

SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE THE PRIME MINISTER
OUTLINING DEVELOPMENT POLICY FOR LESOTHO AND
ITS MOUNTAIN AREAS,
THURSDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER - SUNDAY, 1ST DECEMBER, 1968

My first desire is to convey to you the condolences of His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II and the Government of Lesotho on the tragedy that befell our Flying Doctor and his pilot in the service of the people who live in the mountain areas of Lesotho. We all feel this loss deeply. Among other factors, this tragedy makes us acutely aware of the need to render to these areas services which, though limited in scope, are now being enjoyed by people living in the Lowlands.

Lesotho is basically an agricultural country and because of this the Government accords top priority to crop and livestock production and improvement, as a means of increasing the people's income. The increase in income will form the basis of savings which will be used by the people themselves for the future economic development of the country.

The Government is convinced that for industrialization to continue unhampered it must be accompanied by productivity increases in agriculture. The experience of Japan, Israel and other countries that have achieved a break-through in agriculture shows that agricultural development is a prerequisite for a successful programme of industrialization. The country ought to be self-sufficient in food supplies in order to minimize the balance of payments problems that result from heavy importation of machinery and foodstuffs. It is therefore the Government's objective to make Lesotho self-sufficient in food requirements and to diversify agriculture through the introduction of new cash crops which may be suitable for our climate and soils.

It is in this light that the Government intends to develop the Mountain areas and to make them more accessible to the Lowland markets so that they can sell their produce at economic prices. The Government is now investigating alternative ways of achieving this development objective. It has commissioned the Transport Research Centre of the University of Stellenbosch to make an economic appraisal of where the roads to the mountain areas should be constructed. The Government is also negotiating with friendly countries on the assistance that can be given for the development of the

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