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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

2 November 1981

My dear Prime Minister,

I was delighted to have the opportunity for such a good talk while we were in Melbourne. As a result of our conversation I have every confidence that the difficulties that you face - formidable though some of them may be - will be successfully overcome. As you know, over the year and a half since independence we have endeavoured to give you all the assistance within our power, not only as far as the economy is concerned with our development aid programme, but also in dealing with the first of the problems you mentioned to me, the integration of the Army.

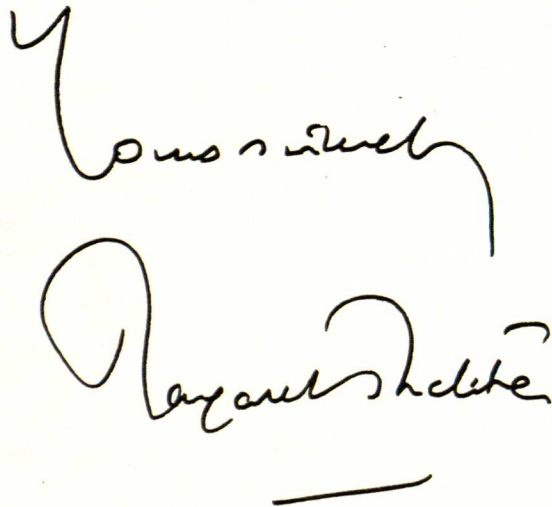
I promised to look into two particular questions you raised with me, progress on land resettlement and fees for students from Zimbabwe in the United Kingdom. On the first of these, you asked if we could not increase the allocation of £20 million for land transfer and resettlement which formed part of the total offer of development aid which we made at the time of independence. I realise how important this is to you. It was for this reason that at the Aid Donors' Conference in Salisbury last March Lord Soames made a further commitment of £10 million to a second land resettlement scheme. We understood that, together with the first scheme, this constituted the full extent of the Zimbabwe Government's plans in this extremely important sphere for the next three years. I hope you will consider that a total of £30 million, representing almost 50 per cent of the estimated total cost of land resettlement schemes over the first few years of independence, is a generous response, especially in view of the limitations on our development aid expenditure which have regrettably had to be made for the time being as part of our general economic strategy. Moreover, I understand that there might be some limit to the speed at which land resettlement can be accomplished.

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I am of course aware, not least from my conversations in Melbourne, that our decision to charge full fees to many overseas students has caused disquiet, especially in Commonwealth countries. We have carefully considered whether we could not make some exceptions to our present rules, but I fear that any relaxation would inevitably become widespread and would undermine the basis of what we believe to be a necessary policy. However, in certain respects, Zimbabwe is already more favoured than others. We have financed very large numbers of Zimbabwean students over the years from our aid programme (in fact, the training allocation for Zimbabwe has been the largest of all) and we are continuing to do so, albeit on a lesser scale. At the Aid Donors' Conference in Salisbury in March, Lord Soames announced an addition of £5 million for Zimbabwean students in Britain who would qualify for tertiary education, either in the United Kingdom or at the University of Salisbury, and he also indicated to your Minister of Education that your Government could, if they wished, use some of the British aid announced at independence to finance additional students to pass to higher level studies.

I hope you will agree that the very substantial assistance that we have already offered will make a significant contribution in both the highly important areas which you mentioned to me. The assistance we have pledged ourselves to provide to Zimbabwe immediately makes this one of our biggest aid programmes in Africa and demonstrates the importance we attach to helping Zimbabwe in the early years of independence.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Roy Jenkins', is written over the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'R' and a long, sweeping underline.

The Hon. R. G. Mugabe