

claims that it had reduced the level of traffic through Mozambican ports from 80 per cent before the Portuguese coup in April 1974 to 20 per cent, this is a gross underestimate, as shown by figures from records of the Mozambique Railways and Harbours authority. In fact, traffic was reduced from 2,840,351t in 1973 to 2,139,624t in 1975, which is 60 per cent of Rhodesia's foreign trade outside Southern Africa. Rhodesian traffic through Beira actually rose by 30 per cent since 1973, although her dependence on Maputo was decreased.

The cost to Mozambique in lost freight charges alone has been estimated at £20m a year. Because of the layout of the railways in the region, Mozambique will lose revenue from traffic not only from Rhodesia but from Zaire, Botswana, Malawi and South Africa. Zaire had recently been exporting 18,000t of copper a week through Zambia and Rhodesia to Mozambican ports, because she had been unable to use the Angolan port of Lobito. Mozambique will also lose revenue from Malawi-South African traffic which passed through Rhodesia and Mozambique, and from large amounts of Rhodesian goods imported by Malawi which were transported by road through Mozambique. In addition, traffic from Botswana and South Africa which went via Rhodesia has been halted. Because of the loss of traffic, the cost of running the ports and railways will be higher, and there is a possibility of unemployment on both lines to Rhodesia and the ports, particularly Beira.

Mozambique had been importing large quantities of food, especially maize and meat, and industrial goods, from Rhodesia. In his address, President Machel appealed to the nation to increase agricultural output to compensate for the loss of vital food imports from Rhodesia. He placed the agricultural and industrial sectors on a 'war footing' and appealed for support from socialist countries.

Representatives of 35 Commonwealth countries, meeting in London on the day of the border closures, reaffirmed their commitment to compensate Mozambique for enforcing sanctions. This decision was taken at a Commonwealth summit conference last year, when Britain and Canada pledged to contribute a large proportion. The special meeting of the Commonwealth Sanctions Committee in London was requested by the Tanzanian High Commissioner, Mr Nsekela, a few days before the closure.

There is speculation that the decision about the border was taken at a meeting

of Presidents Machel, Nyerere, Kaunda and Khama in Quelimane, Mozambique, in February.

Kurt Waldheim, Secretary-General of the United Nations, immediately issued a statement saying he was confident the United Nations would respond favourably to any request for assistance by Mozambique. On March 16, Mozambique's Foreign Minister, Joaquim Chissano, told the UN Security Council his country needed \$49m a year, in addition to the \$8m owed by Rhodesia to Mozambique. Britain and a group of non-aligned states sponsored a resolution in the Security Council calling for international economic aid to Mozambique. Subsequently, the Security Council unanimously voted to extend economic aid to Mozambique. ■

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Mozambique's closure of her border with Rhodesia, while it has serious implications for her own struggling economy, means that Rhodesia has lost outlets for about 60 per cent of her foreign trade and a sixth of her rolling stock, worth £23m, which were confiscated by Mozambique as they were on her side of the border when the announcement was made. President Machel, announcing the closure on March 3, said all Rhodesian assets in Mozambique would be confiscated in line with United Nations sanctions. He said the ban would cover any communication with Rhodesia, including land and air traffic of goods and persons.

Although the Smith government