



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.

Up to last November, Canada had normal relations with the Rhodesian Government, and the Canadian Government had already sent a confidential message to the Rhodesian Government some time before the 1965 conference pointing out the grave consequences of a unilateral declaration of independence. This warning was repeated again in the succeeding months.

I myself received representatives of the Government of Rhodesia during the last two and a half years prior to UDI and explained our position, as have other governments in and outside the Commonwealth.

After the unilateral declaration of independence, many Commonwealth countries reacted very strongly, as had been generally anticipated. Various African governments argued that Britain should use force in putting down the illegal Smith régime, as Britain had already done in dealing with civil disorders and revolts in other colonies and dependencies. The Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity passed a resolution early in December calling on all member states to sever relations with Britain if the Smith régime was not "crushed" before mid-December. Following this resolution, various countries, including two Commonwealth members, Ghana and Tanzania, withdrew their missions from London. In an attempt to minimize the damage of this breach, Canada assumed the role of protecting power for Britain in Tanzania and for Tanzania in Britain. Ghana has since restored diplomatic relations. It is a matter of great significance to Commonwealth unity when action of this kind takes place.

It was in these circumstances that the Nigerian Government took the initiative in proposing a special Commonwealth conference on Rhodesia. As in the past, one of the purposes of the conference was to discuss differing opinions on how to deal with the Rhodesian issue so that these differing opinions should not result in a split in the Commonwealth along racial lines.

I would not want to disguise in any way our concern as of last December about what the action of countries in withdrawing missions from a Commonwealth country could mean to Commonwealth unity. We are heartened, however, by the fact that President Nyerere did indicate that in withdrawing his mission from London there was no intention on the part of Tanzania to withdraw from the Commonwealth. Our concern about this Rhodesian question was not fully but largely based upon our concern for the continued integrity and unity of the Commonwealth, an organism which we believe plays a very vital role at the present time.

At the Lagos conference, Britain welcomed the proposal of Prime Minister Pearson which led to the establishment of two continuing Commonwealth committees. The most important of these, the Sanctions Committee, now chaired by the Canadian High Commissioner in London, is maintaining a review of the sanctions against Rhodesia and considering ways and means of making them more effective. When he was in Ottawa last week, Mr. Chevrier and I had a very useful discussion and reviewed the work of the Committee. It is due to meet again this week. Its tasks include co-ordinating aid to Zambia, which, of course, is an integral aspect of the Rhodesian situation. A second Commonwealth committee is planning a large-scale programme of training for Rhodesian Africans which will come into effect when constitutional government is restored. This

will help to prepare the ground for a viable independent state under a multi-racial administration by training for their new responsibilities leaders, officials, and technicians from the African majority. These committees are a new type of Commonwealth machinery, in that they have been established by the prime ministers for a limited and finite purpose and with some duties which are of a rather wider and less technical nature than those normally carried out by Commonwealth institutions.

The work of these committees was naturally among the subjects discussed with the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr. Arnold Smith, during his visit to Ottawa last week. This was a valuable opportunity to discuss many aspects of the Rhodesian question, particularly from the point of view of its implications for the Commonwealth. I may not agree with the kind of emphasis that Mr. Arnold Smith gave to this question, but I will agree that the implications of the Rhodesian problem for peace in the world are very great.

Rhodesia is not, of course, of concern only to the Commonwealth and to Africa. World concern about Rhodesia has been expressed through the United Nations, and the Rhodesia problem has been before the General Assembly and Security Council of the United Nations a number of times in the past three or four years. The issues involved must be understood in the light of developments in modern Africa, with its many new sovereign independent states.

After the unilateral declaration of independence, it was the British Government itself which raised the issue in the Security Council. Britain asked the members of the United Nations to join with her in making effective the economic measures taken against Rhodesia. It was obvious that the co-operation of other nations, particularly the principal trading nations of the world, was necessary if the economic sanctions were to be effective.

The experience of the international community with sanctions is very limited. In fact, I think this is the first instance where a programme of economic sanctions, even though on a non-mandatory basis, has been imposed, unless one were to include the decisions of the Security Council in August of 1963 urging member states of the United Nations to take action in regard to the situation in South Africa.

On November 20, the Security Council adopted a resolution by ten votes to none with one abstention recommending the severance of all economic relations between member states and Rhodesia, including an oil embargo.

Canada has acted in support of Britain's policy of ending the illegal situation by non-military means; and, as a member of the Commonwealth, has acted in concert with Britain and other members of the Commonwealth and through Commonwealth institutions. Canadian economic measures have been taken together with other major trading countries, including the U.S.A. and Western European nations, and in compliance with the Security Council resolution of November 20. This is in accordance with the basic Canadian policy of strong support for the UN in grave situations of this kind.

The Canadian belief in multi-racialism and non-discrimination has also been a reason for action over Rhodesia.

I am sure that, if such a stand were not taken by a Commonwealth country or by the Commonwealth as a whole, the integrity and the unity of the Commonwealth would be impaired as it has never been before. Canada opposed the unilateral declaration of independence because it was designed to perpetuate a system of racial inequality and discrimination wholly inconsistent with the basic principle of the new multi-racial Commonwealth. If the Commonwealth is to be maintained, I repeat, Canada cannot give comfort to those who support racial discrimination.

