

Speech by the Honourable the Prime Minister on the occasion of the Ceremony to mark the ESCOM connection with Maseru, held on Friday 21st June, 1968 at 11 a.m.

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MR. DE VILLIERS:

It is a little more than a month since a large and jubilant crowd of Basotho people assembled at the Maseru Railway Station to welcome the reintroduction of the passenger train to Lesotho. To-day, in a matter of a few weeks, I am here with you, Mr. de Villiers, to mark the occasion of another signal event in the development of our country. The connection of ESCOM power to Maseru is indeed a proud event for me and the Government which I am privileged to lead.

The small generation plant which until now provided electricity for us could no longer - by virtue of its weakness and the rapid growth of the town of Maseru - cope with the increasing demands for electric power, especially in the winter months.

ESCOM power which we receive to-day will not be restricted to this town only. It is the intention of the Government in the near future to pass it on to Mofija, to Roma and to Mazenod, which in that order are the three main fountains of learning and knowledge as also the springs of the Christian faith. Just as education and Christianity spread throughout the length and breadth of Lesotho from those places, so in the same way the light of industrial progress and the source of power must spring from these historical centres.

In August 1966 Messrs. Merz and McLellan recommended to the Government of Lesotho that an approach be made to ESCOM for a power connection to meet Lesotho's urgent demands and ensure her industrial progress. Government accepted this recommendation and, after consultations with the Department of Foreign Affairs in the Republic of South Africa, it was agreed that a draft agreement with ESCOM be negotiated. I feel it is my duty to express my appreciation and gratitude to the ESCOM management for the exceptional co-operation they extended when they were approached in this matter; and equally my thanks go to the Department of Foreign Affairs in the Republic of South Africa, which was the official channel of these fruitful negotiations. The target date for this connection was May 1968 and as all know this has been accomplished.

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.