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C.P. 162 (31).

CABINET.**FUTURE OF SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN RHODESIA.***Joint Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs and the Secretary of State for the Colonies.*

AT a meeting of the Cabinet held on the 15th April, Cabinet Conclusion 22 (31) 10, it was agreed, in accordance with the proposals made in C.P. 84 (31), that we should consult the Leaders of the Conservative and Liberal Parties with regard to the policy to be adopted as to the future of Southern and Northern Rhodesia, and that, after doing so, we should report further to the Cabinet.

Discussions have now taken place with nominated representatives of the two Parties in question (Mr. Amery and Lord Winterton for the Unionists, and Sir R. Hamilton and Mr. Pybus for the Liberals), and, as a result, an agreed statement of policy has been drafted in the form of a reply to a proposed Question in the House of Commons. This statement is as follows:—

“ His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have given careful consideration to the request received from the Government of Southern Rhodesia and from the elected members of the Legislative Council in Northern Rhodesia, that a conference should be held in order to consider the possibility of amalgamating Northern Rhodesia with Southern Rhodesia under a constitution similar to the present constitution of Southern Rhodesia.

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are not prepared to agree to the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia at the present time. They consider that a substantially greater advance should be made in the development of Northern Rhodesia before any final opinion can be formed as to its future. It must be remembered that it is less than eight years since His Majesty's Government assumed direct responsibility for the administration of Northern Rhodesia. Very considerable progress has been made during these years, but even greater changes, affecting the whole balance of the various interests in the country, are almost certain to result from the development of the mining industry. At present the European population is small and scattered over a wide extent of territory, while the problems of native development are in a stage which makes it inevitable that His Majesty's Government should hesitate to let them pass even partially out of their responsibility.

On the other hand, His Majesty's Government, while considering that amalgamation is not practicable now or in the near future, do not wish to reject the idea of amalgamation in principle should circumstances in their opinion justify it at a later date, and fully realise the prejudicial effect upon progress in both countries if such a rejection were regarded as a permanent bar to their future evolution. Their view is that for some time to come Northern Rhodesia should continue to work out its destiny as a separate entity, observing the closest possible co-ordination with its neighbours, and especially with Southern Rhodesia.

His Majesty's Government feel that, in order to prevent misconception, they should state at the outset that the conditions of any scheme of amalgamation, if and when it arises for actual discussion, must make a definite

provision for the welfare and development of the native population. Barotseland would necessarily require separate treatment, and arrangements may possibly have to be made in regard to other parts of Northern Rhodesia. Without going into details of these contingencies, it is sufficient that it should be indicated that the territory to be amalgamated with Southern Rhodesia would not necessarily have boundaries coterminous with the present boundaries of Northern Rhodesia.

It will be remembered that, in order to secure as great a measure of continuity of policy for the future as may be possible, the Secretary of State for the Colonies and I arranged some few weeks ago to confer with members of the two Opposition Parties on this matter. The conclusions which I have announced are, of course, those of His Majesty's Government, but I am happy to think, as the result of the conversations referred to, that they are likely to commend themselves to members on the other side of the House."

It will be seen that this statement embodies the former of the two alternative policies set out in Section VI of C.P. 84 (31), viz., a reasoned refusal to consider the proposed amalgamation at the present time.

If this statement of policy is approved by the Cabinet, it is proposed to arrange for Questions to be asked simultaneously in both Houses on Thursday, the 2nd July, and for the text of the statement to be read in reply in the House of Commons, and a corresponding statement made in the House of Lords. In that event, it would be necessary to communicate in advance by telegram to the Governments of Southern Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia the text of the proposed statement. In making this communication to the Government of Southern Rhodesia, the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs would propose to add that, having regard to the view which His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom take in the matter, they feel that a conference at the present to discuss the questions involved as proposed by the Government of Southern Rhodesia last autumn would not serve a useful purpose, but that His Majesty's Government fully appreciate the advantages of the closest co-operation between Southern and Northern Rhodesia on matters of policy which are of common interest to both territories, and are at all times ready to facilitate consultation between the two Governments with a view to such co-operation.

J. H. T.

P.

*Downing Street,
June 29, 1931.*
