF THE SAGA AS FAR AS EVERYONE KNEW

BUT FACTS WHICH WERE KNOWN IN CERTAIN QUARTERS BEFORE HE DISAPPEARED, AS WELL AS INFORMATION WHICH HAS TRICKLED FROM MANY SOURCES SINCE, SUGGEST A MORE COMPLEX AND EVEN SINISTER STORY LAY BEHIND COMMANDER CRABB'S LAST DIVE

PIONEER

WITHOUT DOUBT, THE RUSSIANS WERE INTERESTED IN CRABB

HE HAD NOT ONLY PIONEERED NEW DIVING TECHNIQUES DURING HIS LONG AND OUTSTANDING NAVAL CAREER, BUT HIS WAR AND PEACETIME EXPERIENCE HAD MADE HIM A LEADING AUTHORITY ON UNDERWATER ESPIONAGE AND DEMOLITION

AN OPERATION WAS SET UP BY THE RUSSIAN SECRET SERVICE, THE KGB, WITH THE OBJECT OF WINNING CRABB AND HIS EXPERTISE OVER TO THE SOVIETS

USING ONE OF THEIR AGENTS IN BRITAIN, MATTHEW SMITH, THEY WERE TO BAIT CRABB ABOARD THE RUSSIAN CRUISER

THEIR METHOD WAS SIMPLE. SMITH WOULD POSE AS A CIA AGENT AND PERSUADE CRABB, WHO WAS BY THEN OUT OF THE SERVICE, TO INSPECT THE HULL OF THE CRUISER ON BEHALF OF AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE

PAYMENT

BUT NEWS OF THE PLOT LEAKED BACK TO BRITISH INTELLIGENCE, THROUGH ONE OF THEIR CONTACTS INSIDE THE KGB

CRABB WAS WARNED AND WAS THEN PRIMED TO ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE CAPTURED AND ACT AS A DOUBLE AGENT, PASSING INFORMATION OUT OF RUSSIA BEFORE BEING SMUGGLED BACK INTO BRITAIN BY FRIENDLY AGENTS

SMITH DULY MADE HIS CONTACT, AND CRABB AGREED ON A FEE FOR THE DIVE OF £50. THIS FIGURE HE MENTIONED TO MRS ROSE, WHO SAID IT WAS RIDICULOUSLY LOW



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SMITH AND CRABB MET IN PORTSMOUTH AND BOOKED IN AT THE SALLYPORT HOTEL, WHERE THEY TOOK TWO ROOMS AND SIGNED THE REGISTER

BUT HOW WAS CRABB TO GET ABOARD THE CRUISER?

SMITH ARRANGED FOR HIM TO SURFACE ONCE AS A RECOGNITION SIGNAL, KNOWING FULL WELL THAT THE RUSSIANS TOO WOULD BE WATCHING

UNAWARE

AFTER THAT, RUSSIAN DIVERS SWAM OUT OF AN UNDERWATER DOOR AND TOOK CRABB PRISONER, WE MAY PRESUME WITHOUT TOO MUCH OF A STRUGGLE AS THE COMMANDER WAS WELL PREPARED

WEIGHT IS ADDED TO THE STORY OF AN UNDERWATER DOOR BY THE FACT THAT SUCH AN ENTRANCE WAS DISCOVERED WHEN THE ORDZHONIKIDZE WAS SOLD OUT OF THE SERVICE TO THE INDONESIANS A FEW YEARS LATER

THE OPERATION MIGHT HAVE SUCCEEDED IF THERE HAD BEEN BETTER LIAISON BETWEEN BRITISH INTELLIGENCE AND THE GOVERNMENT

WHEN THE POLITICAL FURORE BLEW UP OVER THE OFFICIAL SOVIET PROTEST, IT NATURALLY HIT THE HEADLINES. AND THE GOVERNMENT, COMPLETELY UNAWARE OF WHAT MI5 HAD DONE, MADE NO ATTEMPT TO CONCEAL THE STORM OR EVEN PLAY IT DOWN

BUT DISCLAIMERS WERE ISSUED AND ATTEMPTS WERE LATER MADE TO COVER UP ALL TRACES OF CRABB'S VISIT TO PORTSMOUTH

ABANDONED

A SENIOR POLICE OFFICER, ACTING ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM HIGH AUTHORITY, EVEN WENT TO THE SALLYPORT HOTEL AND REMOVED THE PAGES FROM THE REGISTER BEARING THE NAMES OF CRABB AND SMITH

ALL THIS MUST HAVE BEEN REPORTED BACK THROUGH AGENTS TO CRABB, WHO WOULD HAVE REALISED THAT FOR SOME REASON THE PLAN HAD GONE HORRIBLY WRONG. TO ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, HE HAD BEEN ABANDONED BY THE BRITISH

BUT HE WAS KNOWN TO BE SUPREMELY PATRIOTIC, BESIDES WHICH HIS LONG CAREER IN THE SERVICES WOULD HAVE TRAINED HIM TO ACCEPT STOICALLY SUCH A SETBACK. IT WAS JUST ANOTHER HAZARD WHICH HAD TO BE LIVED WITH

MRS ROSE IS ONE OF THE LAST PEOPLE TO SEE COMMANDER CRABB ALIVE

JITTERY

HE WAS ENGAGED TO HIM FIRST IN 1948, ON THE DAY HE RECEIVED HIS GEORGE MEDAL. AFTER THAT, THEY SPLIT UP AND EACH MARRIED

BUT LATER BOTH OF THEM WERE DIVORCED AROUND THE SAME TIME. THEY MET ONCE MORE, AND AT THE TIME OF COMMANDER CRABB'S DISAPPEARANCE HAD BEEN ENGAGED FOR FOUR MONTHS

'THE DAY BEFORE HE DISAPPEARED, CRABBIE AND I HAD LUNCH TOGETHER,' SAID MRS ROSE

'HE CAME ROUND TO MY FLAT AND WE WENT OUT TO A PUB. BUT HE WAS TERRIBLY JITTERY. HE NORMALLY DRANK QUITE HEAVILY, BUT HE ONLY HAD A HALF OF BEER AND JUST PICKED AT HIS FOOD

'I ASKED HIM WHAT WAS WRONG AND HE TOLD ME HE WAS GOING DOWN TO PORTSMOUTH THE NEXT DAY TO TEST SOME NEW EQUIPMENT. ALTHOUGH I DIDN'T WANT TO GO WITH HIM, HE PERSUADED ME

DISLIKED

'ON THE JOURNEY DOWN I THREATENED TO BREAK OFF OUR ENGAGEMENT IF HE DIDN'T TELL ME WHAT HE WAS REALLY GOING. I SAID HE WAS ALWAYS TESTING NEW GEAR SO THERE WAS NOTHING NEW IN THAT

'FINALLY HE ADMITTED HE WAS GOING TO LOOK AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RUSSIAN CRUISER

'HE SAID HE HAD ALREADY CARRIED OUT A MISSION LIKE IT IN 1952, AND THAT THIS TIME THE ADMIRALTY WERE SENDING HIM

'I HAD MET MATTHEW SMITH ABOUT TWO WEEKS BEFORE. HE TALKED LIKE AN AMERICAN. I DID NOT LIKE HIM A BIT

'AT PORTSMOUTH, CRABBIE SAID WE COULD NOT STAY IN THE SAME HOTEL BECAUSE HE HAD TO LEAVE ME AND MEET SMITH

'HE SAID: 'IF I DON'T RING YOU TOMORROW MORNING, I'LL PHONE IN THE EVENING AND WE'LL HAVE LUNCH THE DAY AFTER'

