

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

PBM - 4
Preparation for Federation

42 Fereday Drive
Eastlea,
Salisbury,
Southern Rhodesia
August 17, 1953

Mr. Walter S. Rogers
c/o Institute of Current World Affairs
522 Fifth Avenue
New York 36,
New York

Dear Mr. Rogers:

One of the busiest men in the new federation, which officially came into being August 1, is Mr. A. D. Evans, the Southern Rhodesian Secretary for Internal Affairs, and chairman of the federal Joint Preparatory Committee. In fact he is so busy that when I appeared at 2:15 p.m. last Friday at his offices in the new Princess Margaret Hospital for natives, he was nowhere to be found. "I can't understand it," the receptionist said. "Mr. Evans has had hundreds of appointments during the past few months and he hasn't been late to one of them."

She excused herself to answer the telephone that was ringing urgently on the counter and I settled myself down to read some of the African newspapers which were spread out on a table. In a few minutes she returned with a worried look on her face and a piece of paper in her hand.

"Mr. Evans was taken suddenly ill at lunch time," she said. "His wife just phoned up to say he was sorry but he could not keep his date with you." My disappointment must have shown on my face, for she then asked, in a very kind voice, "Would you like to talk to Mr. Parry? He's deputy chairman of the committee." In a few minutes I was walking down a long corridor of the hospital toward Mr. Parry's office.

Parry proved to be a very pleasant young man. The limp which was very evident as he crossed the room to greet me was evidently of a military origin since he wore the end of his necktie tucked into his shirt as a former soldier might if his mind were occupied by other thoughts.

He is from Northern Rhodesia and is a member of the Central African Council which was set up after the report of the pre-war Bledisloe Commission indicated that the time was not ripe for amalgamation or federation of three territories. As you know, the Council was an unofficial coordinating body with no actual power.

The Joint Preparatory Committee of which he is deputy chairman was formed in June of this year when it became evident that federation would be passed in London with little alteration. During the course of our talk he gave me a copy of a government circular labeled confidential and told me I could use part of it if I promised that its contents would not be made available to the press. It read, in part:

"It is necessary that the three Central African Governments should, in association, begin planning, and that a pre-Federal organisation should be set up on the understanding that, since the necessary legislation to found the Federation has still to be passed, in its final stages, by the

United Kingdom Parliament for approval by her Majesty, the existence and activities of the proposed organisation should not be publicised.

"It is essential that in planning for what is to happen within the Federal sphere after the arrival of the Governor-General, those appointed to the pre-Federal machine should regard themselves as the nucleus of a Federal team, looking at things from the standpoint of Federation rather than of individual territories, and owing single-minded loyalty, in all matters which are to become Federal, to the future Federal Interim Ministry, Government and Legislature.

"In the pre-Interim period the general task of the Joint Preparatory Organisation, in addition to making essential practical arrangements, would be to assemble factual information which, as far as possible, within the time available, would amount, in sum, to the preliminary advice which the Interim Ministry would wish to offer the Governor-General on his assumption of office."

Federation has now been passed. The provision in the above paragraphs barring publicity has been outdated and bits and pieces of information about the activities of the committee have been finding their way into the local newspapers.

Boiled down, the thought behind the workings of the committee is as follows: Under the federal constitution the Governor-General (Lord Llewellyn) will have the power of a virtual dictator during the time between September 4, when he arrives, until a federal parliament is elected in December (about December 16). Although he has had administrative experience as British President of the Board of Trade, Minister of Aircraft Production, and Minister of Food, he knows little or nothing about running the new federation. When he arrives he will name a Prime Minister and several subordinate ministers who will help him manage the country until the legislature is elected and functioning. The various working parties and subcommittees that have been set up under the joint committee will advise Lord Llewellyn and the ministers in his government.

"We are building an embryo government," Parry said. "In theory we do not know who the new ministers will be. That is one of the myths of this kind of government. But it is common knowledge among government people (and this is definitely not for publication) that Llewellyn will name Sir Godfrey Huggins as his Prime Minister and then ask Huggins to form a government. And when that happens, we already know pretty well who the new ministers will be."

Parry would not tell me the names of the individual ministers. He did disclose that these men are working with the committees and working parties so as to be in a position to help Llewellyn take over the reins of government as soon as he arrives. The future ministers and the working parties have already set up an unofficial federal treasury, cabinet office, office of internal affairs, office of external affairs, and an attorney-general's office which in all likelihood will become official after September 4.

It might be well at this point to give a short rundown of the governing

powers which will be Llewellyn's during the interval between September and December to show what sort of assistance he will need most.

Under the terms of the new constitution the Governor-General must approve of a method of holding an election in Nyasaland, where there has never been an election before. Parry says that as far as he can tell, the electoral college system will be used in Nyasaland because of this inexperience in elections.

The Governor-General must appoint an interim ministry. He is not, however, bound to take the advice of this ministry and may disregard any of its opinions. If he does disregard an opinion of his ministry, he must report his dissenting opinion to the government in London.

He is the sole administrator of a special fund of £125,000 which he is to use to help establish the government as a going concern. Parry says that Llewellyn will no doubt accept the advice of his ministers in the spending of this money and that he will make an accounting of the money he has spent to the first federal parliament.

He will be vested with both executive and legislative powers during the interim period, and any regulations he imposes will be treated as legislative law and will continue after the election of a parliament unless amended.

The constitution itself will not come into full effect until so declared by the Governor-General. He will do this shortly before the federal elections in order that election machinery may be set up in all three territories, especially Nyasaland.

In the newspaper it has been announced that "Various working parties are forming recommendations to be made to the Governor-General, but Mr. Evans said that it was not possible to disclose these until they had received the Governor-General's approval."

