

Rhodesian Position in Commonwealth

als which they hope may establish a new point of departure for Rhodesia's political development.

We expect there will be strong misgivings on the part of many Africans over the proposals. It is entirely understandable that they should wish all Africans in Rhodesia to have the advantages which they themselves have obtained through independence on the basis of majority rule. Canada is completely in accord with the desire of Africans to achieve the abolition of all forms of racial discrimination throughout Africa and the realization of full political rights for all African peoples, a desire we and they have repeatedly expressed in the United Nations and at Commonwealth meetings.

• (2:10 p.m.)

The Commonwealth has not been successful in its attempts to solve the Rhodesian problem. In my view this does not mean that the Commonwealth should be considered of lessening importance. In its brief existence as a multiracial association, it has contributed greatly to the adjustments required by the accession to independence of its members from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. Canada is confident that the Commonwealth can continue to perform a vital role in the seventies.

The proposals envisage seeking the views of the people of Rhodesia. It is entirely right that this should be so. This is obviously a vital element in the achievement of any settlement. The provision for a commission appointed by Britain represents a serious attempt to test the opinion of Rhodesian Africans. Nevertheless, there are inherent complications. The vast majority of the people have been given little opportunity in the past to express their political will, certainly not on complicated constitutional questions. There are definite physical limitations on the ability of the commission to consult everyone. Another cause of concern is the state of emergency which apparently will prevail during the commission's deliberations. African nationalist parties such as have come to power elsewhere, notably ZAPU and ZANU, will, it appears, continue to be unable to operate, and their leaders will be prevented from influencing public opinion during the consultations.

I am sure that I speak for all members of this House when I say that we hope that notwithstanding these limitations the commission will be able to ascertain the views of the Rhodesian people and, in particular, the African population as to the acceptability to them of the proposed agreement. I feel confident that men of the integrity of those nominated to be chairman and vice-chairmen will report not only the views they hear but also on the adequacy of the procedures for ascertaining those views.

As Canadians we may view the proposals as falling short of what is desirable, but we cannot substitute our judgment for the judgment of the Rhodesian people themselves as to whether they prefer to go on as at present or to accept the settlement that has been proposed. Whatever happens, Canada will not cease to be concerned with the attainment of full democracy and social justice in Rhodesia.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, this is a statement to which it has been difficult to find a response that satisfies. In one sense I feel it is a bit premature for us to pass judgment upon what has been

[Mr. Sharp.]

done or, indeed, to express an opinion. I am sure we would all welcome an announcement of the end of a certain type of government wherein such a minority rules over such a majority by such means. Therefore we do not regard this as an announcement of the best kind by any means. Indeed, the minister couched his statement in those terms.

These are the kind of questions about which there is no monopoly of concern in any group or in any country. I am sure that we cannot over such questions mount a successful exercise in excessive party or personal purity. We all wish that more could be accomplished toward the aims to which this country has paid its allegiance, and to which all of us still pay allegiance.

We know that in Britain there is great concern and anxiety about the longlasting Rhodesian problem. I have been watching with great interest the concern that a man like the Right Hon. Nigel Fisher, one of the great liberal Africanists of today, a man so well acquainted with African problems and so sympathetic to them, has displayed. He has come to the conclusion that the step that is being proposed is in fact a step in the right direction.

I also noted in the minister's statement a realistically painful recognition that many of the programs that were brought about in connection with the Rhodesian problem have not been very successful. I think we have all reached the stage where we must admit not only the lack of success but the great degree of hypocrisy connected with the sanctions program. Indeed, some nasty person said the other day that the sanctions were as leaky as certain governments. The other day we read with anxiety that the United States was to purchase chrome from Rhodesia. Of course there should be reason for that anxiety, but Rhodesia has been producing chrome for years and years and I have heard no one say that it has been stockpiled. It might be interesting to know where that chrome has gone in the last eight years.

An hon. Member: To Russia.

Mr. Macquarrie: I was impressed by the minister's statement about the importance of events in South Africa. I agree with what he said. I would point to that to renew my urging that the government, which the other day with flags fluttering and banners flying opened a legation in Algeria, should move to open a legation in Zambia which I understand has been seeking such an opening for a long time.

I know there is much that can be said on the other side about the satisfactory situation of some people in Rhodesia in that, although they do not wield power, the economic conditions under which they live are better than those in other countries of Africa. I am impressed by that but not convinced by it. I agree with John Stuart Mill who many years ago said that even good government is no substitute for self-government, and I do not call the government of Rhodesia a good one.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macquarrie: I ought to note, because the people of Canada are interested in this question, as they should be, that certain misleading statements in the press have indicated that what is taking place in this area, or may