



CANADA

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 66/16

THE USE OF SANCTIONS AGAINST RHODESIA

Statement on April 4, 1966, by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, to the Standing Committee of the House of Commons on External Affairs.

This Rhodesian declaration of independence has precipitated an African crisis which could have the greatest implications for the Commonwealth. The illegal regime in Rhodesia is attempting to perpetuate a system whereby the white settlers, who are one-sixteenth of the population, maintain effective political domination over the black majority, who are fifteen-sixteenths of the population.

This has naturally placed a severe strain on relations within the multi-racial Commonwealth and between the West and African states.

I should emphasize at the outset that Rhodesia is British territory. The illegal declaration of independence of November 11, 1965, has not been accepted by Britain, or any other state, and the British Government remains responsible for this territory and for the conditions to govern Rhodesian independence. Negotiations between the British and Rhodesian Governments went on for several years before the illegal declaration of independence last November by Mr. Smith. The negotiations were broken off by the Rhodesians. It then fell to the British Government to decide how to restore a legal situation in Rhodesia, and the decision was to employ economic measures rather than force. Throughout, Britain has clearly had the primary responsibility for Rhodesia. It is the colonial power.

At the same time, in view of Rhodesia's importance to race relations in Africa, and, in view of the multi-racial nature of the Commonwealth, Britain has fully recognized that the Rhodesian question is a matter of legitimate and strong Commonwealth concern. At the 1964 prime ministers' conference, there was an extensive discussion of Rhodesia and a lengthy reference to the question in the communiqué, which includes a statement of the view of Commonwealth prime ministers that independence should take place on the basis of majority rule and that a unilateral declaration of independence would not be recognized. The issue was discussed in 1965 and again referred to in the communiqué in which the Commonwealth prime ministers reaffirmed--all of them--that they were "irrevocably opposed" to any UDI.