Mr. Parry told me, after I had assured him I was not writing for publication in the press, that the principal working parties which had been set up were the economic and financial party, the public services party, and the tariff party.

The economic and financial party has been set up under the chairmanship of Sir Andrew Strachan, Secretary to the Treasury of Southern Rhodesia. Generally, it is dealing with the development needs of the federation in relation to its resources (natural and financial). It no doubt will come up with a detailed plan for all federal development activities, Parry said.

It is also preparing information for the use of the Apportionment Commission, to be named by the Governor-General under terms of the constitution, which will make up a comprehensive list of the assets and liabilities of each territory which eventually will be transferred to the federal government.

The public services working party is setting up a system corresponding to the civil service system in the United States. Its chairman is Mr. T. S.

Chegwidden, director of the Southern Rhodesian Public Services Board. It will draw up a Public Service Act (Civil Service Act) to outline pay and service conditions for future civil servants. It is also selecting a staff for the temporary ministry.

The public service working party is different from the others, Parry said, since it has already been designated (unofficially) as the one working party which will become permanent even after the Governor-General arrives and sets up his temporary ministry.

It has already had a certain amount of unwelcome pressure applied to it since it is the body which is making recommendations for appointments in the nucleus of the new ministerial offices.

Mr. G. E. Thornton, who retired a year ago as Financial Secretary of Northern Rhodesia, is head of the tariff working party which is setting up an organization for the control of customs and excise and export duties to be collected by the federal government. It is also investigating the multitude of trade agreements which the three territories have made with other colonies and nations individually in the past and which will therefore bind the federation.

A parliamentary working party has been organized under the leadership of Colonel G. E. Wells, former clerk of the Southern Rhodesian parliament. It is busy setting up rules of order and debate for the new parliament. It is also attempting to decide where the federal assembly should meet, although Parry assured me that the federal parliament will no doubt take over the present Southern Rhodesian parliament building on Cecil Square in Salisbury.

The above-mentioned working parties have been designated "full-time" and they have been holding regular meetings since June.

Five working parties which meet occasionally and which will dissolve completely after they have made final reports are the income tax, customs, health, post office, and legal working parties. Their job is a matter of centralizing administration for the organizations in the spheres which already exist in the territories.

Since Parry told me that Sir Godfrey Huggins will be asked to form an interim government, it is obvious that all the ministers he chooses will be members of a new party, the Federal Party, which has just been set up with Huggins as its head.

The Federal Party is composed of government leaders from the three territories who supported federation during the referendum and it is only natural that Huggins should choose these men to work on the actual business of getting the new country under way.

However, an opposition party to the Federal Party was formed even before the Federal Party was organized. It is called the Confederate Party and is drawing a surprising number of followers to it.

"Suppose," I said to Parry, "that the Confederate Party won the election instead of the Federal Party. Wouldn't the fact that the members of the Confederate Party had nothing to do with the organization procedure that went before the election hamper the country? Wouldn't they have to go over a great deal of ground that had already been covered by these working committees and the Federal Party interim ministry?"

Parry looked shocked--then stared at me in an amazed fashion as though wondering how anyone in his right mind could imagine a member of the Confederate Party in the new parliament. "That problem could be solved when we come to it," he answered, inadequately, I thought.

In future letters I will deal with the organization and getting-under-way of the two parties which have been formed to fight out the federal elections in December. I will just say here that the Confederate Party, although it is repugnant to the very-powerful Huggins and his followers, has an amazing amount of support and will surprise a lot of people when the time comes to count votes.

Sincerely,



Peter Bird Martin

P.S. In case you haven't seen them, I enclose a list of some of the most important sections of the new federal constitution. PBM

Received New York 8/28/53.

The Federal Assembly will have: 14 elected members from Southern Rhodesia, 8 from Northern Rhodesia, and 4 from Nyasaland;

Two specially elected African members from Southern Rhodesia, two from Northern Rhodesia, and two from Nyasaland;

One European specially elected to represent Africans in Southern Rhodesia;

One European specially appointed by the Governor of Northern Rhodesia and one specially appointed by the Governor of Nyasaland to represent Africans.

The Speaker to be elected by Parliament, but if the man selected is a member of either Federal or State legislatures he must resign his seat (the present Speaker in Southern Rhodesia is also a member of Parliament).

The Federal Assembly will sit at least once a year and may have a life of five years. A general election will follow within three months of dissolution of Parliament.

There will be a Prime Minister and Executive Council consisting of the Ministers chosen by the Prime Minister.

In the Federal Public Service appointments will be made only on the grounds of a man's competence, experience and suitability, and not on grounds of race.

There will be a Federal Supreme Court consisting of a Federal Chief Justice and not less than two and not more than six other Judges.

A standing committee of the Federal Assembly--The African Affairs Board--consisting of three Europeans and three Africans will advise the Prime Minister on matters affecting the interests of Africans. This board has special power to reserve certain "differential" legislation for the Queen's pleasure. This is really a temporary veto power which would refer a measure back to London and the Colonial Office, which follows a much more liberal native policy than that followed here.

From taxes, Southern Rhodesia to get 13 per cent, Northern Rhodesia to get 17 per cent and Nyasaland to get 6 per cent. The Federal Government will get the rest.

The territorial governments can collect more money by charging an extra income tax which cannot be more than 20 per cent of the tax share they receive from the Federal government.

The territorial legislatures must not pass laws restricting the movement of commodities between the territories (except petrol).

A Loans Council will govern external borrowing.

The entire constitution will be reviewed in from 7 to 9 years at a conference of delegates from the federation, the three territories, and the British Government.