

The Canadian belief in multi-racialism and non-discrimination has also been a reason for action over Rhodesia.

I am sure that, if such a stand were not taken by a Commonwealth country or by the Commonwealth as a whole, the integrity and the unity of the Commonwealth would be impaired as it has never been before. Canada opposed the unilateral declaration of independence because it was designed to perpetuate a system of racial inequality and discrimination wholly inconsistent with the basic principle of the new multi-racial Commonwealth. If the Commonwealth is to be maintained, I repeat, Canada cannot give comfort to those who support racial discrimination.

I can very well understand that there may be views of members of the Committee that are not completely consistent with Government policy but that nevertheless appear to give recognition to the multi-racial character of the Commonwealth.

The Canadian Government sincerely believed that Rhodesia should not become independent on the basis of the 1961 constitution unless it was substantially modified. In theory, the 1961 constitution could eventually produce majority rule in the country, when sufficient Africans reached the required property and educational level to obtain the franchise for election to 50 out of the 65 seats in the Rhodesian Legislative Assembly. These educational and property qualifications are so high in terms of conditions in Rhodesia that only a very small percentage of the Africans in Rhodesia qualify to vote for these 50 seats. The qualifications of the remaining 15 seats are lower, and all but one are now occupied by Africans. However, 14 seats out of 65 is a long way short of a majority. Mr. Smith and his followers have made it plain that they did not expect Africans to become the majority of the electorate in their lifetime. It seems clear that the Smith Government made its illegal declaration because Mr. Smith and his followers were unwilling to accept the basis which would assure the attainment of a fair political voice to the majority of the population within a reasonably short period rather than the very long and indefinite period desired by the illegal Government of Mr. Smith. They knew that the consent of the people of Rhodesia as a whole required by Britain would not be given to independence based on the 1961 constitution as it stood.

Public opinion in Canada and other Commonwealth countries could not contemplate as a fellow member a country which practised discrimination not only through the franchise but in a variety of ways. Rhodesian legislation keeps for the exclusive use of white settlers much of the best agricultural land in Rhodesia. The illegal régime has imposed press and radio censorship of increasing intensity. Hundreds of Africans, and one white Rhodesian, have been interned or restricted without trial for political reasons.

I should point out that the Rhodesian crisis threatens not only relations within the Commonwealth but also Western relations with Africa in general, good relations between the races all over Africa, and stability within African countries. Economic development is being threatened by this instability and by trade dislocation resulting from the necessary economic sanctions. This is not only damaging to Africa but to Western economic relations with that continent, both in the short and long term.