"THAT WAS THE LAST I SAW OF HIM. AFTER HE DISAPPEARED, I WENT TO THE SOUTH OF FRANCE FOR A TIME TO AVOID THE PUBLICITY

"WHEN I HAD BEEN THERE ABOUT TWO WEEKS, A FRIEND SHOWED ME A GERMAN MAGAZINE WITH A STORY ABOUT CRABBIE IN IT

"THERE WAS A PHOTO OF MYSELF, MY BROTHER AND MY SISTER IN LAW. ONLY THREE COPIES OF THAT PHOTO EXISTED. I HAD ONE, THE PHOTOGRAPHER HAD ANOTHER AND CRABBIE HAD THE THIRD. I TRACED THE OTHER TWO

"THAT WAS THE FIRST PROOF I HAD THAT HE WAS ALIVE. FROM THERE IT WENT ON. I HAD MANY CONTACTS WHO MET ME WITH INFORMATION WHICH HAD BEEN PASSED OUT THROUGH UNDERGROUND SOURCES

'NOT HIM'

"PEOPLE WOULD COME TO MY HOUSE, COME AND SIT BY ME ON TRAINS AND APPROACH ME IN THE STREET, IT WAS QUITE PETRIFYING SOME TIMES"

MRS ROSE SAID COMMANDER CRABB EVEN MANAGED TO SMUGGLE OUT THE MOST DEFINITE PROOF OF ALL. THIS WAS A PET NAME HE USED TO CALL HER

"NO. ONE ELSE KNEW IT AND NO ONE ELSE DOES" SHE SAID "I HAVE NOT EVEN TOLD ANYONE ABOUT IT SINCE THEN"

MRS ROSE HAS ALSO SPOKEN TO SEVERAL PEOPLE WHO SEEN COMMANDER CRABB

ONE MAN, A DANE, WHO SHE SAYS HAS SINCE DEFECTED TO THE EAST, TOLD HER HE HAD SEEN HIM IN A RUSSIAN NAVAL DIVING TEAM IN SEBASTAPOL

AND THE CORPSE?

"THAT WAS NOT CRABBIE," SAID MRS ROSE

"IT WAS A RUSSIAN ABOUT HIS BUILD. THEY CUT THE HEAD AND HANDS OFF AND THEN DUMPED IT THERE

"WE HAD EXPERTS IN WHO STUDIED THE TIDES. THEY SAID THE BODY COULD NOT POSSIBLY HAVE BEEN THERE MORE THAN 24 HOURS

WESTERN DAILY PRESS 1974 "

BUST 'IS

By DAVID DUFFY and ERIC SE

BUSTER CRABB, the Navy hero who disappeared on a secret mission in the Black Sea eighteen years ago, is alive and well in Russia, his former fiancée told yesterday.

She said she has been contacted and is waiting for him to meet him soon.

Former society beauty Mrs. Patricia Rose said: "Crabby has been training Russian frogmen in the Black Sea."

"But he has served his purpose now and wants to leave Russia."

"But he will not return to England. Our meeting could be in France—quite soon."

Mrs. Rose, who looks to be in her fifties and lives at The Orchards, Minehead, Somerset, last saw Commander Lionel Kenneth Philip Crabb, G.M. O.B.E., in April 1956.

It was the day he set out from London for Portsmouth to dive under the Russian cruiser which had brought Soviet leaders Bulganin and Khrushchev on a visit to Britain.

His courage

The British spy diver vanished on his mission—and there were Parliamentary repercussions when it was revealed that the underwater bid to crack the Russian warship's secrets had been carried out by the Intelligence services in defiance of strict Government orders.

Crabb, 46, was a James Bond type of figure with a reputation for indestructibility.

And when a headless, handless body said to be Crabb was washed up close friends were not convinced he was dead.

Positive identification was never made.



Mrs. PAT ROSE is waiting for

The body was found in a Portsmouth cemetery.

Mrs. Rose has a photograph of the grave.

Someone is supposed to have flowers on it.

"People think it's him. But it isn't. I have always known he is alive."

Last night she angrily refused to

Secret att.

N/DPR/107/1/39 - Ed. Crabb

STAFF CONFERENCE

Clas.

Encl.
No.

M.8

C2(AD) (Mr.Cribbs)

Copies to:- PS/DUS(N) **AUS(D Staff)**
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Head of DS5
Head of N.G.

At Encl. 4, AUS(D Staff) has asked you to draft a reply from DPR(N) to the producer of the proposed programme, Mr. Darlow, and to clear this draft first with the Cabinet Office. AUS(D Staff) proposes that the reply should, in effect, say that there is no assistance we can usefully give but that the BBC should clear the script with Admiral Denning.

2. I suggest that you take your further action on this docket so that we have a properly maintained record and also because you will wish to take account of the other aspects covered in minutes 6 and 7. You will notice that Sec/DPBC's minute of 11th April at Encl.3 has been removed from the docket (DUS(N) thought that paragraph 3 should not be on a registered file) but you have a copy of it.

3. You will see that we were proposing to submit to Ministers here, for information, before a letter went back to the BBC. DUS(N) suggests that you should follow this procedure before the letter is finally sent but after you have cleared it with the Cabinet Office and anyone else you should consult.

R. J. Penney

AUS(NS)

17th April 1972.

1/70 JHL

SECRET

AUS (Defence Staff)/193

C2 (AD) (Mr Cribbs)

Copy to :

PS/Sir Burke Trend
PS/PUS
AUS (NS) ✓
CPR
Head of DS 11
Head of DS 12
Sec/DPEC
Cabinet Office (Mr Child)

✓ Copied by Aus (NS) to
PS/DUS(N) (for docket)
Sec VCNS
DPR(N)
Cde. Int. Dis
DNSY
Hd DSS
Hd NL

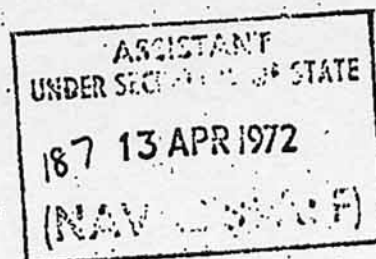
PROPOSED BBC TV PROGRAMME ON COMMANDER CRABB

We spoke. Would you please draft a reply from DPR (Navy) to the producer of the proposed programme, Mr Darlow, and clear this draft with Mr Child of the Cabinet Office. On present advice, it seems to me that the reply should, in effect, say we are sorry there is no assistance we can usefully give but that the BBC should clear the script with Admiral Denning in case there are any 'D' Notice angles.

(Sgd) P. T. E. ENGLAND

P T E ENGLAND
AUS (Defence Staff)

12 April 1972



SECRET



(c) crown copyright

BUSTER CRABB 'IS ALIVE'



**Buster
Crabb ..
as he
looked
before
his
'last'
dive**

By DAVID DUFFY and ERIC SEWELL

BUSTER CRABB, the Navy frogman who disappeared on a secret dive eighteen years ago, is alive and well in Russia, his former fiancée claimed yesterday.

She said she has been contacted and expects to meet him soon.

Former society beauty Mrs. Patricia Rose said: "Crabby has been training Russian frogmen in the Black Sea

"But he has served his purpose now and wants to leave Russia.

"But he will not return to England. Our meeting could be in France—quite soon."

Mrs. Rose, who looks to be in her fifties and lives at The Orchards, Minehead, Somerset, last saw Commander Lionel Kenneth Philip Crabb, G.M., O.B.E., in April 1956.

