

SMITH AND MUGABE JOIN FORCES AFTER 15-YR WAR

The former Prime Minister of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Mr Ian Smith, said in a public speech the greatest disaster that could befall the country would be if something happened to its present Prime Minister, Mr Robert Mugabe.

The two fought a war for 15 years and were bitterly opposed prior to the country's independence.

Something changed the two men. An insight into what happened was given in Toowoomba yesterday by Mr Bremer Hofmeyr, an Afrikaaner who lives in Johannesburg.

Mr Hofmeyr is a former Rhodes Scholar, one of three brothers to gain the coveted honour. His family migrated from Holland to South Africa in 1743.

Mr Hofmeyr and his wife Agnes have devoted their lives to racial reconciliation in southern Africa through the Moral Re-Armament Movement, and believe there are many hopeful signs of this coming to pass.

"Theirs (Smith's and Mugabe's) was a very remarkable reconciliation in which many of Moral Re-Armament friends were involved," Mr Hofmeyr said.

"This group comprising blacks and whites met and formed a 'Cabinet of Conscience,' which had no way of forcing its will on anyone.

"However, they felt they must bring Robert Mugabe and Ian Smith together before the election results were announced.

"On the eve of independence the two met privately for the first time. They spoke from their hearts.

"Mr Smith agreed to try to persuade the whites to stay and help build Zimbabwe. Mr Mugabe decided to put two whites in his Cabinet.

"Now we hear that the person Mr Mugabe consults most on political matters is Mr Smith."

Mr Hofmeyr said Mr Mugabe had confounded those people feared the worst with his advent to power by becoming "a very fine leader, in a very difficult situation."

The developing situation in Zimbabwe, with black and white finding a way rule the country together, had become a great encouragement to all those in South Africa who were looking for a new way there.

"Many in South Africa were very cynical of



MR BREMER HOFMEYR and Mrs Agnes Hofmeyr photographed yesterday at the Bridge Street home of Mr and Mrs Geoffrey Warrington.

Zimbabwe's prospects, and events there have not been lost on South Africans. If Zimbabwe goes ahead with a reasonable degree of freedom, security and progress in cannot but be a new factor in southern Africa."

Mr Hofmeyr told also of:

- Mr Ian Smith's son, Alec Smith, who had been a drug addict, drug peddler and drop-out, but who had been converted by a Christian experience and was now actively working with Moral Re-Armament for the good of the country;

- Of the major business corporations and the banks being totally committed to the removal of apartheid in their operations;

- Of the changes established and being effected in desegregating sport, hotels, parks, theatres and industry "that 10 years ago would have been unthinkable."

Mr Hofmeyr said: "If today we accept what 10 years ago was unthinkable, perhaps sooner than we expect we may find ourselves ready to accept changes in the structure that today we think are impossible."