

Reports from envoys sought by Mr Heath

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The Government last night resisted pressure from the Labour Opposition for a debate in Government time next week on the reported massacres in Mozambique.

Although the Opposition asked for a debate, the Government view is that it was up to the Opposition, if they insisted on a debate, to use their own supply time.

The Opposition have three opportunities next week to raise the issue—on Monday when they have a supply day on Scottish affairs, on Wednesday when there is an Opposition motion on inflation, and on Thursday when it is expected there will be a Second Reading debate on the Consolidated Fund Bill.

Earlier yesterday, the Opposition were optimistic that the Government would allow Government time for a debate during the visit of Dr Caetano, the Prime Minister of Portugal.

In the meantime the Government is seeking reports from the Ambassador in Lisbon and the Consul-General in Lourenco Marques.

Hugh Noyes, Our Parliamentary Correspondent, writes :

Lord George-Brown, Labour's former Foreign Secretary, speaking on the reported massacre by Portuguese troops in Mozambique, told the House of Lords today that some Labour

peers were falling into the trap of choosing which tyrants and which colonialist policies they were willing to accept.

As Lady Tweedsmuir, Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, was rejecting demands from the Labour Front Bench for the official visit to Britain next week of Dr Caetano, the Portuguese Prime Minister, to be cancelled, Lord George-Brown said that, for a long time under both Labour and Conservatives, Britain had been willing to accept tyrants who ran colonialist policies, even in Europe. Those who had experience in these matters knew that Roman Catholic missions could not have provided the clinical evidence that Mr William Rees-Mogg, Editor of *The Times*, published yesterday. It could not possibly have been checked in that detail.

Lord George-Brown detected a political motivation which had nothing to do with social democracy but was simply a rejection of one tyrant whom it was thought should not be there. If this were to be applied to foreign policy, Mr Brezhnev, the Soviet leader, would never appear in Britain.

But, as Conservative peers cheered, Lord Kennet, from the Labour Front Bench, repeated his call for the visit to be abandoned.