

PRIME MINISTER

STATEMENT ON RHODESIA: WEDNESDAY 6 FEBRUARY

The Lord Privy Seal's statement in the Commons passed off quietly enough, although at the end Mr. Shore described him, rather surprisingly, as having been "unusually dyspeptic and ill-tempered".

There were some ritual criticisms of the Governor from Martin Flannery and one or two others - which Ian Gilmour dismissed as "soap box nonsense". Rather more serious were the repeated references to the vote in the Security Council. David Steel said that something was wrong when we were seen to be at variance with the United States at the United Nations and James Lamond inquired whether the Lord Privy Seal's condemnation of the "bounders in the Security Council who had made their allegations so effectively" that everyone else had voted against us" extended to those Nations who had voted against Soviet action in Afghanistan.

In answer to all of this, the Lord Privy Seal said that those who had Ministerial experience knew that there were many different reasons for casting votes in the United Nations. A close reading of the reasons given for the vote would not support the assertions which had been made in the House.

Finally, Peter Shore suggested that the amount of violence and disorder which was being caused from various different sides merited an increase in the monitoring force of 600-800. Ian Gilmour said any request from the Governor for increases in the monitoring force would of course meet with a response from us, but that no such request had been received.

A copy of the statement is attached.

6 February 1980

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LORD PRIVY SEAL

PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT ON RHODESIA: 6 FEBRUARY

Mr. Speaker,

With Your ~~Lordships'~~ permission I shall make a statement on Rhodesia.

The elections are now only three weeks away. Mr Nkomo and Mr Mugabe have returned to the country. The political campaign is under way.

Election broadcasts have begun; each party has been allotted equal time.

Election supervisors from the United Kingdom are positioned throughout the country to oversee preparations for the elections. Arrangements have been made to return ballot papers to this country after the poll to set at rest fears that the secrecy of the vote will not be preserved.

The Commonwealth observer team has been in Rhodesia since 24 January and official observers from individual European and Commonwealth countries will arrive shortly.

/Arrangements



Arrangements are being made through the usual channels for a small group of Parliamentary observers to witness the elections.

Violent incidents continue to cause deep concern, although the numbers of incidents and of casualties remain far below those prevailing before the ceasefire came into force. The two attacks on buses last Sunday were particularly horrifying and distressing examples.

Today we have heard of attacks on the house of Mr Robert Mugabe and of one of his Party officials. I know <sup>honourable Members</sup> ~~Your Lordships~~ will join me in deploring all such attacks.

The great majority of the incidents investigated formally by the Ceasefire Commission have been attributed to Mr Mugabe's ZANLA forces, several thousand of whom remain outside the assembly places in breach of the agreements.

Patriotic Front military commanders are present at all meetings of the Ceasefire Commission and have accepted these findings. Action has been taken to discipline elements in the auxiliaries who have acted in breach of the agreements.

/the principle



The principal threat to fair elections comes from large-scale intimidation of the rural population. In certain parts of the country it has been made impossible for even Mr Nkomo or Bishop Muzorewa to hold meetings.

People have been told that if they do not vote according to the wishes of a party, the war will continue or they will be killed. This is a matter of great concern.

The parties signed a solemn undertaking at Lancaster House to campaign peacefully and without intimidation. The Governor has invited them to renew that commitment. It is vital that people should be able to make up their own minds about their political future without fear of the consequences.

The Governor has also taken the power to impose limited penalties against any - any - party or its candidates which fails to honour its undertakings.



The return of refugees from neighbouring countries has begun under arrangements co-ordinated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It is hoped that all those in Botswana will return before the elections as well as a high proportion of those in Zambia.

The return of the refugees from Mozambique is also proceeding - though more slowly because of the unsettled situation in the east of the country.

At our insistence, the political detainees held by ZANU in Mozambique have, like all political detainees in Rhodesia, been released.

Road and rail links with neighbouring countries are being reopened. Diplomatic representatives from nine countries are present in Salisbury with six more to follow shortly. An important and positive development has been the introduction of joint patrols by Patriotic Front forces and the police in the vicinity of assembly areas.

Nevertheless, the Governor's task in the remaining weeks will be no easier than it has been so far. But what has been achieved so far by way of giving effect to the Lancaster House agreements represents a much greater advance than many people dared to hope for.



honourable Members

I am sure ~~your Lordships~~ would Join me in paying  
tribute to the Governor for the determination  
and fairness which he has shown in dealing  
with the sensitive problems and conflicting  
pressures I have described.

Against this background of solid achievement, the Government regret that the tone of last week's debate on Rhodesia in the United Nations Security Council was one-sided and absurdly selective. Such polemics can only increase tension and make the implementation of the settlement more difficult.

Machinery already exists in Salisbury for the investigation and redress of grievances: and as the Security Council has frequently told us, that responsibility is ours.

The Government felt it inappropriate to associate itself in any way with a resolution which purported to re-interpret the agreements reached with the parties at Lancaster House. The United Kingdom did not, therefore, participate in the vote.

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