

SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE THE PRIME MINISTER,  
CHIEF LEABUA JONATHAN, AT A NATIONAL PITSO,  
AT THABANA - LI - MELE, ON THURSDAY, 25TH  
SEPTEMBER, 1969

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I greet you in the name of the Basotho people who have placed me in this position I now hold. You have made me a Prime Minister of equal status with the Prime Ministers of other lands. The position to which you have elected me is of your own choice. I am thus bold to appear before you whenever it is suitable for you and myself to do so. I am bound by duty to report to you on what is happening and to inform you whether or not it has been possible to satisfy your directives.

Lesotho is a very small country in comparison with others and there are no ways of expanding its area, despite the fact that her population is increasing day by day; each acre for man and man is diminishing. Our economic subsistence must necessarily depend mainly on Agriculture. But over and above our shrinking land and our swelling population, there faces us constantly the menace of soil erosion. Vast quantities of our soil are being washed away into the ocean. This ever more threatening factor disturbs all of us, for on our soil depend our lives.

Soil erosion has been an ever increasing menace since the days of the British colonial administration. The taxes we paid were for the benefit of the British only. The expatriates were granted advances for cars by taxes paid by the Basotho, and apart from that, the Government was paying them motor mileage with Basotho taxes. The expatriates were given every facility in all things in use in large houses built for them by the English Government with Basotho taxes. They were given gratis plates, pots, spoons, knives, tables, chairs, stoves, beds and blankets, etc., etc. All these things were not subject to rental. The rentals for the quarters they occupied were very low. The expatriates themselves looked the picture of health, while the Basotho were under-nourished and burdened by the strain of difficult lives. These are some of the shameful things occasioned by colonial rule.

Many Basotho decided that this tragedy could not be remedied. The only solution was self-government and to begin to build themselves in order to achieve a good life. Charity begins at home. The Europeans were providing services for themselves alone.

We are now providing services for ourselves. The  
establishment .....