COMMENTARY: The BNFA is pleased to present to our readers the full and unedited speech given by Mr. Kenneth Kaunda, then Prime Minister of Northern Rhodesia, to the Barotseland Government, a document Mr. Michael Sata’s government now classifies as seditious material, for which one of us must be prosecuted in a kangaroo court constituted by an occupying power...

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER KENNETH KAUNDA AT A MEETING HELD AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE BAROTSE GOVERNMENT AT LEALUI ON THURSDAY, 6TH AUGUST 1964.

(THE MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY THE LITUNGA AND MEMBERS OF THE BAROTSE GOVERNMENT)

I have listened to your kind words of welcome with great appreciation and interest and I am very happy to be able to make this visit to Lealui today and meet you all. It had been my hope to make an earlier visit to Barotseland, but unfortunately owing to pressure of work I have been unable to do so. As I said in the letter which I wrote to all Chiefs in the country shortly after the present Government assumed office in January of this year, it is my wish to visit all Chiefs as soon as possible. It has been difficult, however, to fit in as many visits as I would have wished owing to my many other pre-occupations, but I am very glad that I am able to make this visit today.

1. I am also very pleased that it has been possible for so many of the Barotse Chiefs and other members of the Royal Family, and other members of the Barotse Government to be present here today.

2. I am aware that many changes are taking place in Northern Rhodesia at the present time. This is inevitable as the country prepares itself for independence, and I realise that to many some of the changes come as something of a shock. It is my wish to explain to you this morning the reasons for some of these changes and to explain exactly what is intended by them. I think you will agree that so often the cause of misunderstanding is a lack of information, and if a proper explanation can be given of the reasons for changes they can more easily be understood and accepted.

First of all I want to explain briefly the changes that are taking place as a result of the reorganisation of the Provincial Administration. I explained the reasons for these changes, and precisely what they entailed, to the House of Chiefs, at which of course, the four Barotse Representatives were present, and I have no doubt that my explanations have been brought to the attention of you Sir Mwanawina and of the Barotse Government. However, I think it would be useful if I briefly tell you precisely what is intended.

3. When the new system comes into operation at the beginning of September, the former Provincial Administration will be known as Provincial and District government. The intention behind the change is to achieve a separation of the executive, local government and the court functions of the former Provincial organisation, and in place of the Resident Commissioner and Provincial Commissioners, and the District Commissioners - all of whom have played such a valuable role in the past in the administration and development of the country - there will be at each Provincial Headquarters a Resident Secretary, and at District Headquarters a District Secretary, who will be men who are at present serving in the Provincial Administration.

4. An Under Minister will be appointed to each Province as the personal representative of the Prime Minister - and after Independence of the President. In Barotseland the Under Minister will be a
direct link between the Litunga and the Central Government, and he will be particularly responsible to the Prime Minister - and later the President - to ensure that the Barotseland Agreement, which was made in London immediately after the Independence Conference in May, is being honoured. **It will be no part of the functions of the Under Minister to interfere in the day-to-day running of the Barotse Government.**

5. The Under Minister will be responsible for ensuring that Government policy is being carried out, and in Barotseland, as in the Southern Province, since the person selected as Under Minister has been a civil servant, I have decided that a Political adviser should be appointed to assist and advise him in the political aspects of his post.

In order to ensure that there is no misunderstanding as to the position and role of the political adviser, I would like to explain in some detail precisely what is intended by the appointment.

An important part of the Under Minister’s functions will be his position as Chairman of the Development Team. He will be responsible for seeing that the Government’s development plans are carried out and to ensure that there is co-ordination between the various departments of Government.

6. In this task the Political adviser will assist him in dealing with any political difficulties that may arise in the implementation of the plan and in helping him with its general implementation in ensuring for instance, that the people, and the political parties, understand what precisely is being done, and why. After very careful consideration I have decided that the political adviser in Barotseland should be Mr. Lisselo. As the senior representative of the governing party - the United National Independence Party in Barotseland - he is the logical choice for the post, and as I have said, his main function will aspects of his job. He will particularly advise him on party matters and on the attitude of the party to various events and happenings as they occur. I would like to make it quite clear that the post of political adviser will be directly concerned with the functions of the Under Minister, and the political adviser will have no authority to deal with or interfere in the affairs of the Barotse Government.

7. He will have an office in the Office of the Under Minister where the Resident Secretary will also have his office. I should add that the Resident Secretary will be in overall charge of the Government’s administration, and he will have a co-ordinating function in regard to the activities of the Government departments in Barotseland. The relationship between the Resident Secretary and the Under Minister will be a similar relationship to that of Permanent Secretary to a Minister.

