

tual majority rule. But only if the Africans accept the settlement and co-operate in working it will it bring this about. If they refuse to register, as they have done in the past, they will lose the prospect of additional seats and run the risk of turning the Europeans irrevocably against them. The vital questions are: Will the Africans be able to place confidence in the Government? Will they have the patience to refrain from pressing immediate demands and to wait for a future reward? Will they be willing to co-operate in carrying out the changes proposed?

#### Barren path of apartheid

There is one further important question: If the settlement is not accepted, what is the alternative? Immediately, there are only two courses ahead: either to accept the settlement, with its admitted disadvantages but nonetheless clear, if meagre, gains, or to reject it. Rejection would involve a return to the *status quo* with no prospect of improvement, but rather to a Rhodesia treading the barren path of *apartheid*, with no hope of redress for the Africans unless and until at some distant date they are sufficiently strong to rise in revolt. Which way lies greater hope?

These are some of the questions that the Pearce Commission is putting during the course of its inquiry in Rhodesia. The Commission was appointed by the British Government in accordance with the Fifth Principle — that they would need to be satisfied that any basis proposed for independence was acceptable to the people of Rhodesia as a whole. The Commission is entirely independent and will report to the British Government. The chairman, Lord Pearce, is an eminent judge; his fellow members are Lord Harlech, who has

#### Views from Westminster . . .

Lord Goodman, who undertook the negotiations for the British Government, argued in the House of Lords that to reject the proposed settlement would be "an act of consummate folly". There were shortcomings in the settlement and there was no occasion to "go dancing a jig through the lobby" in support of it. But the settlement proposals warranted support because they were "good enough to give Africans and white Rhodesians . . . an opportunity of majority rule overtaking massacre", Lord Goodman said. Sir Alec Douglas-Home, introducing the motion in the Commons calling for approval of the Government's proposals, said it was his conviction that if the proposals were

had wide experience as Minister, Ambassador in Washington and chairman of the Film Censors Board, Sir Maurice Dorman and Sir Glyn Jones, both distinguished former Governors General of independent African Commonwealth countries. They will be assisted by a team of British experts all familiar with African peoples.

He would be a rash man who would venture to prophesy how the Commission is likely to report. At the time of writing in January, some of the first local reactions to the inquiry — both by African demonstrations and by the Rhodesian authorities' counter-measures — seem deeply disturbing. But a Commission of this standing and expertise should have little difficulty in sifting what genuine opinions are held, discounting intimidation, propaganda and pressure by either side, or in reaching a judgment that is both accurate and unambiguous. The Commission does not rule out the possibility that the Commission might find itself compelled to report that circumstances, which could take a variety of forms, did not make it possible to record a verdict.

If the Commission finds that the settlement is acceptable, then the problems will not vanish overnight, but at least this unhappy land will obtain formal recognition of its independence and can look forward to its future with some measure of hope. But if the Commission is unable to find that the settlement is acceptable, then the vital Fifth Principle will not be fulfilled and it would scarcely be possible for the British Parliament to give effect to the proposals. This result would mark a breakdown in confidence between the races (for which the Africans could not be blamed) and might set them on a collision course. It would be a sad day for Rhodesia.

accepted, all races in Rhodesia had the chance to build a new and non-racial country.

Denis Healey, speaking for the Labour Party in the Commons, described the Government's approach as a "shabby charade". He charged the proposed settlement in Rhodesia was regarded by the majority of people as a "hypocritical settlement out of African interests". If the Government went through with it, they would carry responsibility for the next half-century in Rhodesia "around their neck like an albatross, with immense damage to Britain's influence and interests throughout the world".