I can very well understand that there may be views of members of the Committee that are not completely consistent with Government policy but that nevertheless appear to give recognition to the multi-racial character of the Commonwealth.

The Canadian Government sincerely believed that Rhodesia should not become independent on the basis of the 1961 constitution unless it was substantially modified. In theory, the 1961 constitution could eventually produce majority rule in the country, when sufficient Africans reached the required property and educational level to obtain the franchise for election to 50 out of the 65 seats in the Rhodesian Legislative Assembly. These educational and property qualifications are so high in terms of conditions in Rhodesia that only a very small percentage of the Africans in Rhodesia qualify to vote for these 50 seats. The qualifications of the remaining 15 seats are lower, and all but one are now occupied by Africans. However, 14 seats out of 65 is a long way short of a majority. Mr. Smith and his followers have made it plain that they did not expect Africans to become the majority of the electorate in their lifetime. It seems clear that the Smith Government made its illegal declaration because Mr. Smith and his followers were unwilling to accept the basis which would assure the attainment of a fair political voice to the majority of the population within a reasonably short period rather than the very long and indefinite period desired by the illegal Government of Mr. Smith. They 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.

Public opinion in Canada and other Commonwealth countries could not contemplate as a fellow member a country which practised discrimination not only through the franchise but in a variety of ways. Rhodesian legislation keeps for the exclusive use of white settlers much of the best agricultural land in Rhodesia. The illegal régime has imposed press and radio censorship of increasing intensity. Hundreds of Africans, and one white Rhodesian, have been interned or restricted without trial for political reasons.

I should point out that the Rhodesian crisis threatens not only relations within the Commonwealth but also Western relations with Africa in general, good relations between the races all over Africa, and stability within African countries. Economic development is being threatened by this instability and by trade dislocation resulting from the necessary economic sanctions. This is not only damaging to Africa but to Western economic relations with that continent, both in the short and long term.

Another basic reason why Canada is applying economic sanctions to Rhodesia is that such means are much preferable to the use of force, which is always to be avoided if possible.

I can say to the Committee that the possible use of force in certain situations in this matter must be regarded with the gravest concern. It is not merely a question of police action; this is a situation that could have implications and consequences far beyond the mere exercise of police power.

Military operations could have explosive effects on the whole of Africa and grave international repercussions. The British have not precluded the use of force to restore law and order in Rhodesia, but the British Government has declared that it is unwilling to use force in existing circumstances, and this is a matter where the British Government alone is constitutionally responsible.

The sanctions campaign against the illegal regime which has only been in operation for a relatively short time, as I stated in the House of Commons, has not produced the swift results that some had expected, but there is no doubt that the sanctions are adversely affecting the Rhodesian economy. How long it would take for this campaign to produce the desired result I do not know. It is a field in which predictions are inherently difficult. In this case also, the result may well be obtained at a point well short of economic collapse. When Mr. Smith's followers realize that the growing economic dislocation resulting from the UDI is not a temporary phenomenon but rather that their trade will continue indefinitely and progressively to be damaged by sanctions and that their economic prospects are distinctly bleak, they should realize their mistake in backing his illegal action. It is therefore very important to keep up the economic pressure on the illegal régime to make clear to its supporters that there is to be no slackening but rather an increase in the efforts of countries applying the sanctions. We attach importance to the general embargo on exports to Rhodesia by the United States on March 18.

What action will be taken in the United Nations if the sanctions do not give evidence of greater success remains to be seen. Action under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter could be confined to oil sanctions, or it could be confined to other sanctions.

Speaking for the Canadian Government and knowing what this means to the Commonwealth as a whole, we cannot in any way relent in our conviction and in our effort, within the limitations that we have prescribed for ourselves, to see this matter through. Nothing less than the interests of the Commonwealth is involved in this situation.

A major Canadian contribution, apart from the total embargoes on exports and imports that we have authorized, has been the Canadian contribution to the Zambia airlift. This airlift was necessitated by the action of the illegal regime in cutting off the supply of oil products to Zambia in December of last year after the embargo commenced against Rhodesia. Zambia was almost wholly dependent on Rhodesia for oil products from the refinery inside Rhodesia.

Now, far from being ineffective, this airlift has enabled Zambia to maintain and build up its oil stocks to the point where, with increased use of road transportation, the airlift itself may be reduced or become unnecessary in a few weeks time. This has been a useful undertaking and one most effectively carried out by the Royal Canadian Air Force. Our participation was originally intended for a period of one month, starting late in December. We subsequently agreed at the request of the British and Zambian Governments to continue the airlift until the end of April. The position now is being reviewed. I might say that the airlift has cost Canada up to March 31, \$1,125,000....

We have to consider the question of Rhodesia alongside other questions that require settlement at this particularly difficult period in our relations with other countries in the Commonwealth, in the United Nations and outside. Our policies in respect of all of these questions is a reflection of the responsibility of any state in the interdependent world in which we live to make its contribution toward removing international sources of friction and to the establishment of peace in the world.

s/c