

# WHY 'LOVABLE' ROLF PUT HIS FOOT DOWN

—and said goodbye to £15,000

**ROLF HARRIS, the man with "the most innocuous act in show business" (his words), is the last person you'd imagine upsetting governments. But he has.**

Seemingly even more out of character, his reaction to official displeasure has had all the

force of a two-finger gesture.

When the Australian entertainer arrived in South Africa last month for a £15,000, four-week tour, he learned that his plans to play to coloured as well as white audiences had been vetoed by the authorities.

White only, they insisted.

Immediately, he cancelled his tour, money or no money.

Back in England and still in mild shock at recent events, Rolf told me:

"I wasn't being pig-headed. I was quite prepared to abide by the South African system, which is to perform before separate white and coloured audiences.

"I was confident that I would get permission to entertain coloureds, and had several concerts booked. But I was told there were 'valid reasons' why I couldn't.

"I don't know what those reasons were. Perhaps they had something to do with the fact that I've been involved in helping Australian aborigines.

"Other people may not have my convictions. I know some show business people who have gone to South Africa prepared to take the money and forget the politics. That's their business.

"What annoys me is that I had no desire to

incite a riot or anything like that. My act is probably the most scrupulously pure thing you can imagine: mainly comedy with songs, and a little bit of sentiment. All of it could be classed as family entertainment.

"I would think I was the last person they had reason to query."

Rolf, who came to Britain from Western Australia in the Fifties, has had his own television series since 1966. His bouncy, Aussie approach appeals particularly to children.

He is due to start recording his new series for London Weekend Television soon. Meanwhile he has a date as a guest on ITV's Golden Shot next Sunday, and then he is to tour America and Canada.

## A new show

ROLF moved from the BBC to London Weekend last spring. "I really wanted to do a different kind of show. I felt at the end of my last BBC series that I was becoming nothing more or less than a compere."

Rolf, who has been married for fifteen years to a sculptress called Alwen, and has a nine-year-old daughter, Bindi, lives in Sydenham, in South London, a suburb not normally associated with show business personalities.

He also owns a night club in Malta.

"We're going to try to spend more time out there this year," he said.

The ways of the Australian Outback still call to him, even on Malta.

"I've always had this cave-dwelling thing. I would love to own a cave. It's primitive—like in Australia going

out with a knife and a cup and roughing it.

"When I discovered a mountain cave in Malta I asked the government if I could buy it. But they said sorry, it wasn't for sale."

Governments and Harris are obviously not destined to be in concert.



Rolf Harris: "Why me?"