

Let Belize Live



Speeches of the Premier
Exhibit Booklet

Let Belize Live: Speeches of the Premier, Exhibit Booklet

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the Belize Archives and Records Service (BARS)

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Minister's Foreword

To think of George Price is to think of Belize. His life, thoughts, words, actions, and decisions are intertwined with Belize's birth, growth, and development.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology and the National Institute for Culture and History (NICH) in collaboration with the Belize Archives and Records Service (BARS) are honored to present this booklet of selected speeches from the Office of the Premier under the leadership of George Price during the period 1964 to 1981.

The speeches cover wide ranging social, cultural, economic and political issues of national importance.

George Price was truly a man for all seasons. He was the "man in the arena" who lived a life of service to his people and country.

These selected speeches, all written, endorsed, or delivered by Price, capture the brilliance, energy, passion, charisma, and visionary leadership of the man Belizeans are proud and honored to call the FATHER OF OUR NATION.

It is my hope that these speeches will inspire all Belizeans to see themselves as nation builders and provide a new generation of Belizeans with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the life and legacy of the Rt. Hon. George C. Price.

Hon. Francis W. Fonseca
Minister of Education, Culture, Science & Technology
January 3, 2023

Introduction

The Rt. Hon. George Price, more than anyone else, is unquestionably the foremost symbol of Belize's struggle for self-government and independence. His legacy continues to be admired, discussed, and studied in an effort to develop our national identity and national consciousness. For this very reason, we are pleased to present a set of iconic speeches that will help students, researchers and citizens engage more thoroughly with Mr. Price's legacy and contribute to the development of Belize.

This booklet entitled, "Let Belize Live: Speeches of the Premier," centers on twelve speeches curated in an exhibition of the same name in honor of George Price Day and unveiled at the George Price Centre for Peace and Development on January 13, 2023. It includes several well-known and other less-known speeches issued or delivered during Mr. Price's term as the Premier of Belize, 1964-1981. We have included the September 25, 1981, *Statement at the United Nations* deliberately because although Mr. Price was by then the Prime Minister of Belize, his statement recaps the arduous work during his tenure as the Premier and re-articulates his vision for Belize's future when he said:

As we become a member of the world community, we hear the question asked: What is Belize and its People? And how will they fit among you? In reply: Belize is a Caribbean and Central American nation which works and lives a revolution that is peaceful, constructive, new, progressive, and Belizean. It is our own, with all our national attributes, land and resources.

These twelve speeches are only a prelude, an appetizer if you will. Our objective is to produce a special series of collectible books from these records with the "Let Belize Live: Speeches of the Premier, Father of the Nation George Price, Vol. 1" to be made available in print and ebook format on National Heroes and Benefactors Day 2023. We also recognize that in our internet-driven world, open-access information is necessary for our students and researchers. On this note, we have digitized and made available a collection of more than sixty speeches from the Office of the Premier on the Government of Belize's new education portal: the 501 Academy. This selection of speeches is only a small part of a larger project to index more than thirty boxes of archival records from the Office of the Premier Collection in order to make them readily and efficiently available for researchers, students, and the general public.

The publication of these speeches will have two broad benefits. First, it serves to inform readers about events and discourses that have shaped our current political, social, and economic realities. For example, the speeches encourage us to explore these five thematic questions “Why was St. George’s Caye Day transformed into National Day during self-government?”; “What development plan was achieved and envisioned for the emerging Belize?”; “How were social and cultural celebrations made part of the nation-building process?”; “How did we defend our sovereignty against all opposition?”; and “What key messages unified the Belizean people at the brink of independence?”. The answers to these questions are in part available, implicitly and explicitly, across the wide variety of pronouncements, statements, and addresses delivered or issued by the Office of the Premier.

Secondly, this initiative encourages citizens, especially our students, to be inspired by the words and actions of Mr. Price. Despite his status as a National Hero and Father of the Nation, Mr. Price was not attracted to the grandeur of heroism but rather more dedicated to serving the Belizean people. From his anti-colonialist defiance in his clamors for self-government to his diplomatic and political maneuvering for independence, Mr. Price made many friends, followers, and believers in the idea of Belize, a new nation in the heart of the Caribbean and Central American basin. It is our hope that Mr. Price’s speeches will attract and nurture new nation-builders because, as he would say, “much work has been done, but more is yet to be done”.

