

SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE THE PRIME MINISTER OF
LESOTHO, CHIEF LEABUA JONATHAN, AT MPHARANE
CONSTITUENCY, ON SUNDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER, 1969

In June, 1965, Senator Molupe Mothepu resigned, with your consent, his position as a popularly elected Representative of the people of Mpharane constituency in the popularly elected Lesotho National Assembly. As a result of this resignation a vacancy was created. This was an act of bravery on the part of the National Party and the people of Mpharane. It was an act of bravery because with the slender majority we had in the National Assembly the position of the Basotho National Party in being able to form a government was in the balance.

Nevertheless, the people of Mpharane reorganised themselves for the second task of electing not only a member of the National Assembly, but also a Prime Minister for Lesotho. On 1st July, 1965, the brave and proud members of the Basotho National Party in the Mpharane constituency confidently went to the polls to elect in a democratic way the Prime Minister of Lesotho. Indeed, as the Almighty would have it, I - Leabua Jonathan - was elected by the people of Mpharane on 1st July, 1965, to be your representative in the Lesotho National Assembly.

On the 5th July, 1965, at 6.45 p.m. I took an oath of office before His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II. By that act I assumed office as Prime Minister, head of the Lesotho Government and Chief Adviser of His Majesty the King. At that time Motlotlehi was representing Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom. At that moment I longed for the day when Motlotlehi would stand and act on his own behalf and not on behalf of another Queen or King.

At that moment I felt that the National Party members of Mpharane and the National Party people of the rest of Lesotho felt some deep sense of dissatisfaction that Motlotlehi should act for another monarch. This was wrong! There was but one thing to be done, namely to obtain independence for Lesotho. With an independent Lesotho Motlotlehi would act in his own right. He would be a King amongst other Kings and not a King under other Kings. I am absolutely certain that at that moment members of other Parties did not care or worry about the position of the King. Indeed, in certain quarters Motlotlehi was the target of foul and abusive language. In the circumstances, we of the National Party were to battle single-handed to elevate Motlotlehi to the position of a King equal to others.

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