

Here is the heart of the Rhodesian problem. Our integrity as an independent nation committed to certain ideals in human affairs, our position in the United Nations and our position in the Commonwealth required us to take a stand. We did take a stand on behalf of racial equality and political justice. How could we proclaim to the new leaders of Africa and to others our belief in political freedom and racial justice everywhere if we ignored the flagrant breach of these principles in Rhodesia?

The Rhodesian situation is, of course, a complicated one. There are questions of means to obtain the final objectives. There are points on which there have been dissension and misunderstanding, both in Canada and elsewhere.

In the first place, there should be no misunderstanding about the fact that the declaration of independence made by the Smith Government was illegal. It was not within the powers of the Rhodesian Government to make such a declaration. Such a declaration could not be made without the agreement of the British Parliament. From the beginning, when the Smith régime first threatened to make an unilateral declaration of independence, the Canadian Government made its opposition to an illegal declaration very clear.

Then there have been suggestions that Britain did not do enough to avert the declaration and the ensuing crisis. In fact, successive British Governments explored every possibility of compromise. The Smith Government did not take the final step because of a British failure to negotiate but because they were unwilling to accept the basic British position. The British position was that independence could only be granted on a basis which would assure the majority of the population of political representation within a reasonably short period rather than the very long and indefinite period desired by the Smith Government. That government 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.

It has been suggested by some critics that Commonwealth or other countries do not have the right to tell Britain what to do about Rhodesia since it is solely a British constitutional responsibility. I agree. We do not have the right to tell Britain what to do. We are not telling Britain what to do. At the Lagos conference of Commonwealth prime ministers in January, the communiqué describing the discussions made the essential point clearly and forcefully:

"The Prime Ministers reaffirmed that the authority and responsibility for guiding Rhodesia to independence rested with Britain but acknowledged that the problem was of wider concern to Africa, the Commonwealth and the world."

We have acted as a member of the Commonwealth in concert with Britain and other members of the Commonwealth and through Commonwealth institutions, including two new ones which are the result of Canadian initiative. In our economic measures we have acted, together with other trading countries, including the U.S.A. and Western European nations, in compliance with the Security Council resolution of