

You will understand from all that I have said and from many other activities which are too numerous to mention, that Government is doing its utmost to provide more and more jobs inside Lesotho and to improve the living conditions in the villages where most of our people dwell.

I come to a matter which has given you all much cause for concern, namely land allocation. It has come to Government's notice that there are still many Chiefs and Headmen who disregard the law which requires them to be guided by the advice of five elected men when allocating lands. It is Government's firm intention to put an end to these abuses and to make sure that land is allocated according to the law. In addition, we are preparing another law for presentation to Parliament to give the people even greater security of land tenure. We believe that if the Chiefs are able to inherit lands from their parents, then every Basotho should enjoy the same benefits. The Constitution which is our supreme law, lays down that the land is the property of the Nation and not of the Chiefs.

Surprisingly enough, Mr. Mokhehle, the Leader of the Opposition, supports those chiefs who say that the land of Lesotho is the property of the Chieftainship and he accuses the Government of wishing to deprive the Chiefs of their rights. He and some of his chiefly friends would even go so far as to demand a referendum on this matter, although it is already settled by the Constitution which also provides that anyone who feels that he is being denied his rights, shall have recourse to the courts. It seems to me very plain that Mr. Mokhehle is merely trying to gain a temporary political advantage, but to do so, he is prepared to support their privileges in the form of land and their numerous allowances at the expense of the ordinary people of this country who have no lands and no regular source of income. All this does not worry Mr. Mokhehle because he himself, as Leader of the Opposition earns a regular monthly salary like a civil servant or a chief, and he also wears one of those neckties which six years ago he pretended to despise.

But the ordinary man need have no fear for Government is determined to see that justice is done to all. If there is to be a referendum, the question will be not whether the Chiefs should be deprived of their rights, but whether the Chiefs should be allowed to continue to own vast tracts of land and at the same time receive large salaries from a variety of sources.

A recent statement of Mr. Mokhehle to the Agence France Press on the 20th July, shows clearly that he wants to gain/....