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INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

PBM - 22
A Quick Look at
The Federation

101 Alteryon Mansions
Corlett Drive
Illovo, Johannesburg
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Mr. Walter S. Rogers
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New York 36, New York

Dear Mr. Rogers:

I have just returned from a 10-day trip to Southern Rhodesia during which I spent most of my time talking to University people and doing research into University history. In between the question sessions and the library digging Julie and I had time to have dinner, tea and cocktails with a lot of our old friends--which was as close as I came to actually seeking information about the progress of and reaction to the first few months of the new Federation under Sir Godfrey Huggins' Federal Government. I present them to you as a collection of individual opinions--and suggest that perhaps the feelings they represent are widespread. They may well not be widespread, but I feel that often it is all too easy to forget that a large country is made up of a number of individuals--and that what politicians and experts call "trends," "public opinion" and "feelings of the country" are just the sum total of a lot of individual opinions.

While we were in Salisbury we stayed with our friends the Cunninghams (PBM - 5). They had no hard and fast ideas about the progress of Federation--they seemed to feel that things in Southern Rhodesia were pretty much as they had been before Federation. As it happened, we arrived at their apartment on a Friday evening. If we had arrived three days later we would have missed Ken because on Monday morning he got into his new Wolseley automobile (a Nuffield product, like Morris cars) and headed for Ndola, on the Northern Rhodesian copperbelt, to open a new branch for his firm, Puzey and Diss. Ken was full of enthusiasm for the new job, not only because the step up from sales manager to branch manager was a welcome promotion, but because at long last he would have an opportunity to use some of the American sales methods he had been trying to get his Salisbury salesmen to adopt for several months. He didn't see the importance I saw in the bare fact that Puzey and Diss have even considered opening in Ndola. To me it is apparent that where the economy of Southern Rhodesia was formerly based on tobacco, gold, chrome and asbestos, the economy of the Federation is based to a large extent on Northern Rhodesian copper.

Perhaps Puzey and Diss would have opened eventually in Ndola anyway. But the fact that they are doing it now, so soon after Federation, indicates a faith in the future of the country and a feeling that under Federation the production of copper will increase, the flow of money to the copperbelt will increase and the number of people buying cars there will also increase.

Percy Newton (PBM - 6), on the other hand, is not what you might call cheerfully optimistic. His apartheid-minded tabloid, The Citizen, has been expanded from 12 to 16 pages of sex, sensationalism and dire warnings about the black future of the Federation. It is still losing money, but he seems determined to keep it going and is already practicing sad facial expressions to go with an "I told you so" attitude.

He is still selling high-priced vegetables at the same old stand in Salisbury and is growing the vegetables near his suburban home on the Golden Stairs Road in Mount Pleasant, north of the city proper. The latter part of this operation, however,

is soon to cease. Percy has seen the hand writing on the wall, he says--in 10 years' time he feels that the Natives will have taken over the country one way or another and the 80 acres of land on which he has been growing vegetables won't be worth 80 shillings except as a cemetery for the burial of Europeans killed by the Federation brand of Mau Mau.

At present the land is worth about \$4200 an acre. So Percy is beginning to buy his vegetables from truck farmers living farther out of town and has turned his garden boys into construction workers. He is laying out roads, installing water supplies and conducting surveys. He is setting up a township on his 80 acres of vegetable gardens and will soon begin selling plots of land to fools who can't see the hand writing on the wall.

The Confederate Party, Percy's Nationalist-like, white-supremacy political organization, suffered quite a set-back in the territorial elections held a month or so ago. They failed to win a single seat, either in the Northern or Southern Rhodesian territorial Parliaments. Percy points out, however, that 13,000 voters voted for the Confederate Party and many of the seats (especially in Southern Rhodesia) were lost by very slim margins.

I had a long talk with a journalist friend who has been covering the first session of the Federal Parliament for the South African Press Association (SAPA). Over a couple of beers he told me that most people who complain about the Federal Parliament are complaining because it doesn't seem to have accomplished much. "Most of the first session," he said, "was taken up by discussion about whether the matter being discussed was actually a Federal function or whether it was still in the jurisdiction of the component territories. And of course there were a lot of special commissions set up to look into this and that and report later on how the Federal Government should operate. As a matter of fact, the first Federal Parliament has accomplished a good deal--all in the groundwork department, though."

