

ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY H.E. THE PRESIDENT DR.
A. MILTON OBOTE, M.P., ON THE OCCASION OF THE
FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF UGANDA'S INDEPENDENCE:
9TH OCTOBER, 1967

The air of confidence that surrounds this year's celebrations is the greatest asset which we must all carry into our sixth year of Independence. There is confidence in the Government; confidence in the programmes for the development of the economy and social services; confidence in the structure of the Administration; confidence in the District Councils; and above all the people's confidence in themselves. Where there is confidence there is stability, and where there is stability there is opportunity to move forward at an accelerated speed.

During the last five years the country came to recognise that re-adjustments and re-castings are inevitable in the many things which we must do to preserve our Independence and improve our standard of living. There have been considerable readjustment and re-casting of the Constitution and in the Local Administrations Act. There

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are, however, some more legislations to be submitted to Parliament and such Bills will be designed not only to complete the constitutional exercise but also to create conditions for normal and rapid development of the country.

In these circumstances I do not think that the country was expecting me to announce the lifting of the

State of Emergency in Buganda. A year ago on this day I told the country that the Government was proposing to introduce further changes and that the State of Emergency would continue until the new changes become fully known and are seen to be running smoothly. You all know that the

Constitution and the Local Administrations Act came into effect only last month, and that is not a sufficient period to enable anyone to say in a definite manner that the Constitution and the Act are running smoothly. It would therefore, in the view of the Government, be wrong to lift the Emergency at this stage.

As regards the future, the sixth year of our Independence shall witness the closest relationship between the Government, the District Administrations and the people. An aspect of this relationship will be frequent visits to the districts and to the people in their homes and places

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of work by Ministers and Government officials. Another aspect will be to take the Government to the countryside by establishing in appropriate rural communities, committees, and charging such committees with the duty of considering all aspects of Administration and programmes for rural development. Government Ministers, officials, and the Secretaries General with their staff, will be required to meet these committees at frequent intervals and to discuss with the committees, adopt and implement various programmes. The aim here is to bring rural communities into full involvement in working out projects and implementing them, and thereby allowing people to assume their natural and basic right to say of any project, with one voice, that "we did it".

In the same way the Government proposes to institute in 1968 a programme that shall enable large numbers of the people from different districts to visit other districts. The aim here is to enable the people to develop understanding and to appreciate the quality of our people in different districts.

As we move into the sixth year, therefore, let us resolve never to shirk our responsibilities in promoting understanding and to work for the growth of our/.....

our economy and social services. Many who are able to cast their eyes backwards will see that in the past considerable and valuable time was spent in discussing and arguing on matters which were not of great concern to the people as a whole. These discussions, in most cases, resulted into creating in the minds of many the false idea that security of the people lies and is to be found in the tribal units.

The majority of the people are becoming more and more aware that enmity and tribal conflicts are not conducive to stable conditions which are essential for activities which create prosperity. This increasing awareness will not do away, during the sixth year of our Independence, with the weaknesses and malice on the part of some who will make every attempt to poison the minds of the people. These attempts, if past experience is any guide, will be centred on narrow grounds, and the most popular of them appear to be tribe and religion.

It remains the misfortune of Africa, and of our country in particular, that a good thing like religion should be used for evil and non-religious purposes.

Neither the Government nor the Party has ever condemned

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any person for being a member of any tribe, nor have we condemned or attempted throughout our years in Government, to give a raw deal to any tribe.

To provide security and opportunity to every man and woman in Uganda is our responsibility as a Government and in doing so we will not, even in the face of provocation, do anything against any person merely because of his religion or his tribe. It is with this in view that I dedicate the sixth year of our Independence to the development of human understanding amongst all our people.

Since the 9th of October, 1962, the measuring-rod of Uganda's image at home and abroad was established as the sum total of the daily activities of the citizens.

The image of our country is good. We can make it even better in the sixth year. The one and only sure way of doing so is for each individual to take pride in his work and to give that work maximum attention, as well as to avoid interfering with other people in their jobs, or making things difficult for other people to concentrate on their jobs.

The fact that our economy grew by over 6 per cent last year meant that farmers were constantly working in their/.....

~~their farms; the fishermen caught fish; the cattle~~
owners looked after their herds; the businessmen gave maximum attention to trade, commerce and industry; and that the civil servants reported at their places of work regularly and punctually and carried out their duties according to regulations. It is very easy to imagine that the other man's job is not difficult. It is not so easy to record the same performance and achievement as the other person if you are to get his job.

Therefore, on behalf of all, I say "thank you" to all who during the past year, worked hard and made it possible for the country to celebrate this day with confidence.

The event we are celebrating today is a challenge to the present generation. It is the present generation that must establish a firm foundation of the image of Uganda, the pearl-like character of its people, and the ability of the people to live as respectable members of the human race. Petty quarrels or misrepresentation of national efforts will not give our country that foundation, or give our people that character, or enable us to take with dignity our rightful place in the forum of nations.

Let no-one be in doubt that the event we celebrate today is of the greatest importance to the children of today and generations yet to come. These children must

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grow in the atmosphere of hope, understanding and security. They will take over from the present generation the important responsibility to give Uganda a character and to give its people a shining image which must generate pride at home and envy abroad. The high degree of confidence which is the hallmark of this year's celebrations is an important indication that we are moving in the right direction. Let us keep that way, for ahead of us there lies a glorious future.

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