It was the day he set out from London for Portsmouth to dive under the Russian cruiser which had brought Soviet leaders Bulganin and Khrushchev on a visit to Britain.

His courage

The British spy diver vanished on his mission and there were Parlia-

Fiancee says: I will see him



Mrs. PAT ROSE . . . She is waiting for Crabb.

The body was buried in a Portsmouth cemetery.

Mrs. Rose said: "I have a photograph of the grave. Every week someone is said to put flowers on it.

"People think it's me. But it isn't because I have always known he is alive.

hall claims that her story was hard to believe. Mrs. Rose said she was convinced Crabb's death was faked.

She said she had been contacted by strangers on numerous occasions.

Earlier this year she was sure that Crabb was still alive when she was given the message:

"Commander Crabb says he is looking forward soon to being re-united with his 'Old Grey Witch'."

This was a pet name Crabb called her and was known only to the two of them.

Mrs. Rose said: "The contact told me that Crabby had been ill. There's no question in my mind that what he said was genuine.

"He told me Crabby was known in Russia as Captain Luovicia Korablov and that though he

SUNDAY MIRROR.

15 SEPTEMBER 1974.

AUS
L3P 13/4

AUS(DS)

Copy to:

- PS/PUS
- AUS(NS) ✓
- CPR
- Head of C2(AD)
- Head of DS11
- Head of DS12

8.11/4/72
 Copied by AUS(NS) to
 PS to DUS(N) (For the dossier)
 Sec. VCNS
 DPR(N)
 Com. the DIS
 DNSY
 Hd DS5
 Hd NL

PROPOSED BBC TV PROGRAMME ON COMMANDER CRABB

L3P
11/4

1. Your AUS(DS)/174 of 6th April 1972, the only 'D' Notice relevant to the case of Crabb is 'D' Notice No 10 British Intelligence Services.
2. So much has already been published on Crabb some factual, much speculative that I doubt whether any significant new light can be cast on the affair concerning Crabb himself.
3. However, it is a fact that a naval team from "Vernon" did - separately from Crabb who was - dive under the Russian ships and I suspect the new evidence is from one of these. The operation was kept secret and a revelation could have political/security difficulties.
4. I agree that MOD should give no assistance but perhaps CPR may like to suggest to Darlow that he clears his script with me.
5. In view of paragraph 3 I have classified this minute secret.

RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4)

Vice Admiral Sir Norman Denning
Secretary/DPBC,
Room 6354, Ext 2206,
Main Building.

11th April 1972

ASSISTANT
 UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
 147 11 APR 1972
 (NAVAL STAFF)

AUS (Defence Staff)/174

Copied by AUS/NS 16:-

Sec/DPBC

Copy to :

- ES/PUS
- AUS (NS) ✓
- CPR
- Head of C2 (AD)
- Head of DS 11
- Head of DS 12

} without attachment

PS (6 Dors (N) - For use in the DPR file.

*Sec V. 1001
DPR (Int) Dis.
Dors Y.
Head of DSS.*

*16P
6/4*

PROPOSED BBC TV PROGRAMME ON COMMANDER CRABB

1. I attach a copy of a minute by AUS (NS) which is self-explanatory. Please see in particular paragraph 4. It seems to me :

- a. any advice you may be able to give could be related only to any 'D' Notice which may be relevant to the case
- b. if we are up against real political and/or security difficulties I must let the Cabinet Office know as soon as possible
- c. the draft reply to the BBC should be cleared by Head of C2 (AD) as well as CPR so that we can maintain consistency in an area with which some of us are constantly involved.

Certainly this seems to be yet another case in which the Ministry of Defence should give neither assistance nor hostages to fortune.

P. T. E. England

P T E ENGLAND
AUS (Defence Staff)

6 April 1972

ASSISTANT
UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
6 APR 1971
(NAVAL STAFF)

N/DPR/107/1/39

STAFF IN CONFIDENCE

Class. Encl. No.

DSS(N)

- Copies to:
- Sec/VCNS
- AUS(NS)
- AUS(D Staff)
- CPR
- DPR(N)
- Commodore Int Dis
- DNSY
- Head of DS 5

*Concerns letter from BBC
proposing to do 1/2 hr T.V
programme on Com. Crabb
(Accession). BBC letters have
found a diver who was
there at the time. Person
mentioned was by AWS(NS) should
considered that US 7 S(RN) should
be: The "BBC's diver" was concerned about
his pension (his refusal) if he
took part in the
programme.*

File.

*Shin
5/1/72*

Having consulted Head of NPP, I will deal first with the questions of pensions mentioned in para 2 of M6 and in the BBC's letter.

2. Under the Admiralty Pensions Act and the Forfeiture Act, the Department may at its discretion suspend (and restore later) or forfeit a pension on account of

- a. Misconduct by the pensioner;
- b. Conviction of a serious offence connected with the Service;
- c. Grave criminal offences;
- d. Any other criminal offence resulting in sentence of imprisonment exceeding six months.

It seems most unlikely that if the BBC's (anonymous) diver took part in the proposed programme we should have any cause to take action concerning his pension.

The said diver does of course remain subject to the Official Secrets Act and depending on what he says might lay himself open to prosecution for unlawful disclosure of information. I suspect, however, after the passage of time and bearing in mind the Departmental view that there is no security objection to the programme that the Director of Public Prosecutions would be unlikely to bring a prosecution.

At the inquest on Commander Crabb, the Coroner returned an open verdict. If, therefore, the diver mentioned by the BBC has and discloses information relevant to the death of Commander Crabb - which he deliberately withheld back in 1957 - he might find himself in trouble with the authorities on that score.

STAFF IN CONFIDENCE

66673 1-430-1 170 J111

STAFF IN CONFIDENCE

Minute Sheet No.

Reference.....

Minutes and Brief Details of Enclosures

Clas.

Encl.
No.

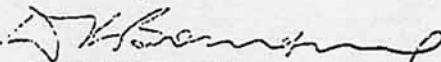
5. On the general question of a TV programme about Commander Crabbe, I must invite attention to the fact that the Prime Minister personally made a statement in the House of Commons on 9 May 1956 (Col 1226-1229) in which he said:-

"It would not be in the public interest to disclose the circumstances in which Commander Crabbe is presumed to have met his death."

On 14 May (Columns 1757 to 1788) on a motion by the late Mr Hugh Gaitskell (who divided the House) the Prime Minister again refused to be drawn on the subject of Commander Crabbe's death.

6. I do not personally know the story of the Crabbe affair but if the Prime Minister's reticence was due to political reasons or diplomatic reasons or security reasons (or a combination of such reasons) then even though security reasons can now apparently be discounted, Ministers may still not wish publicity to be given to this matter and may indeed wish the BBC to be discouraged (so far as this is possible) from proceeding with the proposed programme. Otherwise I agree entirely with AUS(NS)'s minute.

7. I have made this docket STAFF-IN-CONFIDENCE.


D K BOMPFREY
Head of NL
5 April 1972



(c) crown copyright

Please sign and return immediately to

Naval Law Division
Room 207, N. Bl. (II)
Old Admiralty Building

Received ~~TOP SECRET / SECRET~~ document Medical Cover and forms
relating to Crabb, LKP, Lt. Col RNYR
reference dated (discharged year 55)

~~Copy No~~

Signature T. W. Wicks T. W. WICKS

Dept. MEDICAL DIRECTOR GENERAL (NAVAL),
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE,

Date 10 March 1967
EMPRESS STATE BUILDING,
LONDON, S.W.6

FULHAM 1241

EXT 2020

CA - Grabb's medical documents
returned to MATG (Wicks)

9/3/67 by report
CHC.



