

Letter from Leabua Jonathan to Harold Wilson regarding the economic situation in Lesotho (Maseru, 7 October 1966)

Caption: On 7 October 1966, three days after the independence of Lesotho, Joseph Leabua Jonathan, the Lesotho Prime Minister, sends a letter to the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, in which he asks for the British Government's financial support for Lesotho.

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PRIME MINISTER'S
SERIAL TELEGRAM
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BASUTOLAND

C. B. Khama Bhebe -
Sir A. Selous -
Mr. ~~Seth~~ a. a. a. 6
Mr. Maurice →

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER,
MASERU.
LESOTHO.

CA/FIN/10

7th October, 1966.

Dear Mr Prime Minister,

I send you my thanks and the thanks of my colleagues for your very kind personal message of congratulations and goodwill. The participation of the British delegation in our independence celebrations has given us particular pleasure. The Basotho people will always remember with gratitude that Britain has faithfully discharged her trusteeship here in saving Lesotho for the Basotho and preserving its land from alienation to peoples of other races. The special friendship between our two countries is deeply rooted in our past history, and it will certainly long survive the termination of the direct association to which you have referred.

It is upon this friendship that we now rely in our first approach to the problems that confront us. As you well know, these are many and complex - and in some respects - unique.

The necessity to accept realistically the implications of our geographical position has already exposed my government to criticism from other newly independent African states.

Our economy is far less developed, and our known resources more limited than those of any other former British colony which has embarked upon independence. You have been kind enough to reassure me of the British Government's intention to give Lesotho what help it can. For this, my colleagues and I are deeply grateful - fully aware as we are of the United Kingdom's grave financial difficulties. Today, a delegation led by my Ministers of Finance and of Economic Development leaves for London to discuss these matters. The proposals they carry have been prepared in some haste, but they take full account of the findings and recommendations of previous Missions of investigation established or instigated by the British Government. I can assure you that everything possible will be done to increase our revenues and to achieve economies. I am, however, advised that despite all our efforts, we have no immediate prospects of resolving our financial and economic difficulties. Our proposals are as modest as we can make them, but should it appear to the British Government that it would be unable to meet them, I would be grateful for an opportunity to plead our case personally in London before a final decision is reached.

In conclusion, my colleagues and I wish to assure you of our deep appreciation of the continuing concern

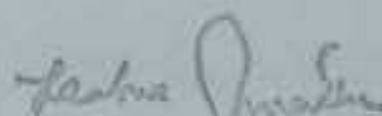
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of Her Majesty's Government for the future well-being of Lesotho, and to say that we look forward to the establishment of a continuing relationship between our two countries which will be no less happy and fruitful than our past association.


PRIME MINISTER

The Right Hon. J.H. Wilson, P.C., O.B.E., M.P.,
Prime Minister,
10, Downing Street,
LONDON.