

PRIME MINISTER

Sir Ian Gilmour's Statement on Rhodesia

The Speaker allowed very few supplementaries following the Lord Privy Seal's PNQ today (text attached).

Peter Shore said that the Governor and his small British staff were doing their best in difficult circumstances, but they had to be seen to be fair. The advice they were getting from the Rhodesian civil and military authorities was strongly biased. He suggested that the Governor should issue a nolle prosequi in the case of Garfield Todd since he had control of prosecutions by virtue of his position.

He asked who would advise the Governor which areas had the highest intimidation and what use was being made of the Commonwealth observers. Finally, he suggested that the Governor should invite Ian Smith publicly to confirm that he would abide by the election result.

Sir Ian Gilmour said that the Governor had been unfairly traduced in many quarters. He did not accept that Lord Soames was acting on biased advice. As his answer had made clear, advice on the intimidation was coming from British election supervisors. He said that Garfield Todd had called on the Attorney General yesterday, and that new circumstances had come to light as a result. Ian Smith's attitudes were a matter for the Governor.

John Biggs-Davison said that Mr. Mugabe was in breach of the Lancaster House agreement. We should support the Governor if he banned Mr. Mugabe's party. Alex Lyon said that free and fair elections could not be held if a substantial proportion of the population was disenfranchised. Julian Amery asked when the names of the Parliamentary delegation to Rhodesia would be announced, and why the members of Lord Boyd's group had not been invited to take part.

/In answer to

In answer to these points the Lord Privy Seal said that intimidation was rife in the Eastern parts of the country. It was impossible for Mr. Nkomo and Bishop Musorewa to hold meetings there. He was not sure when the composition of the Parliamentary delegation would be announced, but at least one member of the Boyd team was already in Rhodesia. He said that there was no reason to believe that the auxiliaries had been behind the attack on Mr. Mugabe.

There was then a very sharp exchange between Andrew Faulds and the Lord Privy Seal. Mr. Faulds said that the British and foreign press had noted the "open partisanship" of the Governor and he accused the Governor ~~of~~ of rigging the elections on Ian Smith's behalf. Sir Ian Gilmour described this question as "fairly disgraceful" and "quite outrageous". He said that it was people like Mr. Faulds who were largely responsible for what was being written in the Press.

Finally, Russell Johnston asked whether the Commonwealth monitoring force was adequate in size. He suggested that it should be increased. The Lord Privy Seal said that however many members the monitoring force had, intimidation could not be eliminated. It was impossible for those who did not speak the language to detect all forms of intimidation in tribal villages. He added that it would be impracticable to increase the monitoring force at this stage.

Nothing very new was said and there was no probing of the Governor's intention to send extra supervisory personnel; some of the details of that proposal were supplied in FCO briefing later.

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13 February 1980

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BY PRIVATE NOTICE

\*La Mr Peter Shore (Tower Hamlets, Stepney & Poplar): To ask the Lord Privy Seal if he will make a statement on the progress of the election campaign in Rhodesia.

SIR IAN GILMOUR

The problem of intimidation of voters in the rural areas, the scope of which has now been confirmed to the Governor by the British election supervisors, continues to cause great concern. The Governor has enacted an Ordinance enabling him to suspend elections in any area where systematic intimidation makes it impossible for a fair election to be held. He has also listed a number of areas where intimidation is particularly severe. This should warn those of whatever party who seek to deprive others of the right to campaign freely and peacefully of the possible consequences of their actions. The Government will also be taking positive measures to strengthen supervision of the elections by sending a large number of additional personnel <sup>from the UK</sup> to be present in polling stations in rural areas, to ensure that the arrangements for voting are scrupulously fair.

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As the House will be aware there has been a further deplorable attack upon Mr Mugabe. Investigations are being pursued. The Governor will continue to take firm measures to deal with intimidation, violence and breaches of the ceasefire from whatever quarter. Despite the serious problems which exist, the Government are determined to carry the election through to a successful conclusion and to ensure that it is conducted as fairly and freely as possible.