



CENTRAL AFRICAN *Personalities*

**The Hon.
Reginald Stephen
Garfield Todd**

PRIME MINISTER OF THE COLONY OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA

Reginald Stephen Garfield Todd became a Prime Minister before he was fifty years of age. Many congratulated him: few envied him, and some commiserated with him. Mr. Todd himself was as much surprised as he was satisfied.

The task of taking over from the Rt. Hon. Sir Godfrey Huggins might have appalled many, but Mr. Todd possesses more than the requisite degree of self-confidence and assurance to leave no room for fears. He possesses, too, qualities which have made the performance of his task easier, namely, an ability rapidly to assimilate facts and to size up a position: a capacity and a willingness to work hard and long: a frankness that is often disarming, and a clear conception of what he is striving for. If his assumption of the office of Prime Minister was not acclaimed it was certainly not long before most people felt that he was measuring up to the job.

He has seldom, if ever, chosen for himself the easy path. Born in 1908, of Scottish descent, in Invercargill, New Zealand, he could have entered his father's business and managed wool mills, coal mine, brick and pottery works. He did in fact enter the business, but his ambition turned in other directions: he wanted to be a missionary. So he entered the Glen Leith Theological College in 1929 and graduated, with honours, in 1931. Subsequently he was at both the Otago University and the University of the Witwatersrand.

It was in 1934 that he was appointed Superintendent of the New Zealand Mission at Dadaya, close to Shabanie, the asbestos centre of Southern Rhodesia. He had much building work to do in more senses than one, and he became in due course a skilled artisan in several fields. This served in good stead in the development of the ranch which he acquired in the district and to which he goes whenever State affairs permit him to do so. There, with his wife and two daughters, he is as happy as only a truly busy man with varied interests can be.

It is said that he came into politics because Sir Godfrey Huggins, seeking a good candidate for the Insiza constituency remembered a "roasting" he had been given in the constituency by Mr. Garfield Todd who had asked many pertinent and not easily answerable questions. Be that as it may he was elected for Insiza in 1946 and re-elected for the altered constituency of Shabani, in 1948. As a back-bencher he was not particularly outstanding, but when he spoke he did so with obvious knowledge of his subject, sincerity and conviction. He spoke more frequently on matters concerning the African than on other affairs. He spoke then, as he does to-day, with fluency and great rapidity.

So, after seven years of political experience, he found himself, when Federation came, chosen from his fellows to lead in Southern Rhodesia. He has done so up to now with firmness and conviction and many feel that he will establish a reputation which will stand comparison with those of Coghlan, Moffat and Huggins, three of his predecessors in office.