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Southern Rhodesia (Item 23): Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; Report of the Sub-Committee

Statement to be made in the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly (20th Session) by the Canadian Delegate to the United Nations, and Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Dr. Stanley Haidasz, on Tuesday, October 5, 1965.

Mr. Chairman, as this is the first occasion on which the Canadian delegation has intervened in the discussions of this Committee I should like first to congratulate you on your unanimous election as Chairman of this Committee. Your qualifications for this position are impressive indeed and I am certain that the Committee will benefit greatly from your wise guidance during the weeks ahead. I should also like to extend congratulations on their election to the other distinguished officers of the Committee--our Vice-Chairman, Mr. Bruce and our Rapporteur Mr. Natwar Singh.

Mr. Chairman, since the Fourth Committee last considered the question of Rhodesia there have been, as the Committee is well aware, a number of important developments in the situation. The attitude of all parties appears to have hardened considerably and the reports of the Special Committee of Twenty-Four have reflected the increasing concern of the international community.

There has also been an encouraging development. This is the degree to which the members of the Commonwealth of Nations representing a wide variety of races and cultures

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have been able to speak with one voice. There have been two meetings of Commonwealth Heads of Government since the Committee last met. At both these meetings it was made clear that all countries of the Commonwealth believed that Rhodesia should proceed to independence only when sufficiently representative institutions came into existence.

Speaking in the House of Commons on July 17, 1964 the Prime Minister of Canada strongly endorsed the conclusions of the Commonwealth meeting in 1964. He made it clear at that time that Canada would not recognize the validity of a unilateral declaration of independence and that he felt that the Rhodesian government should be made aware of the serious political and economic consequences of such an illegal measure. Again in June 1965 the Commonwealth Heads of Government reaffirmed that they were irrevocably opposed to any unilateral declaration of independence by Rhodesia and further reaffirmed their insistence on the principle of majority rule. //

In this connection, Mr. Chairman, I believe that this Committee should recognize and pay tribute to the patient and unrelenting efforts of the British government, with whom rests primary responsibility, to achieve a peaceful and satisfactory solution to the problem of Rhodesian Independence. Much of this work has necessarily been conducted in private. In addition, however, the British government has more than once publicly, clearly and solemnly warned the Rhodesian government of the disastrous consequences of a unilateral act on its part.

In the last resolution which it adopted on Rhodesia the General Assembly placed a special responsibility on those countries enjoying close relations with the United Kingdom. Certainly the Commonwealth countries can be so described and, as I have indicated previously, they have given and are giving this difficult problem urgent serious consideration. The Canadian Delegation believes that the broad measure of agreement reached at the last two Prime Ministers' Conferences by countries directly interested was a significant step forward and offered a good foundation for a solution.

The situation has now reached a crucial stage. The Rhodesian Prime Minister is now in London engaged in discussions with Prime Minister Wilson. The Canadian delegation would urge, therefore, that our statements and our actions here should be guided by the overriding need to provide a constructive influence at this critical time.

