

SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE THE PRIME MINISTER
AT A NATIONAL MEETING AT MABABATHA, ON
SATURDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER, 1969.

The Basotho National Party was formed in 1959. At that time the preparations for a representative form of Government for Lesotho were well ahead. The Basutoland Congress Party was the only well organized Party in the country. The formation of the Basotho National Party was greeted with considerable scorn by the Congress Party. We were called a party of Catholics, a party of Chiefs, a party of "imperialist stooges". Indeed, we were referred to as "sell-outs". When the elections were held in 1960 the Basutoland Congress Party controlled a large number of District Councils, and controlled an even bigger proportion of indirectly elected members of the Legislative Councils.

Although we lost badly in the 1960 elections, We were comforted by an interesting factor in the results of elections. They, the B.C.P. had worked very hard, and although the Party had existed for nine years, an analysis of the 1960 election results revealed that that the territorial election poll was about 24% only. This meant that 76% of the Basotho electorate had not voted. Moreover, approximately 98% of the Basotho women had not registered as voters because of the tax qualification. Should I call it the tax disqualification? This was a lesson to the Basotho National Party that in spite of the loud noise of the Congress Party, it had no real roots in the country. It had established roots in the independent states of Africa. It had established roots in the communist countries. This explains the massive financial aid which flowed into the Congress treasury. They had no roots in Lesotho - yet the noise they made was deafening! Empty tins always make the most noise. The Opposition parties had no popular support.

Realising this weakness, the Basotho National Party worked even harder within Lesotho. By the time we came to the 1965 elections, the Basotho National Party had begun to cast doubts into the minds of Congress and other circles as to their self-confessed strength to win the elections. The Opposition Parties had overlooked
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