TOP SECRET PERSONAL

12

Deputy Secretary

I enclose the two Statutory Declarations made by which after discussion with Mr. Lewen, I think should be retained by him in the Admiralty docket.

I have also prepared an Aide Memoire concerning these declarations which I think should be filed with them. Possibly you may wish to add your remarks.

If you agree I will pass this to Mr. Lewen.

J.P. Pugh

Director of Naval Intelligence.
21st June, 1956.

D.N.I.

I concur - and in the aide memoire; but I think all these documents should be kept in HD of NK's safe (now Mr Todd's & not Mr Lavin) & marked, not to leave HD of NK's safe without agreement of DNI & Dep Sec."

TOP SECRET

13/5
PERSONAL

RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4)



TOP SECRET

13
Copy No. 1 of Two Copies

Aide Memoire

Attached are two Statutory Declarations sworn by RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) of H.M.S. VERNON, concerning the presumed death of Commander L.K.P. Crabb, O.B.E., G.M., R.N.V.R. These Declarations were made before Mr. W.N. Hanna Head of Air Branch, a Notary Public. He has advised as follows:-

"I thought it was proper that these Statements should be in the form of Statutory Declarations, which is the proper way of recording statements about any matter which is not the subject of legal proceedings. If legal proceedings had been started it would probably have been appropriate for the Statements to be in the form of Affidavits made in those proceedings. If it becomes necessary to file the unrestricted statement in Court, it may be necessary to have it sworn as an Affidavit, but I think it would have been improper to swear an Affidavit in the present state of play when there are no proceedings actually issued".

2. If at any time it appears likely that these declarations will be required in legal proceedings, the following are to be personally informed:-

Permanent Secretary



TOP

- 2 -

3. They will consider the desirability of informing the following, other than Members of the Board, who are concerned in this case:-

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

- C. in C. Portsmouth (Admiral of the Fleet
Sir George E. Creasy, GCB,
CBE, DSO, MVO)
- C.O.S. to C. in C. Portsmouth (Rear Admiral
P.W. Burnett, DSC, DSC)
- C.O. H.M.S. VERNON (Captain J. Grant, D.S.O. R.N)
- C.N.I.

Note:- Admiral of the Fleet Sir George E. Creasy feels very strongly about this.

4. Throughout the incident it was considered essential to avoid implicating the C. in C. Portsmouth and his staff, and other Naval authorities at Portsmouth. The main reasons were:-

(a) in a bona fide Naval diving operation, immediate and extensive rescue operations would have been ordered by the C. in C., accompanied by warnings to all Naval and police authorities in the area. This would have been done for humanitarian reasons even if there had been no hope of Commander Crabb's survival.

(b) an experienced diving officer, would have taken immediate



(c)

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

The moment it became clear that a mishap had occurred was ordered to return to his ship and take no further part in the affair. In consequence any cover story purporting to show that this was a bona fide naval operation would only have exposed and the C. in C. to charges of negligence, lack of humanity and error of judgment. Even as a last resort, this was considered unacceptable.

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

(d) throughout the discussions in Admiralty in search of a convincing cover story the absence of rescue or recovery operations vitiated the credulity of any explanation implicating the Portsmouth Naval authorities.

5. The above considerations remain extant and as far as Parliament, Press, the Fleet and the Public are concerned no satisfactory explanation has been made of the exact circumstances. Because the incident remains an unexplained mystery there is every probability of press publicity and public interest as a result of any legal proceedings which may occur in the future.



- 4 -

therefore expose him and the authorities not only to publicity in the press, but to the charges outlined in para. 4 (c), as well as involving further risk of compromise of the true nature of the operation,

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

7. Careful consideration will therefore have to be given in the Admiralty on how the situation is to be handled, but this can only be done when the exact nature of the legal proceedings is known, as well as the part that _____ will be called upon to play in them.

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. V. Ingles', written over a horizontal line.

Director of Naval Intelligence.
21st June, 1956.

Copy No. 1 - Mr. Lewen,
N.L. Branch to retain together
with Statutory Declarations

Copy No. 2 - D.N.I.

To All to whom these presents shall
come, Greeting:-

I, WILLIAM NEIL HANNA, M.V.O. of
Craigleith, Kersfield Road, Putney, London,
S.W.15. Notary Public do HEREBY CERTIFY that
on the 19th day of June, 1956, personally
appeared before me

Royal Navy, named in
the Declaration hereto annexed, a person
well known and of good repute and worthy of
credit and by Solemn Declaration made before
me did solemnly declare the contents of the
said Declaration to be true.

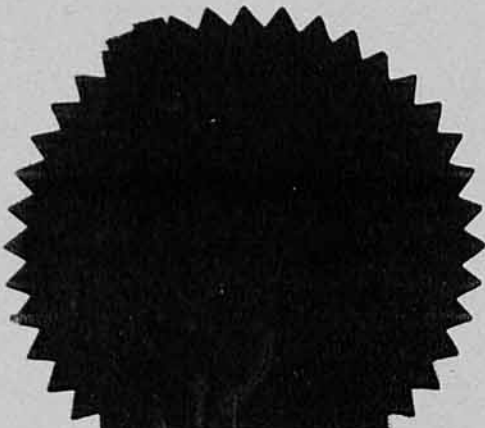
In testimony whereof I have hereunder
subscribed my name and affixed my Seal of
Office at Craigleith, Putney aforesaid this
nineteenth day of June, 1956.

QUOD VERITATEM ATTESTOR

William Neil Hanna

Notary Public
Craigleith,
Kersfield Road,
Putney, London,
S.W.15.

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)





(c) crown copyright

CONFIDENTIAL

OUT

MESSAGE

270938Z June

//

From: Admiralty

Date: 27.6.57

To: Commander in Chief, Mediterranean

UNCLASSIFIED REPLY OR REFERENCE LIMITED TO STEREOTYPED PHRASE

PRIORITY

Please pass to Sir John Lang.

Chichester Inquest.

On cause of death Coroner returned open verdict; on identity he said he was satisfied remains were those of Commander Grabb. Nothing untoward at inquest; press comment today is considerable but not beyond expected bounds. It includes leading feature by Daily Express. Most comment focused on statement issued last night Grabb family solicitors that ".... every particle of evidence in our possession points conclusively to the fact that this very gallant gentleman died as he had lived in the service of our country and of no other".

Statement seems to have been aimed at earlier puff that Grabb was working for American agency.

270938Z

P.S. to Secretary
(Ext. 65)

First Lord
Second Sea Lord (2)
V.C.N.S. (2)
Parliamentary Secretary
Civil Lord
Secretary
Deputy Secretary (P)
U.S.N.
N.L.
C.N.I. (2)
R.G.

MH/19.53

Chancery House.
(5th Floor).

10

Chancery Lane.
London. W.C.2.

22nd July, 1957

Dear Dodds,

Re: Crabb, Decsd.

I am sorry that I have been so long in returning the documents you lent me in connection with this matter. As you know, the Inquest was finally concluded on the 26th June last and I enclose two copies of the whole of the evidence which was given. I also enclose a number of other documents which you may like to file or destroy.

Whilst I was in Chichester, I was handed a bundle of letters which appear to be written by a gentleman with a bee in his bonnet. However, for what they are worth, I am sending them to you.

