

[Search Help](#)

[HANSARD 1803–2005](#) → [1920s](#) → [1925](#) → [December 1925](#) → [2 December 1925](#) → [Commons Sitting](#) → [KADAVER FACTORIES.](#)

GERMAN GOVERNMENT DENIAL.



www.parliament.uk

HC Deb 02 December 1925 vol 188 cc2232-3

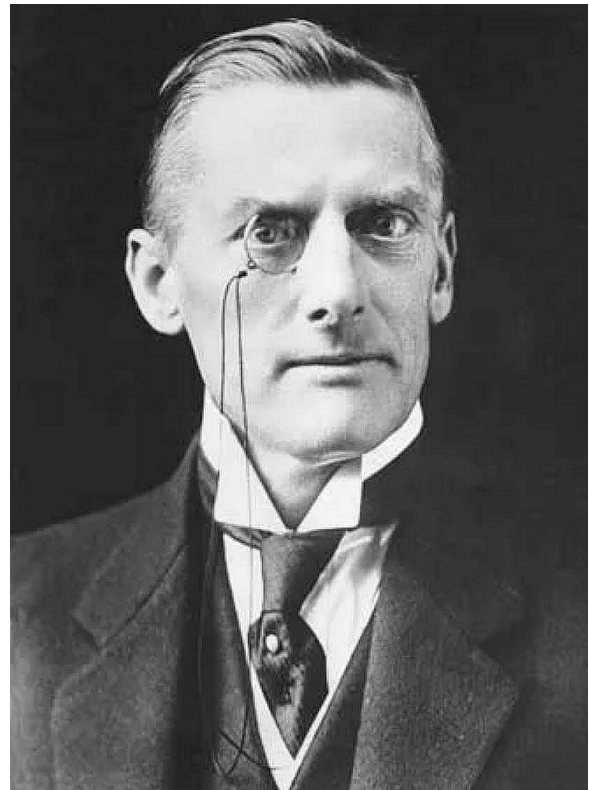
Mr. ARTHUR HENDERSON May I ask a question of which the Leader of the Opposition gave notice—and may I express his regret that he is unable to be present to submit this question himself— namely, to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can make any further statement as to the [Kadaver story?](#)

The SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir Austen Chamberlain)—who, on rising, was received with general cheers: Yes, Sir. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War told the House last week how the story reached His Majesty's Government in 1917. The Chancellor of the German Reich has authorised me to say, on the authority of the German Government, that there was never any foundation for it. I need scarcely add that, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, I accept this denial, and I trust that this [false report](#) will not again be revived.

[Sir Austen Chamberlain, Foreign Secretary, Pilgrim Society. (Dec. 02, 1925). GERMAN GOVERNMENT DENIAL (re. alleged WWI Kadavar factories, rendering bayoneted Belgian babies for soap). UK Parliament, Hansard. Sources: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1925/dec/02/german-government-denial>

<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1925/nov/24/statement-by-secretary-for-war>]

Sir Austen Chamberlain (b. Oct. 1863; d. Mar. 6, 1937)
 First Lord of the Admiralty (Dug. 24, 1931 - Nov. 05, 1931)
[Foreign Secretary \(Nov. 03, 1924 - Jun. 04, 1929\)](#)
 Lord Privy Seal (Apr. 01, 1921 - Oct. 23, 1922)
 Chancellor of the Exchequer (Oct. 09, 1903 - Dec. 04, 1905)
 Secretary of State for India (May 25, 1915 - Jul. 17, 1917)
 Postmaster General (Aug. 11, 1902 - Oct. 09, 1903)
 Member of Parliament, Birmingham West (Jul. 14, 1914 - Mar. 16, 1937)
 Member of Parliament, East Worcestershire (Mar. 30, 1892 - Jul. 07, 1914)



[Search Help](#)

[HANSARD 1803–2005](#) → [1920s](#) → [1925](#) → [November 1925](#) → [24 November 1925](#) → [Commons Sitting](#) → [KADAVER FACTORIES.](#)

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY FOR WAR.



www.parliament.uk

HC Deb 24 November 1925 vol 188 cc1142-3

30. *Lieut.-Commander KENWORTHY* asked the Secretary of State for War if, in view of the feeling aroused in Germany by the recrudescence of the rumours of the so-called corpse conversion factory behind the German lines in the late War, he can give any information as to the source of the original rumour and the extent to which it was accepted by the War Office at the time?

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS At this distance of time I do not think that [the source of the original rumour can be traced with any certainty.](#) The statement that the Germans had set up a factory for the conversion of dead bodies first appeared on the 10th April, 1917, in the "Lokalanzeiger," published in Berlin, and in the "Independance Beige" and "La Belgique," two Belgian newspapers published in France and Holland. The statements were reproduced in the Press here, with the comment that it was the first German admission concerning the way in which the Germans used their dead bodies.

Questions were asked in the House of Commons on the 30th April, 1917, and the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs replied on behalf of the Government that he had then no information beyond that contained in the extract from the German Press. But shortly afterwards a German Army Order containing instructions for the delivery of dead bodies to the establishments described in the "Lokalanzeiger" was captured in France, and forwarded to the War Office, who, after careful consideration, permitted it to be published.

The terms of this Order were such that, taken in conjunction with the articles in the "Lokalanzeiger" and in the two Belgian papers and the previously existing rumours, it appeared to the War Office to afford corroborative evidence of the story. Evidence that the word "Kadaver" was used to mean human bodies, and not only carcasses of animals, was found in German dictionaries and German anatomical and other works, and the German assertion that the story was disposed of by reference to the meaning of the word "Kadaver" was not accepted. On the information before them at the time, the War Office appear to have seen no reason to disbelieve the truth of the story.

Lieut.-Commander KENWORTHY I am much obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for his very full answer. Does he not think it desirable now that the War Office should finally disavow the story and their present belief in it?

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS I cannot believe any public interest is served by further questions on this story. I have given the House the fullest information that is in my possession in the hope that the hon. Members will be satisfied with what I have said, [HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.]

Lieut. - Commander KENWORTHY Does not the right hon. Gentleman think it desirable, even now, to finally admit the inaccuracy of the original story in view of Locarno and other things?

Sir L. WORTHINGTON-EVANS It is not a question of whether it was accurate or inaccurate. What I was concerned with was the information upon which the War Office acted at the time. Of course, the fact that there has been no corroboration since necessarily alters the complexion of the case, but I was dealing with the information in the possession of the authorities at the time.