

in Rhodesia is attempting to perpetuate a system whereby the white settlers, who are 1/16 of the population, maintain effective political domination over the black majority who are 15/16 of the population.

● (12.00 noon)

This has naturally placed a severe strain on relations within the multiracial Commonwealth and between the West and African states.

I should emphasize at the outset that Rhodesia is British territory. The illegal declaration of independence of November 11, 1965 has not been accepted by Britain, or any other state, and the British Government remains responsible for this territory and for the conditions to govern Rhodesian independence. Negotiations between the British and Rhodesian governments went on for several years before the illegal declaration of independence last November by Mr. Smith. The negotiations were broken off by the Rhodesians. It then fell to the British Government to decide how to restore a legal situation in Rhodesia, and the decision was to employ economic measures rather than force. Throughout, Britain has clearly had the primary responsibility for Rhodesia. It is the colonial power.

At the same time, in view of Rhodesia's importance to race relations in Africa, and, in view of the multi-racial nature of the Commonwealth, Britain has fully recognized that the Rhodesian question is a matter of legitimate and strong Commonwealth concern. At the 1964 Prime Ministers' Conference, there was an extensive discussion of Rhodesia and a lengthy reference to the question in the communiqué, which includes a statement of the view of Commonwealth Prime Ministers that independence should take place on the basis of majority rule and that a unilateral declaration of independence would not be recognized. The issue was discussed in 1965 and again referred to in the communiqué in which the Commonwealth Prime Ministers reaffirmed—all of them—that they were "irrevocably opposed" to any U.D.I.

Up to last November, Canada had normal relations with the Rhodesian government, and the Canadian Government had already sent a confidential message to the Rhodesian government some time before the 1965 Conference pointing out the grave consequences of a unilateral declaration of independence. This warning was repeated again in the succeeding months.

I myself received representatives of the government of Rhodesia during the last two and a half years prior to U.D.I. and explained our position, as have other governments in and outside the Commonwealth.

After the unilateral declaration of independence, many Commonwealth countries reacted very strongly, as had been generally anticipated. Various African governments argued that Britain should use force in putting down the illegal Smith régime, as Britain had already done in dealing with civil disorders and revolts in other colonies and dependencies. The Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity passed a resolution early in December calling on all member states to sever relations with Britain if the Smith régime was not "crushed" before mid-December. Following this resolution, various countries, including two Commonwealth members, Ghana and Tanzania, withdrew their Missions from London. In an attempt to minimize the damage of this breach, Canada assumed the role of protecting power for Britain in Tanzania and for