

How Ian Smith sees one-man one-vote

By James Fox, Geneva

A STATEMENT has emerged which suggests that Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front party has different ideas from the widely accepted intentions of the Kissinger proposals for Rhodesia. The statement—a memorandum of a speech by a deputy minister—says the Rhodesian government does not see majority rule as "one-man one-vote" but as a qualified franchise.

The Sunday Times has obtained a copy of this memorandum, which seems to indicate that the Smith government wishes to ride out the next two years or more without conceding to black rule.

Smith's original statement after the Kissinger initiative several weeks ago was deliberately vague. But last week—amid the preparations for the conference—the Rhodesian Front was openly backing down on the prospect for universal franchise. Smith declared: "Majority rule for us is well short of one-man one-vote." His foreign minister, P. K. Van der Byl, echoed: "I categorically oppose one-man one-vote."

Even before these statements, the British chairman of the conference, Ivor Richard indicated that if there was a general wish to discuss other forms of franchise then this was not to be excluded. Any-

thing short of this, for the African delegations, is unthinkable.

The document is a simple, one-page memorandum of a speech delivered three weeks ago by Ted Sutton Price, deputy minister in Smith's office, to a closed meeting in his constituency. In summary, Sutton Price said:

6 The US cannot support a white minority government because of world opinion. If an "acceptable" government was set up, it would support Rhodesia with everything, except troops, to combat communism.

The Rhodesian Front accepted the package only because of pressure—there are \$60m in exports in the pipeline. Without exports moving, the government could not support an agricultural crop next year. The railway system was moving few goods. The border was closed for up to four days during the Kissinger talks. The fuel supply is down to 19.6 days. Smith considered appealing to the South African public over the head of Vorster, but did not have enough time.

The Kissinger deal—an interim government, two years to sort out the constitution and then majority rule—is not seen as one-man one-vote. America understands the problem better than the UK.

Sutton Price then revealed the basic tactics of white survival.

Parliament, he said, would

only go "into recess" under the plan and not be dissolved. If the agreed constitution was not liked after two years, parliament could reject it. At worst Rhodesia would be in a better position to fight the war than at present. It would have two years' trading on the open market with sanctions lifted.

The economy would be revived with the \$2,000 million development fund. There would be two years to build up arms and war materials for the armed forces. Then, ambiguously, the memorandum says: "The market for recruiting into the armed forces would be widened."

African nationalists, on learning of this plan in Geneva last week, were so incensed that one said Smith had come to Geneva to perpetuate a "gigantic fraud." Another black leader, Robert Mugabe, commented: "It is an indication that Smith is really not prepared to surrender just now, and what we hear of American pressures is apparently an exaggeration."

The Rhodesian Front plans leaked out on Wednesday in a statement that was clumsily handled by Bishop Abel Muzorewa's spokesman, Rev Max Chigweda, and had little impact on the Press. Chigweda read out

a list of what he claimed were the future tactics of the Smith government.

He concluded that Smith had come to Geneva to perpetrate a "gigantic fraud." Pressed for his sources, Chigweda hedged, and reporters concluded that the "document" was a Rhodesia Front memorandum pre-dating the Smith speech.

Smith dismissed the Chigweda statement as "nonsense." It will be more difficult for him to allay the suspicions of the black delegates this week.

Martin Meredith reports from Salisbury: Rhodesian Front MPs have been holding constituency meetings to explain settlement proposals. They have told their audiences that majority rule does not mean one-man one-vote, but will depend on the income, property and educational qualifications of the blacks.

However, even with a qualified franchise, majority rule could be effected easily and there is thus enormous scope for negotiation in the Rhodesian Front position.

Privately, some leading nationalists are not entirely hostile to the idea of a limited franchise—despite their public position—provided that it means majority rule.