

File in case 9083

SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER IN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
ON WEDNESDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY, 1968, ON THE OCCASION
OF THE PRESENTATION OF GIFTS TO THE HOUSE BY
THE BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS
DELEGATION

MR. SPEAKER, SIR,

I am glad to rise to thank the Delegation from the House of Commons who have brought us these magnificent gifts. We particularly appreciate the feeling expressed here today that these gifts symbolise the parliamentary tradition cherished by the peoples of our two countries. We have a recent Westminster type constitution agreed to by all our people. This does not stem simply from having been a British colony. Far from it. We know these systems in our tradition too, extending a long way back. We have always been used to having pitsos and while the rules of procedure, Mr. Speaker, may not have been as complicated as ours are today, nevertheless they were aimed at allowing a man, however, humble, to express his views freely and fearlessly before the highest and the lowest and to have them weighed up before decisions were taken on important matters. This we take to be the essence of the democratic parliamentary system evolved by Westminster to a technical perfection but whose principles were not at all unknown to our forebears and to our people long ago. Our traditions of democracy and of the moral code were developed in our own way. In 1833 when the first French missionaries came to our great Chief Moshoeshoe, they thought the best way to preach was to recite the Ten Commandments. After listening patiently to these Moshoeshoe commented quietly: "Yes, we have much the same rules too."

So, Mr. Speaker, when this Honourable Delegation from the House of Commons comes here and with generosity presents us with a fine gift and says that this is a symbol of the parliamentary tradition cherished by the peoples of our two countries, then indeed they are saying more. They have the more perfected system, but we by our own ways have arrived at very similar traditions and hence are able to agree fully on a common tradition in the conduct of public affairs.

We thank them, Sir, through you, for this linking gift and wish them a good visit to us and Godspeed in returning to the Mother of Parliaments.

Sethabathaba Fund to meet the cost of higher education. I cannot see any reason why they should not once again apply themselves to the task rather than see this University stagnate - when it should, on the contrary, now be growing from strength to strength, to the extent where it can provide all the facilities necessary for this country's development. The performance of this University deserves such consideration. It has turned out men of standing in the African society of today. To mention but a few, I would name the first pre-independence Prime Minister of Uganda, Mr. Benedict Kiwanuka, who is today the Leader of the Opposition in that country's Parliament; Mr. John Tembo, the Minister of Finance in the Government of Malawi is the product of our University and so is Mr. Masinde Muliro, a Minister in the Republic of Kenya. These men represent praiseworthy achievements for which we must be proud of our University and particularly grateful to those friends of the University who have assisted so far in its establishment and development. The United Kingdom, over and above the grant-in-aid to Lesotho, makes a special contribution towards the maintenance of the University; the Americans and the Canadians have in a number of ways also extended a helping hand. Here I would like to express a special word of thanks to Canada, because the establishment of our University was the direct result of the work of missionaries of Canadian extraction.

Like all emerging countries in Africa, we are faced with many problems. We are no exception to the rule that education needs to be adapted to the changing requirements brought about by development. It will require hard work and great effort - but I am positive that the response of all sectors of the population to this appeal which I and my Government are launching will bear wholesome fruits. We shall then go on to build properly for the future on a clear-cut policy which will lead to success.