



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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11 Meán Fómhair, 1986.

An Rúnaí Príobháideach  
An tAire Airgeadais

I am to refer to the memorandum no. S2/20/29 dated 11 September, 1986, submitted by the Minister for Finance concerning the Queen Victoria Statue and the Gough Monument and to inform you that, at a meeting held today, the Government agreed to the removal of the Queen Victoria Statue located at Daingean, County Offaly, to Australia, on loan until recalled.

Rúnaí an Rialtais

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An Rúnaí Príobháideach  
An tAire Gnóthaí Eachtracha/An tAire Stáit ag Oifig na nOibreacha Poiblí (A. Uí Dhubhghaill)/Aire Stáit ag Roinn an Taoisigh (T. Ó Niallain)

Mar eolas don Aire/Aire Stáit.

*ghm*

2.11

*PB 16/9*

*ku Buckley*

*Mr Stacey*

*To see Hoare.*

*M. Dafe*

*15/9*

1. Mr. Stays  
2. Mr. ~~Stays~~ PB

15/9

Mary,

To see Mr. The  
Government decision is  
being prepared at present.

Could you give me a ring about the matter,

Simon.

M. D.

12/9

Note: Informed by Mr. Hare that the  
Government had decided to send the  
Statute to Australia.

M. D.

12/9

Oifig an Aire AirgeadaisMemorandum for the GovernmentA. Queen Victoria StatueB. Gough MonumentA. QUEEN VICTORIA STATUEDecision Sought

1. The Minister for Finance seeks approval of the Government to put the Queen Victoria Statue, originally on Leinster Lawn, on display on a secure site to be chosen by the Office of Public Works.
2. The history of the Queen Victoria Statue is set out in an appendix to this Memorandum.

Request to dispose of the Statue

3. The Lord Mayor of Sidney, Australia, has asked if the Queen Victoria Statue could be acquired as a gift or on loan until recall (though practically speaking recall seem unlikely). The statue would be located in front of the newly restored Queen Victoria Building in Sidney. (Only the Queen Victoria Figure is requested: three smaller bronzes from the composition would remain in Ireland). All expenses would be borne by the building promoters. The enquiry was addressed to the Irish Ambassador in Australia. No commitment has been given formally or informally by the Government, any Minister or official to accede to the request, though the courteous response by the Irish Ambassador in Australia and the OPW to the request may have raised Australian expectations.

Objections to the Australian request

4. The Minister for Finance strongly objects to the removal of the Queen Victoria Statue from Ireland. The Monument is representative of one of the many

traditions in Irish history. It is part of our heritage in no less a way than Norman or Viking remains.

5. In the context of the Anglo/Irish Agreement, in which reference has been made to the "two traditions", the Minister for Finance sees great danger in publicly jettisoning a figure of the second tradition. The repercussions for the Government from such an act would far outweigh any minor adverse publicity that might arise if the Australian request were refused.

#### Exhibition of the Queen Victoria Statue

6. The Office of Public Works will be asked to say where best the Queen Victoria Statue might be put on display in safety and without publicity and the appropriate timing for this. It was, for many years, in the inner courtyard of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham. That site and others will be considered by OPW.

#### B. GOUGH MONUMENT

7. The Monument was sold for £100 to Mr. Robert Guinness, Straffan, Co. Kildare. It is now in England. Mr. Guinness has indicated to OPW that because of the adverse publicity to which the removal of the Monument has given rise he is prepared to consider returning the Monument to the OPW. Mr. Guinness, however, wishes to attach conditions to the return of the Monument. A meeting has been arranged between the OPW and Mr. Guinness for 11 September, 1986 to discuss the matter.

8. The Taoiseach agrees in principle with the Australian request.

9. The Minister for Foreign Affairs has been consulted and will convey his objections to the proposal of the Minister for Finance at the meeting.