We give thanks to the leadership of the Hon. Francis Fonseca, Minister of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, and the renewed effort of the National Institute of Culture and History and the Belize Archives and Records Service to make Belize’s documentary heritage relevant, available, and accessible to all. Additionally, we are very pleased that graduates from the University of Belize History Program and staff of the Belize National Library Service and Information System have provided their expertise and resources to this endeavor. We must also thank the George Price Centre for Peace and Development and its Board of Directors and staff who graciously agreed to host the exhibition. Special mention is given to the entire Price family, Rudolph Castillo Jr., Dr. John Waight, Norris Hall, and the many photographers, documenters, and record-keepers who make their photographs, records, and memories of Mr. Price available for the benefit of the nation.

Rolando Cocom, Acting Director at ISCR-NICH

Kevin Montero, Director at BARS

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Carlos Quiroz, NSP Coordinator at MoECST



Our schools teach you, or should teach you, not to destroy but to build, not to transgress the rights of others but rather to work positively that the rights of all will be preserved and protected. For we know that where the rights of one are threatened, the rights of all are endangered. ... As good Belizean citizens who love our country and who try to live in peace and friendship with all peoples, let us do our duty to Belize and to its people.

National Day School Children's Rally, 3rd September 1968, Belize City

Social Studies

Animals Plants Trees



Food

Plant

Tre

multiple

anybody
any
any
aim
agreed
against
afloat



National Day

Memorial Park, Belize City

September 10, 1964

We unite to build a nation. Most Belizeans want an independent and sovereign Belize; but there are some persons who are against it. They say the people are too few and the country too small and poor to have its independence.

To those who doubt, honestly or not, in our ability to be free Belizeans, I would recall a sentence Victor Hugo wrote: "*On the Measure of Greatness*", "There is no such thing as a little country. The greatness of a people is no more determined by their number than the greatness of a man is determined by his height".

All true Belizeans agree with Victor Hugo. We are a small but a great people and we are a country with a great future. On this National Day we pay tribute to our Belizean people and their present and future greatness.

We are a Christian people. We are on the side of Christian Democracy. We are a people who wish to live in peace and in friendship with all our neighbours. We are ever willing to discuss any problem peacefully, rationally but firmly.

In population, we are comparable to the population of some independent countries. In area, we are larger than several independent nations in the Western Hemisphere.

In future outlook, we are second to none in the greatness of our people who are true Belizean Patriots and who work hard to bring a better life for all, for we know that freedom and prosperity anywhere is of great help for freedom and prosperity everywhere.

Undaunted by those who belittle us unjustly; undismayed by the social and economic problems which we meet in our determined onslaught against ignorance, poverty, disease, and a status of dependency, we renew our strength and our courage on our National Day.

Our cause is just. Our objective of independence is safeguarded by the international right of self-determination and guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations. We march forward with our symbol of independence: our blue and

white flag, our national hymn and our Belizean name and identity.

As we march forward, we pause to express our gratitude to all who have helped us to attain self-rule and are helping us reach our historic destiny of independence: To the United Nations for their technical aid; to the seven countries in the Western hemisphere who have supported our self-determination to be a free and sovereign Belizean nation; to Mexico, Canada, and the United States of America who have given us technical aid.

We are thankful to Her Majesty the Queen, to the British government and people, who have contributed generous technical and capital aid to our hurricane reconstruction programme, our development plan and to our budget. Their help is generous; but more help is needed to carry out our development plan, based on the United Nations study and for the new capital.

The success of our National Day Celebrations is due to the loyal and generous support of Belizeans who have donated to the fund and who have attended our celebrations all over the country, I thank one and all.

May God bless them and us as we redouble our efforts to build our Belizean nation in Central America. To move forward to our historic destiny, we wake up and work, “*trabajamos para la patria Beliceña*” as we unite to build a nation.

National Day Celebrations, School Children's Rally

Belize City
September 3, 1968

During our National Day Celebrations we come together to celebrate the twentieth birthday of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

