

## RHODESIAN INCIDENT, December 1971—A NOTE

JUDITH TODD, in her vivid and moving record of happenings in Rhodesia in 1971-72—both to her and to others—*The Right to Say No* (Sidgwick and Jackson, 1972), tells how in December 1971 a meeting to explain the Hume-Smith settlement proposals was held in a tiny Baptist church in the African location on the outskirts of the white town of Shabani. It was arranged by the recently formed branch of the African National Council, but was in fact the normal Sunday service, this being the only way of outwitting the authorities' restrictive measures.

The building was packed to overflowing with many trying to see and hear through the windows. It was terribly humid. Miss Todd was asked to give a sermon based on the White Paper. After hymns, prayers and Bible readings, various people spoke about the proposals and then questions were invited. Suddenly Miss Todd heard voices from behind the curtain in front of which she was seated and discovered that people were standing packed together in the baptistery.

She tells how a little girl standing on the steps held up her hand to vote No and how the African sitting next to her said, half-laughing, half-crying: "She doesn't understand what she is doing, but when she is old she will remember this meeting and she will be proud then that she said No."

The service then ended not with the African national anthem, as Miss Todd herself hoped, but with the revival hymn "There's a land that is fairer than day". The singing might, she thinks, have "moved the hearts of the Monday Club . . . The music was an expression of a tentative liberty that many of the assembled had never before tasted, and the soaring voices of the people lifted and held aloft their hearts."

E. A. PAYNE.