

PRIME MINISTER

Statement on Rhodesia

The Lord Privy Seal's statement on the appointment of Lord Soames (copy attached) went off very quietly this morning. Mr. Shore pressed about whether a ceasefire would have been agreed before Lord Soames' departure for Salisbury. The Lord Privy Seal said that only the details remained to be settled; ~~that~~ that could be done quickly; but that the process of finalising the ceasefire arrangements would require a British presence on the spot.

In answer to subsequent questions from Alex Lyon and Willie Hamilton, the Lord Privy Seal said that the Governor would be going well before the armed forces had returned to barracks or safe areas, and that the monitoring force would not be used as a military force.

Mr. Shore asked finally whether there would be a formal ceasefire declaration before the Governor departed. The Lord Privy Seal said that he could give no firm undertaking about that, since progress would depend on how the Lancaster House talks went over the next few days.

There was general support from all sides of the House for Lord Soames himself.

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7 December 1979