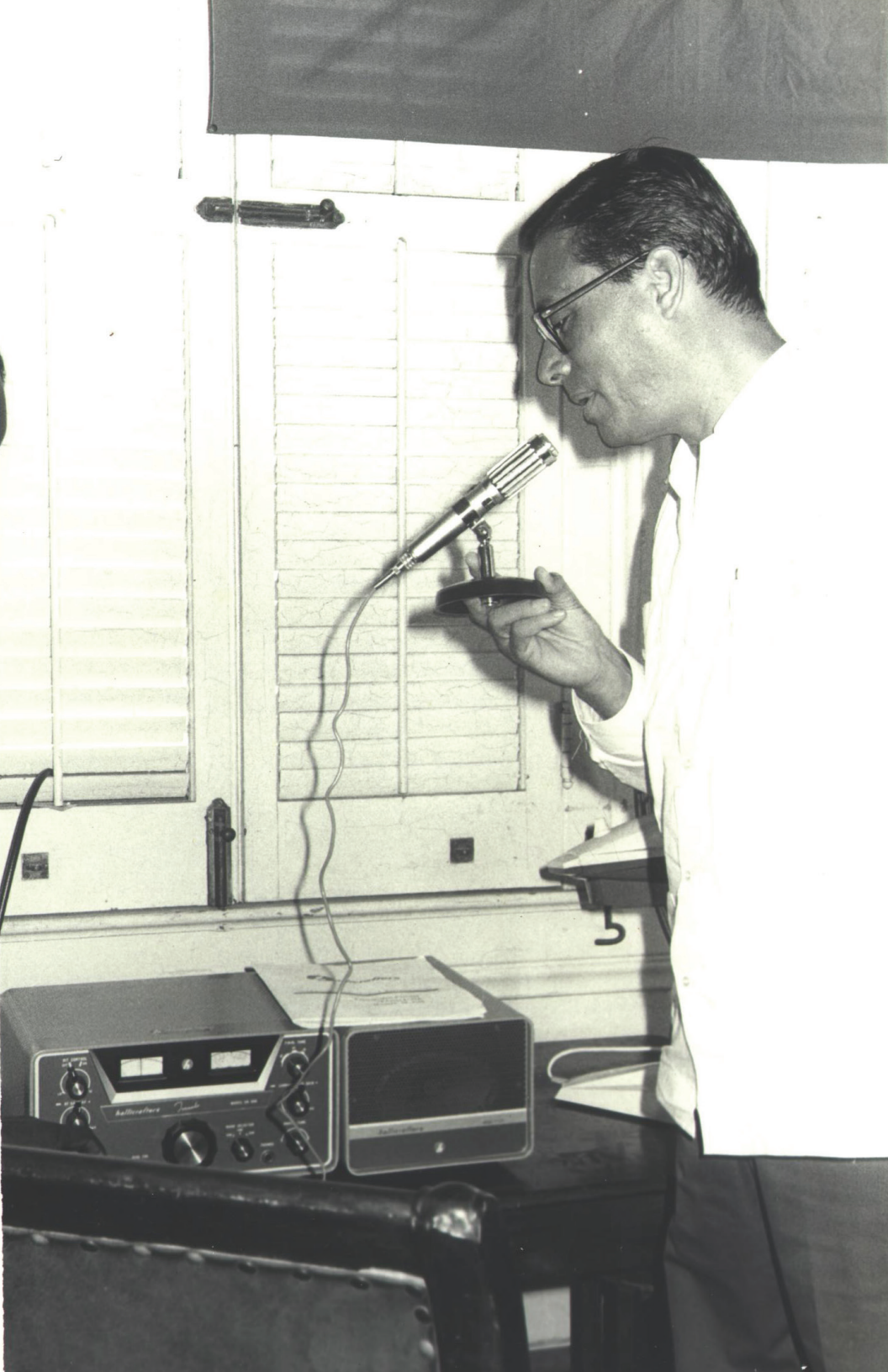
Here in Belize your Government and our Belizean people are happy to associate ourselves with this great declaration and to join in the celebration. We live in a democratic society; and our way of life is the Christian way of life. It is a way which upholds the dignity and the worth of the individual human person. It is a way of life which seeks to secure for all our people conditions that will enable them to live their lives free from exploitation, from tyranny and from fear. It is a way with justice for all whatever their creed, their race or their colour may be.

Human Rights can flourish only in a society and in a nation where its schools strive to plant and to cultivate in its youth those qualities and those attitudes which we all must have if we are to recognise and respect the dignity and the rights of others which we all must have, if they, in turn, are to recognise and to respect our dignity and our rights.

Our schools teach you, or should teach you not, to destroy but to build, not to transgress the rights of others but rather to work positively that the rights of all will be preserved and protected. For we know that where the rights of one are threatened, the rights of all are endangered.

We know that when we incite and encourage violence against others, we soon find that same violence set loose furiously and blindly in all directions - with no other aim, no other purpose but to harass and to hurt, to frighten and to destroy.