Thank you very much for all the assistance you gave me in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

B. Stephenson

G.C.B. Dodds, Esq.,
Department of the Secretary of the Admiralty,
Whitehall,
London, S.W.1.

DR. DONALD FLEMING KING said he is a Doctor of Medicine and a Pathologist.

On the 10th June, 1957 he made an examination of some human remains at Chichester Public Mortuary and when he saw them they were clothed in a frogman's suit. Above the waist, parts of the body including the skull had disappeared although certain bones including the left humerus and both scapulae remained. The abdominal cavity was empty except below the waist-band of the suit. The organs had undergone extensive post mortem change including a change known as adipocere but they were recognisable. He identified a photograph as being one of the remains and said that another, marked No: 3, was an actual size photograph of the feet. He had found the measurement of the feet to be $8\frac{3}{4}$ " and that is small for an adult man. He also found that there was a condition called hallux valgus which is a condition of the toes in which the big toe, which is the hallux, is turned outwards. The joint of the big toe is enlarged and disjointed. With regard to the hair on the body, the pubic hair was in tact and the colour was clearly a light brown and in certain lights when dry it had a gingerish tinge. He thought the deceased was rather a small man in the region of 5' 6" but he could give no more detail of his estimation. The legs were in a good state of preservation and he would describe them as being muscular and well formed and, apart from the feet, there was no deformity. They were quite straight.

From the adipocere, he concluded that the body had been in the water for at least six months and could well have been in the water for at least fourteen months.

On the 14th June, 1957 he went to the Mortuary and examined the remains again. He looked at the left knee and saw a scar. A photograph was taken at Chichester Police Station in his presence of the portion of the skin bearing this scar.

Re-called after Mrs. Crabb had given evidence:

A hammer toe normally involves the second toe and not the big toe.

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

solemnly and sincerely Declare that:-

1. I am a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy.
2. On the evening of Tuesday, the seventeenth day of April, 1956, Commander Lionel Kenneth Phillip Crabb, O.L.E., G.M., Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, telephoned me and asked me to meet him later at a public house near my home.
3. At this meeting he asked me if, in my capacity as an expert diver, I would be prepared to assist him entirely unofficially and in a strictly private capacity in connection with a dive he was undertaking a day or two later, the nature of which was not disclosed to me, and I was told by Commander Crabb that on no account was I to inform any responsible Naval Authority. I agreed on my own responsibility, and I accompanied him early in the morning of 19th April to a boat moored in the Portsmouth area.
4. I assisted Commander Crabb to put on and adjust his equipment. He entered the water from the boat shortly before 0700.

I am satisfied that his equipment at that time was correctly adjusted and in proper working order; he himself appeared fit and well. The weather was fine and the sea calm with a slight ebb flowing. He carried sufficient oxygen for an absence of a maximum of two hours submerged. His actions until disappearance under the surface were normal and the conditions for diving were good. He was not seen by me again.

5. The weight and nature of the apparatus were such that if, through mal-adjustment subsequent to entering the water or through some physical failure on the part of the wearer, he becomes unconscious, it is most unlikely that the body would rise to the surface so long as the apparatus remains in place.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the Statutory Declarations Act 1835.

DECLARED at Craighleith,
Putney, London, S.W.15.
this 19th day of June
1956.

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

Before me

[Signature]

SECRET

To All to whom these presents shall
come, Greeting:-

I, WILLIAM NEIL HANNA, M.V.O. of
Craigleith, Kersfield Road, Putney, London,
S.W.15. Notary Public do HEREBY CERTIFY that
on the 19th day of June, 1956, personally
appeared before me

Lieutenant Commander, Royal Navy, named in the
Declaration hereto annexed, a person well
known and of good repute and worthy of credit
and by Solemn Declaration made before me did
solemnly declare the contents of the said
Declaration to be true.

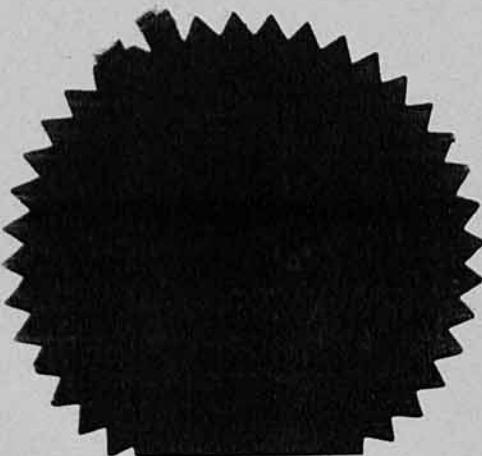
In testimony whereof I have hereunder
subscribed my name and affixed my Seal of
Office at Craigleith, Putney aforesaid this
nineteenth day of June, 1956.

QUOD VERITATEM ATTESTOR

William Hanna

Notary Public
Craigleith,
Kersfield Road,
Putney, London,
S.W.15.

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)



SECRET

I,

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

do

solemnly and sincerely Declare that:-

1. I am a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy.

2. I refer to my Statutory Declaration made the 19th day of June, 1956, marked G.A.F.1.

3. In that Declaration I referred to the position from which Commander Crabb entered the water, as being in the Portsmouth area. I wish to add that the exact position was from a boat moored in the Boat Pound immediately South of the Southern Railway Jetty in Portsmouth Dockyard.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the Statutory Declarations Act 1835.

DECLARED at Craighleith,
Putney, London, S.W.15.
this 19th day of June
1956.

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

Before me



Notary Public

POLICE CONSTABLE RONALD GEORGE WILLIAMS, stationed at Southbourne, said that at about 12 noon on the 9th June, 1957 he went to the Royal Air Force Station at Thorney Island and accompanied the Station Medical Officer to Pilsea Island and on the beach at Pilsea Island he saw some human remains. They were part of the body of a man dressed in a black rubber frogman's suit. The head and upper portion of the body and the arms were missing. Allowing for the fact that it had on this clothing when he first saw it, the photograph shown to him was what he saw.



(c) crown copyright

DR. DONALD FLIDESOLL KING said he is a Doctor of Medicine and a Pathologist.

On the 10th June, 1957 he made an examination of some human remains at Chichester Public Mortuary and when he saw them they were clothed in a frogman's suit. Above the waist, parts of the body including the skull had disappeared although certain bones including the left humerus and both scapulae remained. The abdominal cavity was empty except below the waist-band of the suit. The organs had undergone extensive post mortem change including a change known as adipocere but they were recognisable. He identified a photograph as being one of the remains and said that another, marked No: 3, was an actual size photograph of the feet. He had found the measurement of the feet to be $8\frac{3}{4}$ " and that is small for an adult man. He also found that there was a condition called hallux valgus which is a condition of the toes in which the big toe, which is the hallux, is turned outwards. The joint of the big toe is enlarged and disjointed. With regard to the hair on the body, the pubic hair was in tact and the colour was clearly a light brown and in certain lights when dry it had a gingerish tinge. He thought the deceased was rather a small man in the region of 5' 6" but he could give no more detail of his estimation. The legs were in a good state of preservation and he would describe them as being muscular and well formed and, apart from the feet, there was no deformity. They were quite straight.

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Re-called after Mrs. Grabb had given evidence:

A hammer toe normally involves the second toe and not the big toe.

The big toe might be slightly curled under the second toe.

