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CANADIAN INVOLVEMENT IN OBSERVING RHODESIAN ELECTIONS

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Flora MacDonald, announced today that the senior Canadian member of the Commonwealth group being formed to observe the February elections in Rhodesia is Gordon Fairweather, Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

Mr. Fairweather will be assisted by a small Canadian staff as well as by the support group being fielded by the Commonwealth Secretariat. He is one of eleven Commonwealth representatives who will be in Rhodesia during most of the period leading up to the elections on February 27 - 29 and who will ultimately issue a collective report on the conduct of the elections to Commonwealth Heads of Government. The presence of Commonwealth observers was one of the elements envisaged in the agreement on Rhodesia reached last August in Lusaka at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, attended by Prime Minister Clark.

Gordon Fairweather was born in Rothesay, New Brunswick. He served in the Canadian Navy in World War II. He is a graduate of the Faculty of Law, University of New Brunswick. Mr. Fairweather practised law in Saint John, N.B. He was first elected to the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick in 1952 and re-elected twice. He was Attorney General of New Brunswick from 1958 to 1960. He was elected to the House of Commons in 1962 and was re-elected five times, resigning his seat on August 31st, 1977 to become the first Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission. Mr. Fairweather is an officer of the Order of Canada.