



CANADA

# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

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## CANADA ASSESSES THE BRITISH SETTLEMENT WITH RHODESIA

Statement by the Secretary of State  
for External Affairs, the Honourable  
Mitchell Sharp, in the House of Commons,  
on December 1, 1971.

On November 24, the British Government announced proposals for settlement of the constitutional position of Rhodesia.

By now, Members will be familiar with the main features of these proposals, which include provisions on the franchise and the composition of the legislature designed to give an increasing political voice to Africans, provisions intended to reduce racial discrimination, including a justiciable declaration of rights, a large development program, and a test of acceptability to be conducted by a commission appointed by the British Government.

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From the beginning, Canada has held that the solution in Rhodesia should be a constitution providing for the rapid election of a government broadly representative of the Rhodesian people, of whom the overwhelming majority are black. The constitutional arrangements which have been announced fall short of this objective. The period for the transition to majority rule is not specified and the means for achieving it are highly complicated. Given the past experience with complicated constitutional provisions in Rhodesia and in various other parts of the world, there is inevitably concern as to how these arrangements will be implemented. Much will depend on the goodwill and co-operation of all concerned -- qualities not always evident in recent years in the conduct of the Rhodesian régime.

When I visited Africa last March, I was struck by the fact that two great contemporary dramas were being played out on that continent. Southern Africa is the scene of one of the most crucial chapters in the world-wide search for racial equality and human dignity, and the scene of the final stages in the liquidation of the European colonial empires.

Both of these themes are found in Rhodesia. In seeking to provide equitable arrangements for Rhodesian independence, Britain has had to face the fact that the white minority is at the present time unwilling to yield power to the black majority, and that British capacity to influence the situation