When I was in Rhodesia last year I got the impression that most people expected some dramatic change when Federation got under way--like using the same stamps all over the Federation or printing new Federation money or doing away with the border posts between Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia and Northern and Southern Rhodesia. None of this has been done, although there are commissions looking into the problems.

One of the biggest changes now being contemplated is the standardizing of customs and import regulations in the three territories. At present each colony has its own system of duty and import tax. For instance, the identical brand of cigarettes costs 14¢ less in Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia than it does in Salisbury. The work of the commission investigating this phase of Federal administration is moving slowly because of the large number of Federation interests giving evidence in favor of protective tariffs which would discriminate against competing products from the Union of South Africa.

For instance, Jack Hines, a young friend of ours who has recently been promoted to the position of assistant to the manager of the Rhodesia Herald, has been preparing to testify before this commission. His company wants a protective tariff on printed material imported from the Union. Jack is also planning to accompany his boss on a trip to Nyasaland and East Africa with an eye to expanding the scope of the newspaper firm.

Keith Knutzen, a young Salisbury architect, is up to his ears in business. He is building blocks of flats--and other multiple dwellings--in great numbers. Before Federation most of his building was confined to houses for individual families.

Another friend, Hugh Latimer, is the African representative of a London newspaper. He and his wife live in Salisbury as temporary residents and Hugh travels about southern and East Africa on various assignments for his paper. He has many Native friends throughout Africa and one of these is an African member of the Federal Parliament. I met Hugh in a corridor of the Rhodesia Herald building and he told me an interesting story about his Federal Parliament coverage.

"During one of the debates," Hugh said, "my Native M.P. friend asked me to go upstairs to the Parliamentary library to look up some facts for him to use in the debate. I went upstairs, got the facts, gave them to my friend and that, I thought, was the end of it.

"A few days ago I attended a press conference held by the Federal Prime Minister (Sir Godfrey Huggins). At the end of the conference the Prime Minister took me aside. 'I understand, Latimer,' he said, 'that you don't like Federation.'

"That took me by surprise. I told Sir Godfrey that of course I liked the Federation. 'Well, then,' he said, 'what's all this I hear about your helping our African Members of Parliament? We like our Africans just the way they are--pure and simple. I know that you're applying to have your temporary residence permit renewed and I was thinking seriously of not approving the renewal. However, I'll let it through this time'."

I told Latimer that I thought the whole thing must have been some sort of joke but he said that as far as he could tell Huggins was deadly serious. "I'm in the dubious position of having been warned by the Federal Prime Minister that if I don't stop helping Africans I'll have to leave the country," he said. The story is a hard one to believe entirely and I'm taking it with a grain of salt--but it does have some ring of authenticity when it is viewed in the light of my interview with Huggins reported in FBM-7. In addition, I've never known Latimer, although a strong liberal, to tell a falsehood to prove a point.

In general, therefore, I would say that the Federation is beginning, cautiously, to pick its way through the jungle of organization and re-organization that faces any young country. The Government is not moving too fast--the complaint of most people is that it is not moving fast enough.

During a conversation with Prof. William Rollo, the principal of the new Rhodesian University, the progress of the Federation came up. "I think it's just a matter of conditioning," he said. "The people of the Federation had it drummed into them that the Federation would bring a lot of big, important changes. So far there haven't been any obvious changes and I think the people are just disappointed that life seems so much like it did before Federation. The people in the 13 original states of America must have felt the same way shortly after the Federal Government was set up there."

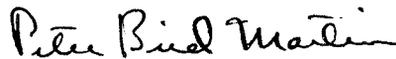
The biggest sign of activity in the Federation is growth. The fact that Jack Hines is going to Nyasaland and East Africa, the fact that Ken Cunningham is going

to open a new automobile agency on the copperbelt, the fact that Keith Knutzen is extremely busy planning houses for a great many people in Salisbury and the fact that Percy Newton's garden is worth \$4200 an acre are outward indications of the boom and confidence that Federation has brought.

The lack of activity shown by the Government is a healthy sign and it will, I feel, soon pass. Sir Godfrey Huggins' remark about the progress of Africans is an indication that no revolutionary changes are to be made in the status of the African for some time--their admission to Parliament and the creation of the multi-racial University is apparently considered enough for the Africans to chew on for some time.

Except for Percy Newton and his friends, there is a comfortable feeling of confidence among my friends in Salisbury. I was welcomed back from the Union as though I had just come from a plague spot to a place where competent doctors are keeping disease under control.

Sincerely,



Peter Bird Martin

Received New York 5/24/54.