

stalemate which has resulted, such factors as the political stagnation for the Rhodesian Africans, the drift towards apartheid, the isolation of all Rhodesians from the outside world, and the distortion of Rhodesian economic and social development had led the British authorities to believe that there were serious disadvantages to the perpetuation of the status quo. These were among the considerations behind the decision of the British Government to make these proposals, which they hope may establish a new point of departure for Rhodesia's political development.

We expect that there will be strong misgivings on the part of many African governments over the proposals. It is entirely understandable that they should wish all Africans in Rhodesia to have the same 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.

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 multi-racial 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