JOHN SEYMOUR RANDALL of "Snow Goose", Cut Mill, Bosham, a Furrer, said that on the 9th June, 1957 he was out in his fishing boat accompanied by two men by the name of Gilby. He went down the Harbour from Bosham until he got to a point where he saw a black object floating in the water about 30 yards from the boat just surfacing with the little running tide showing just above the water every few seconds. They circled the object on several occasions and he decided it was not a buoy or a small mine which he thought at first and, upon closer examination, it appeared to be a tractor tyre because there were two large ribs showing just above the water. He was not satisfied and so went alongside the object and pulled it into the large boat with a boat hook. He then immediately saw it was the shape of a body and on examination he formed the opinion that it contained the body of a person in a rubber diving suit. The ridges he had seen were the two waist-band ridges. They towed the body in and then he reported it to the Royal Air Force Station at Thorney Island. He then returned and waited for the arrival of Police Constable Williams.

GEORGE WILLIAM BOSTOCK, a Temporary Clerical Officer in the Department of the Admiral Commanding Reserves, Queen's Anne's Mansions, London, S.W.1, said it was part of his duty to keep the records of Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Officers. One of the files under his control relates to Commander Lionel Kenneth Philip Crabb and this record shows that he was born on the 28th January, 1909. He entered the Navy and on the 30th April, 1948 he was released with the rank of Temporary Acting Lieutenant Commander. He was re-called to active service on the 12th October, 1951 with the substantive rank of Lieutenant Commander and on the 30th June, 1952 he was promoted to the rank of Commander. On the 8th April, 1955 he was finally released from active service and since that date he has not at all been employed in the service of the Navy or done any training.

MISS AMY FRANCES THOMAS of 2A Hans Road, London, S.W.3. said that she is the Manageress of a number of service flatlets at that address. A gentleman named Commander Crabb occupied one of these for some five years off and on for periods until April, 1956. While at that address he was working for some furniture people but she had no idea in what capacity. Early in April, 1956 he told her he was going to be away for a few days on business and a few days after that, on Tuesday the 17th April, 1956, he told her he was just leaving. He never came back.

MRS. MARGARET ELAINE CRABB of The Granville Hotel, Dover, a Typist/Barmaid said that on the 15th March, 1952 she married a man called Lionel Kenneth Crabb and they lived together until April, 1953. She then began proceedings for divorce against him and obtained a Decree. He did not defend the proceedings. The Decree was made Absolute about December, 1954. During the short time of their married life he was serving in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and shortly after they were married he became a Commander. She described him as a short man and said that he was not as tall as she, her height being 5' 5". His legs were very straight and muscular and the hair on his body was very light brown inclined to ginger. His feet were small and his big toes were very unusual. They appeared to be what she thought were hammer toes and were raised high off the ground. The photograph shown to her was not as she remembered them. She thought he took a size "6" shoe.

On the 11th June, 1957 she went to the Bognor Mortuary and there saw the remains of a human body. She could not identify the feet as those of her former husband although she was not able to say definitely that they were not his feet.

She had frequently heard her husband talk of Heinke, the firm that makes diving suits.

COLIN GREY TURNER of 1 New Park Road, Chichester, a shoe specialist, said that a foot measuring $8\frac{3}{4}$ " is rather small for a man and that if a man with that length of foot had ordinary normal straight feet then possibly he would wear shoes in the region of size 4 to 5. If, however, he had an enlarged joint he would possibly take a size or two larger depending on the width of the foot. The enlargement of the joint would make the foot broader.

SYDNEY JAMES KNOWLES of 2 Geoffrey Street, Preston, a swimming pool supervisor said that he joined the Royal Navy in December, 1939 and he first met Commander Crabb in 1941 when he did under-water work with him. Crabb was a small man. On countless occasions when they were dressing for this under-water work he saw Crabb stripped. The pubic hairs were ginger. He had strong legs with large calves due to all the swimming he did. In the winter of 1945, they were serving at Leghorn and the Captains of ships had been instructed to have placed rolls of barbed wire below the water-marks of their ships for protection against Italian frogmen. Early one morning Commander Crabb and he were going below the surface to search for limpet mines and they were going to investigate the American ship the "John Harrison" to see that mines were not present. As they were going down, a tug came along casting up a wash and it threw both of them against the barbed wire of this ship. When they went back to their launch, he noticed that Commander Crabb had sustained a wound on the side of his left knee. He dressed it for him. About three weeks later, when he was working with Crabb again, he noticed a scar - it was in the shape of an inverted "Y" about the size of a shilling in circumference on the side of the left knee.

After the war he saw Crabb from time to time and he knew that he was living at 2A Hans Road, London. He was also quite familiar with the clothing that he wore when he was diving. He wore a two-piece rubber suit with a neck seal instead of a hood. He used to wear a pair of maroon swimming shorts and he had two sets of combination underwear to wear alternately, one khaki in colour and the other blue. He also used to use blue socks.

He was not able to say from the photograph shown to him whether the feet are those of Crabb.

ERIC JAMES BLAKE of Elmscott, St. Mary's Road, Leatherhead, Managing Director of Heinks & Co. Ltd. 87 Grange Road, Bermondsey, London, S.E.1. said that his firm manufactures, among other things, under-water swim suits. He knew Commander Crabb and he agreed with the description of him given by other witnesses. On three occasions his Company supplied Crabb with under-water suits and the last one was supplied on the 11th October, 1955. It was unusual in that it had a neck seal and did not have a hood. Normally, these suits are sold with hoods. He had seen the suit found on the deceased and said that this was designed in about January, 1955. During the ten months between the time it was designed and the time a suit was sold to Commander Crabb in October, 1955 they sold about fifteen suits identical in all respects to that found on the deceased. Crabb always expressed a preference for a suit with a neck seal instead of a hood. The suit he had seen at Chichester Police Station was identical to the one sold to Crabb but he was unable to say, of course, whether it was the same suit.



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DETECTIVE SUPERINTENDENT ALLAN HOARE, of the West Sussex Constabulary, Chichester said that he has been in charge of enquiries made in connection with this body which was found in Chichester Harbour on the 9th June, 1957. He had made enquiries from all the Police Forces on the South Coast from Cornwall to Kent and from those enquiries he had been informed that no other person similarly dressed to the body recovered has been reported missing. On the 23rd October, 1955 there was a man reported missing after diving in the River Dart but his clothing was in no way similar to the clothing in this case.

The frogman's suit in this case has marks similar to rust marks on both legs, more so on the right leg, as if the body has been caught up in some metal under-water object.

He was present when the Coroner viewed the body and when the witnesses saw it.

SECRET

Naval Law Branch,
Queen Anne's Mansions,
St. James's Park,
LONDON, S.W.1.

21st June, 1957

PERSONAL

My dear Webb,

I enclose two copies of the note which I thought we might give to C.N.I. so that he will have at any rate some comfort next Wednesday.

2. Stephenson thinks that the Press will be very angry, and that they will give us a very bad time as well as inspiring Members of Parliament to ask further questions. However, once the legal proceedings are over - at which we can be required to answer questions whether we like it or not - it seems to me that we can relapse into our old attitude of refusing to add anything to the Prime Minister's statements. This will not make us popular but it cannot actually do any harm.

Yours sincerely,

G. C. B. DODDS

Commander A.B. Webb, R.N.
Secretary to D.N.I.

SECRET

C.N.I.

The adjourned inquest on Commander Crabb will be resumed at Chichester on Wednesday the 26th June at 1500.

2. The body will be identified by the evidence of the following:-

(a) Crabb's ex-wife (small feet, etc.);

(b) Heinke's, who will identify the frogman's suit as being similar to one which they sold to Crabb;

(c) A man in Newcastle who has come forward and identified a bullet wound in Crabb's leg which he knew he had received in the Middle East in 1944. (The scar is of a special shape which was mentioned in the pathologist's report).