8. The Resident Secretary will be the chief official adviser to the Under Minister just as the Resident Commissioner has advised the Government in the past. The Resident Secretary and the political adviser will thus have quite separate responsibilities and functions and one will not interfere with the other.

In each district the role of District Secretary will be to ensure the co-ordination of Government activities in the District, and the implementation of Government policy and the Government’s development plan in the District. District Secretaries will be responsible to the Resident Secretary and they will also co-operate with the District Heads of Kutas.

9. I hope that by this explanation I have cleared away any misunderstandings that may have occurred as to the Government’s plans for the reorganisation of the Provincial Administration and dispelled any fears that may have existed as to the role of the Under Minister and of his political adviser.
I have explained all this in some detail since I want the division of functions between the persons to be appointed to these posts to be clearly understood by all. I hope that it will be appreciated that each has a particular and important role to play in the good government of the country, and that at the same time the Barotse Government has its own particular role. There is no intention that these new appointments should in any way change the role of the Barotse Government.

10. The Under Minister, the Resident Secretary and the Political Adviser also have their own particular part to play and I am confident that if there is understanding of what the part of each is, there will be the fullest co-operation between the Barotse Government and the Central Government representatives. I wish to emphasize that the new organisation is intended to improve the co-operation that has taken place in the past and is not in any way intended to reduce the powers or responsibility of the Barotse Government. I am most anxious, as are my, Ministers, to ensure that the development of our country proceeds as rapidly as possible, and the machinery which is being devised is in order to ensure that the development plans should proceed with the maximum speed and to the maximum advantage of all our people. In this I am certain that we shall receive the wholehearted co-operation of the Barotse Government.

11. I should now like to turn to the Barotseland Agreement which was reached in London in May, and I wish to give an assurance that it is the Government's full intention that the Barotseland Agreement will be honoured fully after Independence. I believe that the Agreement reached in London was an honourable Agreement from the point of view of both the Central Government and the Barotseland Government, and I believe that the way to ensure that it is implemented to the advantage of us all is by loans of a close personal relationship between the Litunga and the Prime Minister - and later the President - through the Under Minister.

12. I am very glad that the basis of this Agreement is that Barotseland is an integral part of Zambia, and I can assure you, Sir Mwanawina, and all Members of the Barotse Royal Family and of the Barotse Government, that the Government has no wish to interfere with the day-to-day running of the internal affairs of Barotseland. This is the responsibility of the Barotse Government and the intention of the Central Government will be no more than to give to the Barotse Government its maximum assistance and co-operation.

I can give an absolute assurance that the customary rights in land in Barotseland will remain with the Litunga and National Council, and the District Heads of Kutas, and the Government is satisfied that Government requirements for land for development projects in Barotseland will receive the active co-operation of the Barotse Government. This is all that the Central Government asks for and I am sure that there need be, and will be, no difficulty with regard to land, the use of land, and land rights in Barotseland.

13. As you, Sir Mwanawina, and the Barotse Government are aware, the responsibility for local government matters in Barotseland has now been transferred from my portfolio to that of the Minister of Local Government. This, as I explained in my letter to you, Sir Mwanawina, was necessary owing to pressure of work, but I believe that it will be found that there will be advantage to Barotseland to have direct access to the specialist services of the Ministry of Local Government in this most important sphere.

14. The senior Local Government Officer should be posted to Mongu very shortly, and it will be this officer's responsibility to advise the Barotse Government on all local government matters and on the implementation of the Barotse Reforms.
I should like before I close to congratulate you, Sir Mwanawina, and the Barotse Government on the wisdom of accepting the Barotse Reforms and I was extremely pleased to note the very large measure of agreement which was reached on all sides on the form in which the Reforms should take.

15. I think that they are very progressive measures and I am sure that their implementation will receive the support and the co-operation of all the Barotse people. It is inevitable that there should be some difficulties and misunderstanding to begin with in implementing such big changes, but they are, I am sure, merely teething troubles which with goodwill and understanding on all sides can be resolved. I appreciate that such radical changes to the old order are difficult for some to accept at once and I may say that I admire the manner in which they have been accepted by those who were formerly members of the executive government of Barotseland many of whom I am glad to note are now filling other important posts in the country.

16. The experience and wisdom of all will be required in shaping the future and I want to make it clear that the Government respects the traditions of the past and has no intention of advocating change merely for the sake of change. We are all proud of our heritage and we are determined to preserve all that is good in it.

Thank you, Sir Mwanawina, and all of you who are present, for listening to me so attentively, and if there are any questions which anyone would like to ask me I should be very pleased to answer them.

Thank you.