

for the record

NO. 16



**RHODESIA SETTLEMENT
PROPOSALS**

**COURAGE AND FAITH
NEEDED**

RHODESIA

THE REVEREND R. G. FORREST WRITES ON THE TERMS

MANY OF THOSE WHO OPPOSE the settlement proposals do so on the grounds that to say No leaves the door open to more negotiations. It needs to be said quite clearly that this is a pipe-dream. Sir Alec Douglas-Home explicitly ruled out the possibility of further negotiations, and a letter from the Prime Minister's office to me says:

"If the proposals as they stand are rejected then as far as the Rhodesian Government is concerned the status quo will remain, that is, the 1969 Constitution will continue in force without amendment."

Therefore, the choice before us is clear. Either the 1969 Constitution as amended in the proposals, or the 1969 Constitution as it stands. Argument about the merits of the proposals is really irrelevant. It would be a help to tabulate the points of difference between the two Constitutions, and the following comparison is made.

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FRANCHISE

1969 CONSTITUTION

- 1—African representation in Parliament determined by the proportionate amount paid by Africans in income tax.
- 2—African representation determined by principle of group "merit".

SETTLEMENT PROPOSALS

- African representation in Parliament determined by financial, educational and property qualifications.
- African representation determined by individual merit.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

- 1—No further progress for African representation beyond parity.
- 2—Permanent provision of seats for members elected **INDIRECTLY** by electoral colleges.

- Beyond parity provision is made for majority rule through the election of 10 members by voters on the combined African higher roll and the European roll.
- Provision for the removal of all indirectly elected members once parity is reached, so that all African MPs may be **DIRECTLY** elected.

AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION

1—Elected Africans have no power of veto over any proposed amendment of the Constitution.

Amendments to the Constitution must be passed by affirmative votes of two-thirds of membership of the Assembly, PLUS

(a) Majority of European membership;

(b) Majority of total African membership.

(This guarantees Africans an effective power of veto.)

2—The number of members in the House may be increased without altering the proportion of African members to the total number of members.

Increase in number of seats in the House to be treated in the same way as an attempt to alter the Entrenched Clauses; i.e., requiring over-all two-thirds majority, plus majority of European and African members voting separately.

(This guarantees Africans a veto against any increase in European seats at the expense of African representation.)

3—Section 26 provides for increase of means and educational qualifications for the existing African roll.

Qualifications for registration of voters, candidates for Parliament, and variations of means qualifications for voters are treated as part of the Entrenched Clauses.

EXISTING LEGISLATION

1—Government may introduce legislation which discriminates on racial grounds.

Government will appoint a three-man commission to review existing legislation and recommend ways of ending racial discrimination.

2—No assurance that future legislation will not be discriminatory.

Assurance given that there will be progress towards ENDING racial discrimination.

3—The Land Tenure Act will be implemented in all its provisions.

Commission will scrutinize the provisions of the Land Tenure Act in terms of the assurances given above.

4—The eviction of tenants from Epworth and Chishawasha missions is imminent.

The threatened evictions will be stayed until after the commission has reported.

(In view of the commission's terms of reference it is highly unlikely that the evictions will ever take place.)

BILL OF RIGHTS

1—The Declaration of Rights allows no appeal to the Courts.

The Bill of Rights is justiciable. Approach may be made to the Courts direct.

2—Courts have no power of enforcement.

Provision made for enforcement by the High Court.

DETAINEES AND RESTRICTEES

1—Review of cases of detainees and restrictees rests with the Government. The tribunal which reviews cases can only recommend.

Tribunal will review all cases. Its decisions will have BINDING authority on the Government.

The above represent the major areas of difference between the present and proposed Constitutions. What the proposals offer is not an immediate and major change in the possibilities and power of African representation. They do offer a significant change of direction (constituting in some cases a virtual "about turn" by the Rhodesian Government from the direction in which it is now moving).

A rejection of the proposals does not only mean that we will be saddled with the status quo, but that the movement Right towards increasing apartheid will be accelerated.

The objections to the proposals are many and valid. Africans were not consulted in advance, the franchise qualifications are too high, precluding the great majority of teachers from qualifying for the higher roll. Too much depends on "assurances", and the good faith and good will of the Government. But, as the Rev. Fred Rea made clear in a recent article, acceptance of the proposals does not mean approval.

The proposals demand from us an act of faith. It would be a tragedy if we were so to mistrust each other on the basis of what has happened in the past that we jeopardize our whole future. Africans

have cause to mistrust Europeans. Equally, after the fiasco of 1961 when Africans reneged on their word, and on the evidence of the States to the north, Europeans have cause to mistrust Africans. Which only leaves us in a position of sterile stalemate.

Let us have the courage and faith to break the stalemate. Let Europeans say that with honesty and integrity they will implement the spirit as well as the letter of the proposals. Let Africans accept the realities of the political situation, and let us all get down to the painful task of redeeming the past and so ensuring a future for all Rhodesians.

The rejection of the proposals only ensures that there is no real future for anybody.

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