3. The Coroner is aware of the background to the case and is not asking for the appearance of any embarrassing naval witness. He does, however, need the Admiralty's help because, surprisingly, none of the witnesses mentioned above can give Crabb's full names or the date of his birth.

4. For this purpose Mr. G.W. Bostock, a Temporary Clerical Officer serving with A.C.R., will give evidence from Crabb's Service record. He knows nothing of the background to the story and will not be able to answer any embarrassing questions, even if they are asked. In any case the Coroner (who is sitting without a jury) will stop the proceedings as soon as he can once he is satisfied of the points on which he requires to be satisfied; and there will be no adjournment during which such matters could be probed.

5. Bostock's evidence will indicate that Crabb did not serve actively as a Naval Officer after April 1955. After the inquest the Press, who will no doubt be disappointed by the lack of sensation in the proceedings, may ask questions about the capacity in which Crabb undertook the trials of underwater apparatus, on which we announced in April 1956 that he had been lost. This is not really embarrassing as we said that he had been "specially employed in connection with" the trials and these words do not suggest that he was necessarily employed as a Naval Officer.

6. The answer to all questions continues to be that we have nothing to add to what the Prime Minister said in the House of Commons in May 1956.

7. Bostock is going to finish his evidence by saying that during his service as an officer Crabb consistently received extremely high reports from his senior officers and was regarded as a man of very high qualities and an inspiration to those serving under him. I thought it would be pleasant for the Admiralty witness to take the only opportunity of paying a tribute to him.

8

GEORGE WILLIAM BOSTOCK will say:

I am a Temporary Clerical Officer in the Department of the Admiral Commanding Reserves stationed at Queen Anne's Mansions, London, S.W.1.

It is part of my duty to keep the records of Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Officers and I have been doing this since 1946. One of the files under my control related to Commander Lionel Kenneth Philip Crabb. The records show that he was born on the 28th January, 1909 and he entered the Navy through H.M.S. Conway. In due course he was promoted and on the 30th April, 1948 he was released with the rank of Temporary Acting Lieutenant Commander. He was re-called to active service on the 12th October, 1951 with the substantive rank of Lieutenant Commander and on the 30th June, 1952 he was promoted to the rank of Commander. He was finally released from Naval Service on the 8th April, 1955 since which date the record shows that he has not been actively employed in the service of the Royal Navy although he was, as are many other Officers attached to the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve so that he could be re-called if necessary. So far as I know he has not either been re-called or done any training since April, 1955. My record would show any kind of Naval service which he performed whilst in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and there is no such entry on the record.

Commander Crabb was awarded the George Medal on the 25th January, 1944 and the Order of the British Empire on the 14th December, 1945. During his service as an Officer he consistently received extremely high reports from his senior Officers and was regarded as a man of very high qualities and an inspiration to those serving under him.

Reasons why Admiralty don't want to appear

1. As soon as he appears (and even if his evidence were to be given in camera), it would immediately be assumed that he was the missing "M=guilt" and he would become the target for all kinds of enquiry from the press & other sources.

2. Even if he were not asked in open court to say where exactly he last saw Crabb, he would inevitably be asked this by the press. If he refused to answer, the inference would be stronger than ever that it was in the vicinity of the Russian ships. This would not only be contrary to the country's interest but contrary to what the Admiralty have already said, as a cover story, namely that

it was in Stokes Bay. ^{Similar considerations arise} only more strongly in regard to questions about the ^{purpose of the operation:} ^{but less likely to be asked.}

3. The story ^{has to tell is basically} inconsistent with the impression which we have tried to convey - that this was a naval operation - because, if it had been, ^{would have} reported to his superiors that Crabb had failed to appear and there would have been a highly organized search.

4. Even if the Press do not realize that, it is unfair to ^{(and also, incidentally, to}

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

to the whole of the naval command at Portsmouth
to give the impression that they failed in their
duty to try to find him.

5. The reason why no search was conducted
can only be explained by saying that a search
could not be carried out beside the Russian
warships, which immediately suggests the true
nature of the operation - again contrary to the public
interests.

~~6. Admittedly,~~

4. 's evidence could be confined
to the fact that he saw Craft into the water
and to identifying the clothing, it would not be
so bad.

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4)

I first met Lionel Kenneth Philip Crabb in about 1949 when we were both in the Royal Navy and from then until 1956 we were personal friends and he came to my house from time to time. During the course of our friendship we were at times both engaged in diving operations and under-water swimming. Some time in 1955 he went into civilian life and was engaged in the furniture trade but he still kept up his interest in diving and under-water swimming. From time to time he visited my home or contacted me when he was in the Portsmouth area.

On the 17th April, 1956 during the evening, he telephoned me at my home and asked me to meet him for a drink. I did this and when we were together he asked me whether I would help him in a dive as he needed someone to assist him getting into his under-water clothing. I agreed to do this and on the afternoon of the 18th April, 1956 I helped him into his under-water clothing and assisted him to go over the side of a boat in the Portsmouth area. He dived and was under water for about half an hour and when he re-surfaced near the boat I helped him on board and he then said that he would like to make another dive with a little additional equipment. We decided that early the next morning would be a good opportunity for this because the tide was then favourable. The next morning, I again helped him into his equipment, which included some additional weights for which he had asked, and assisted him to go over the side of the boat. I think this was shortly before 7 a.m. He was then wearing a cotton vest, bathing trunks, rayon combinations, stockinet combinations and socks underneath the two-piece Heinke diving suit. He also had on rubber flippers on his feet, breathing apparatus and, on his head he had a little woolly Balaclava with a bathing cap on top. The breathing apparatus would have enabled him to breathe comfortably for about 90 minutes with an emergency of an



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to see whether I could see him at all but as I was unable to find him, I went ashore and reported that he was missing.

I have seen the clothing which was found on the Deceased's body. It appears to me to be similar to the clothing which Crabb was wearing when I assisted him over the side of the boat and in my own mind I am convinced that it is the same clothing.

From Rear Admiral J. G. T. Inglis, O.B.E.



Whitehall 9000
Ext. 743

Personal & Secret

Intelligence

Head of N. h.

Attached is a copy of
the letter I have sent to C-in-C
Portsmouth.

J. G. T. Inglis
17/6/57.

P.S. I have not had the opportunity of
putting 2 S.h. in the picture but I hope
to do so tomorrow Tuesday.

From:- Rear Admiral J.G.T. Inglis, C.B., O.B.E.

TOP SECRET

PERSONAL

Intelligence Division,
Naval Staff,
Admiralty, S.W.1.

P.976

17th June, 1957

5

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

The Crabb Case

As you know I have been in direct touch with the Captain of VERNON concerning some of the details of the Crabb case, but we have now reached the stage where I feel you should be informed of how the affair is developing.

2. I am afraid the lawyers have concluded that it is inevitable that [redacted] of the Diving School should give evidence in person at the inquest. + The Coroner and Chief Constable are however being most co-operative. The whole of his evidence, including his taking the oath, will probably be held in camera.

+ as he was the last person on our side to see him alive.

3. The Admiralty will be represented by the Treasury Solicitor.

4. We hope the police will be able to get him to and from the court without the Press becoming aware that [redacted] is involved. We are particularly concerned about the necessity for keeping his part in the affair away from the Press and, even allowing for the skill they have shown in the past in obtaining clues, we hope it will be possible to bring this off.

