

In my statement to the House of Commons of December 1, 1971, I noted that the proposed terms of a settlement for Rhodesia agreed to by British and Rhodesian representatives in Salisbury were being submitted for the consideration of the Rhodesian people as a whole by means of the Pearce Commission. Despite some of the reservations which I noted at that time, the Canadian Government did not attempt to anticipate the decision which only the people of Rhodesia, and particularly the majority of Rhodesian Africans, were qualified to make in this matter: whether the proposals represented a sufficient hope for future democratic development to compensate for the continued denial of majority government.

The Pearce Commission completed its task of seeking the views of the people of Rhodesia and has now reported that it found the proposals were not acceptable to the Rhodesian people as a whole.

It would be easy now to say that the whole Rhodesian question goes back to where it was before this exercise got under way, but in fact the clock cannot be turned back. A new political awareness has now been created among Rhodesia's Africans. The ruling white minority has been made conscious of the strength and extent of black opposition to continued minority rule. At the same time the confidence of outside observers in the integrity and thoroughness of the Pearce Commission has been upheld. The Canadian position of waiting upon the considered views of the Rhodesian people themselves has been vindicated.

The course of events from this point on is naturally difficult to predict. The British Government, given its continuing responsibilities for Rhodesia, has made clear its intention to keep open the way for further efforts at a settlement and its hope that those concerned both inside and outside Rhodesia will not take steps which would make a settlement more difficult to achieve. I need hardly stress that any solution which is now proposed must be one which can engage the confidence of the African people of Rhodesia.

So far as Canada is concerned, we will continue to support the aim of democratic majority rule for Rhodesia. We will continue to refuse recognition to the illegal régime ruling Rhodesia. We will continue to uphold our U.N. obligations and will maintain in effect the existing economic sanctions.