

quisition. The government also wants to ensure adequate water supplies and a road system before settlers move in. There were misunderstandings when application forms for potential settlers were distributed through the fifty-five new and inexperienced district councils: in some places women (who are literally the backbone of agriculture) were told they could not apply, and in parts of Matabeleland there was apathy. Lands Minister Moven Mahachi says: "We are gradually overcoming these problems."

He himself had experience on a series of cooperatives run by Anglican missionaries (from St. Faith's, Rusape, on to Cold Comfort Farm) that were often the target of previous governments from the 1950s. Now cooperatives in various forms, some involving communal living and working together on a "core estate," but all including individual smallholdings, are the favored instrument for resettlement. Didymus Mutasa, another St. Faith's graduate and now Speaker of the national assembly, calls them "the spearhead of Zimbabwe's socialist structure." What the government will not support, anyhow, is the wholesale transfer of large estates to individual Africans, as happened in Kenya. The aim is to provide peasant families with 400 Zimbabwe dollars net income a year. And the individual holdings will be no more than twelve acres of arable land or else enough to carry sixty head of cattle.

The longer-term future, according to another Minister, lies in big dams and large-scale mechanization; and forty-five sites are already marked out for such projects. The ZIMCORD papers speak of the development of the Sabi Valley over fifteen years with the construction of the Condo Dam and irrigation of 70,000 hectares — at the cost of more than 500 million Zimbabwe dollars. Although peasant families would farm there (growing everything from citrus and sugar to vegetables), it worries Zimbabweans of the "small is beautiful" school by resembling too much the long-established white estates at Triangle and Hippo Valley in the lowveld towards the Limpopo.

Working at education

Meanwhile, a group of model schools for some 8000 refugee children has been launched on former white farms under the Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production (ZIMFEP) whose patron is President Canaan Banana. The principle of linking academic studies with productive work, and of teaching young people ways to become self-employed, has been adapted from the work of Patrick van Rensburg with the Serowe brigades in Botswana. The model schools that are strongly supported by outside agencies — those, for example, in Shamva and West Nicholson backed with Scandinavian and Lutheran funds — are forging ahead.

The greatest leap has been taken in formal school enrollment. The primary school population has more than doubled since 1979 to 1.9 million this year, and high school enrollment has trebled to 218,000. All kinds of devices are being used to meet shortages of school facilities and teachers: "hot seating," or double-shift classrooms, and primary school teachers being trained on the job through a four-year "distant education" course. The shortages are bound to become more acute as the policy is pursued of finding high school places for eighty percent of primary school leavers (at present the percentage is twenty). The curricu-

lum is being revised, not only to add productive activities but also to give it a scientific base; and some North Korean advisers are helping in this area.

Trying to keep healthy

Health services were in Rhodesian times focussed on the curative needs of an urban population, and delivered through large city hospitals, despite the fact that eighty percent of the population live in rural areas and could benefit most through preventive care: women through simple maternity services, for example, and children through reducing measles, whooping cough and diarrhea, as well as through improving nutrition.

So the ministry is now organizing two-month training courses for village health workers (VHWs), chosen by their own community, while traditional birth attendants are being taught hygiene and sterilization methods. This primary level of care has its base in health centres and clinics that are now being built in every district. But, as one provincial hospital administrator pointed out, it is important for a VHW first to provide some treatment for the visible ills in a community if he or she is to win their confidence for talk of nutrition and disease prevention. Also, expenditure on the big-city hospitals has not decreased and the new costs of rural services are being covered by foreign aid.

Two years of Zimbabwe — not bad

Zimbabwe, it can be seen, has all or nearly all the problems of any other newly-invented country. It has to build up an efficient public service, inculcate a spirit of national unity, set credible goals of economic and social development and form a foreign policy in a world of rivalries. In Zimbabwe's case these problems are aggravated by the distortions of a dual economy of urban whites and rural blacks, and by the wastage of a long war. It is also stuck in the front line of the continuing black-white struggle in South Africa, which spills over in acts of sabotage (pylons were expertly sundered outside Harare on Good Friday morning) and could swamp the country in an invasion.

Yet I would dare to say that Zimbabwe has made a better start to independence than most states in Commonwealth Africa. It has had the advantage of being able to learn from their mistakes. The long years of UDI produced hundreds of graduates with experience of many countries; now they have to apply the best of that experience at home.

Zimbabwe is unlikely to waste its assets in Pan-African pace-setting, as Kwame Nkrumah did in Ghana. It can avoid the worst internal splits, having neither Nigeria's awkward structure of three powerful peoples nor Uganda's problem of the Baganda people in the country's heartland being at odds with the ruling party. It has put more emphasis on developing the country's basic asset — the fertile land — than has its neighbor Zambia, and is doing so in a more egalitarian way than Kenya and can offer farmers more incentives and services than Tanzania. It is maintaining a more open, self-critical society than Malawi.

Zimbabwe's leaders and people are tackling their many problems with verve and imagination, and they deserve to succeed. □