RETAINED UNDER
SECTION 3(4)

5. Even if the Press don't find out that [redacted] is giving evidence, there is likely to be talk in VERNON about his absence on that day, and this may reach the reporters. At present only the Captain knows about [redacted] role in the affair, and to avoid any undesirable speculation and possibly open comment in VERNON, I am hoping that Blundell will be able to arrange some fictitious duty or possibly leave for [redacted] for a few days covering the day of the inquest. I am asking Blundell to let me know what he thinks would provide the most natural cover for his absence.

6. Even so it will probably be necessary for him to tell some officers in VERNON as much as is necessary to keep their mouths shut. I suggest this should be done at the Captain's discretion.

7. I hope the above is in accordance with your wishes, but if not perhaps you will be good enough to inform Blundell (to whom I am sending a copy of this letter), and let me know.

8. I might add that [redacted] is being extremely robust in his approach to his unenviable situation.

9. Sir John Lang has seen this letter and agrees.

Fig 23

SECRET PERSONAL

FROM CAPTAIN E.A. BLUNDELL, O.B.E., Royal Navy

H.M.S. VERNON

Portsmouth

11th June, 1957.

4

I enclose for your information a copy of the statement made by Lieutenant McLanachan, today Tuesday 11th June, to the Chichester Police after examination of the diving equipment and body recovered off Chichester harbour.

2. The only equipment which could definitely be established as being of Service pattern were the Swim Fins which were marked Pattern 3386. Lieutenant McLanachan did not however draw attention to this other than to state that they were similar to Admiralty pattern.

3. Lieutenant McLanachan understood that the police would be enquiring from Messrs Heinke whether they had supplied a Frogman's suit to Commander Crabb.

4. He was informed that he would probably be required later at the inquest, which is understood to be on 26th June. He has not yet been interviewed by the press. I have instructed him not to reveal any details of his examination should he be approached by the press, other than that he was sent to the Chichester police to assist in the identification of the diving equipment recovered.

E.A. Blundell
Captain.

Rear Admiral J.G.T. Inglis, O.B.E.
Director of Naval Intelligence,
Admiralty.

SECRET PERSONAL

SECRET

PERSONAL

4 A

William Young McLANACHAN, Lieutenant Royal Navy, H.M.S. Vernon, Portsmouth, states :-

I am a Lieutenant Royal Navy stationed at H.M.S. Vernon, Portsmouth. I am a Diving Officer.

Commander Grabb was fairly well known to me. I first met him in 1948 when he was serving in the R.N.V.R., and he was at that time undergoing his annual training at H.M.S. Vernon. I did not see much of him until about 1955, when he had been recalled for service. He had I think served from about 1951.

I was frequently in his company from 1955 when we were together at H.M.S. Vernon. Although I did not actually dive with him, I frequently saw him in his diving equipment. When he was at H.M.S. Vernon he used Royal Navy equipment. He had small feet, but I could not say I really noticed his toes, although I did notice he was splay footed. I did not see anything of Commander Grabb after he left the Service.

I have today the 11th June, 1957, attended Chichester Police Station, where I was shown by Detective Superintendent Hoare the following equipment :-

- 1 Frogman's two piece suit.
- 1 pair swim fins.
- 2 sorbe pads.
- 1 pr. bathing trunks.
- 1 pr. nylon socks.
- 1 pr. blue combinations (top missing)
- 1 pr. nylon combinations.
- 1 piece of an undervest.

With the exception of the swim fins, I cannot identify any equipment as that issued by the Royal Navy. It is as sold commercially. The swim fins are also sold commercially, but are similar to Admiralty pattern.

At 4 pm. on the 11th June, 1957, I viewed a body at the Mortuary, Bognor Regis. I cannot definitely identify the body as that of Commander Grabb, all I can say is that the feet are similar inasmuch that they are small and appear to be slightly splayed.

Signed : W.Y. McLanachan.

Lieut. R.N.

SECRET PERSONAL

1. Frogman's rubber tunic marked HEINKE LONDON.
2. Frogman's overalls, marked HEINKE LONDON inside of waistband. Seals similarly marked and 9 - 10, (inside of left leg and at feet large areas of rust).
3. Two flippers, one has small area of rust.
4. One rubber waist band.
5. Two sarbo pads.
6. Pair of maroon bathing trunks, Jantzen.
7. Pair of nylon socks, St. Michael brand, size 10 - 12.
8. Pair of stockingette blue combinations (top half missing 18" zip).
9. Pair of nylon combinations, top torn.



(3)

Secretary

Thank you for your note about P.S. 448/56. I am glad that it has been agreed that we should say as little as possible on paper.

The passage in square brackets in the draft now enclosed in the paper goes beyond my terms of reference, but it might be worth while to put it in so as to show how flimsy were the foundations of the claim on the Admiralty. If it is thought best to omit it, the draft will make sense without it.

G. H. Lewin
A/Head of N.L.
27.9.56



Secretary

P.S. 448/56

(2)

In N.L. 1811/56 — attached — you approved that we should reject, as advised by the Treasury solicitor, the claim for maintenance put forward by the divorced wife of Commander Brabb through her solicitors. Nothing further has been heard from the solicitors, but Mrs. Margaret Brabb has now made representations to Mr. John Arbuthnot, her M.P.

The draft enclosed in P.S. 448/56 might serve as a reply to the M.P., but we may be rather embarrassed if he pursues the matter. We have, as you know, issued a death certificate in the usual form, and if this came out (on a follow-up of the reference to presumption of death in Hansard of 30.5.56, column 14, for example) it would not seem to square very well with our statement that Brabb had been out of the Navy for over a year at the time of his death.

It might perhaps be suggested to Parliamentary Secretary that he should see Mr. Arbuthnot personally, either as a follow-up to a written reply or in place of it. Possibly the best tactic would be to send a written answer now and have recourse to interview if the M.P. returned to the charge. It should not be hard to persuade a Government supporter that nothing but embarrassment could come of his pursuing this business.

May I have your directions, please? If a draft answer is to be put up in the ordinary way, should N.L. 1811/56 — whose circulation has hitherto been very strictly controlled — be placed with the P.S. paper?

PS, I apologise for all this manuscript — I don't entrust this subject to the typing pool, and Dodds's secretary is on leave.

G. A. Lewin

Ahead of N.L.

20. 9. 56



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Head of NL (Personal)

Dear Lewis

Paul Jay agrees to send
a reply to Mr. Arbutnot to the same
effect as the letter to Aedington & Davis
(but not recognisable as the same
letter). He will reckon to see

Arbutnot as soon as maybe
hereafter & tell him some of
the facts we do not wish
to write about. Please

let me have a draft
(but leave your original
draft which will
serve as an
aide memoire
to P.S.

DL

[MS 101
Vol 1]

Brief issued by CNI to cover Crabb's statement.

1064

B R I E F

(1)

Copies to:

News Room
Duty Commander

Private Office
Resident Clerk

Cdr. L.K.P. Crabb, OBE., GM., RNVR., who was specially employed in connexion with trials of certain underwater apparatus, has not returned from a test dive and must be presumed drowned.

2. The above is NOT to be volunteered to the Press, but can be used in answer to any pertinent Press enquiry which may arise.

3. If pressed by the enquirer, it can be admitted that the location was in Stokes Bay, Portsmouth area.

4. Similarly, if pressed, it is to be admitted that he became missing, presumed drowned, on 19th April.

5. If asked whether the next of kin has been informed, the answer is yes.

C.N.I.
27th April, 1956