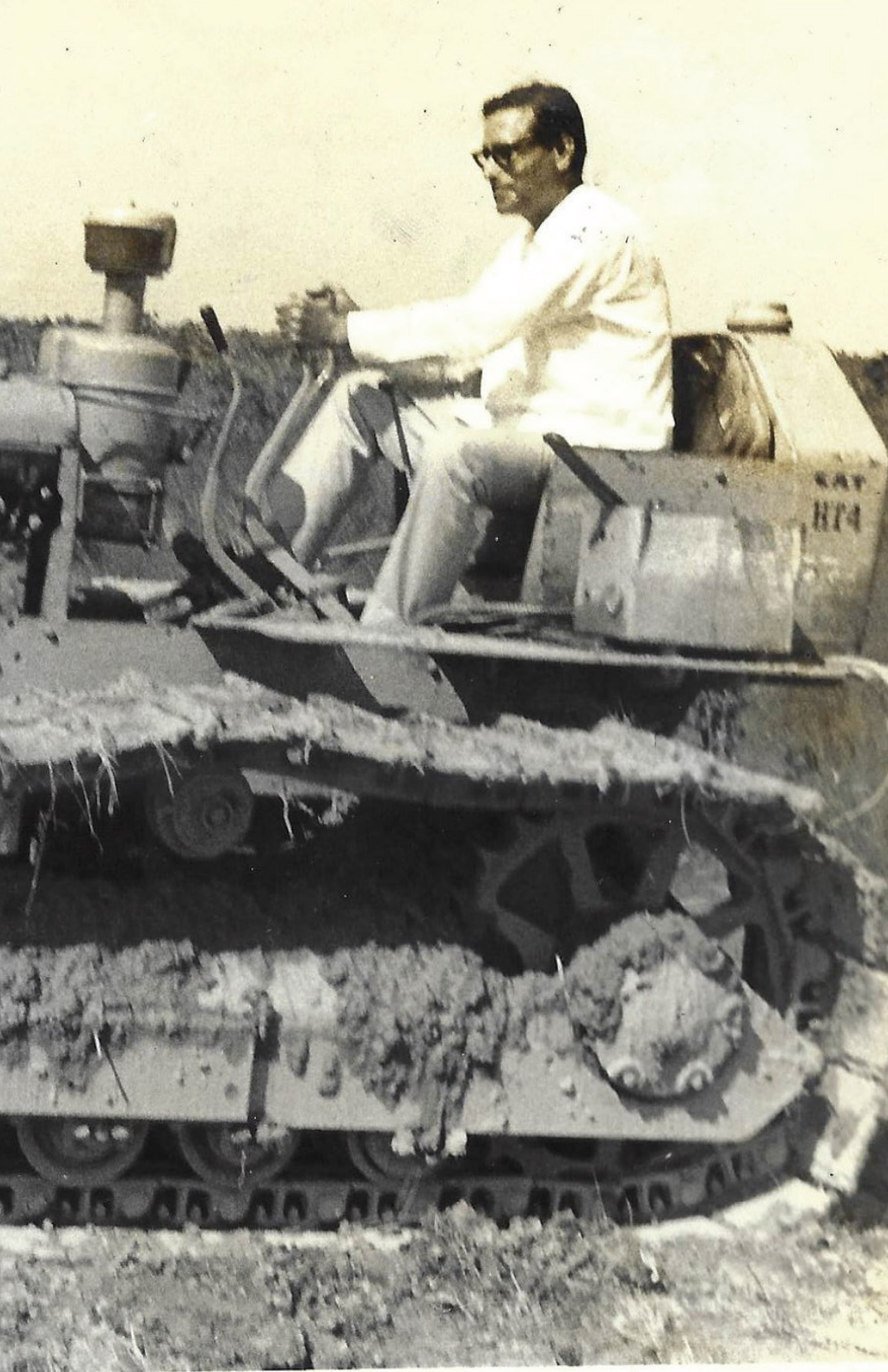
Human rights mean that there are human duties, because every right an individual has means that another individual has a duty. You can best keep your rights by doing your duty to yourselves and to others. As good Belizean citizens who love our country and who try to live in peace and friendship with all peoples, let us do our duty to Belize and to its people. By doing our duty we are saving and preserving ourselves and for others the human rights of man.





Labour, the activity of man, is the most valuable and the most important of all the energies which develop and beautify matter. The worker is most important and most valuable to society. And, in a universal way, all are givers of labour: the owner of capital who puts it to work, the owner of land who puts it to use and the worker who gives his labour to make the land produce, to develop its resources and to provide services necessary to a modern nation.

Labour Day Speech, 1st May 1964, Belize City.



Labour Day Speech of Premier

Belize City

May 1, 1964

Like the energy of the sun and the energy of the sea, labour of man is a creative force which, together with other forces, brings to fulfillment the plan of the universe.

The energy of the sun gives light and the energy of the sea brings rain. Light and water are essential to life and growth. The labour of man uses sunlight and rain water to grow food and to make clothes and shelter, and power, and all things a modern world needs for the welfare and the gladness of all its people.

The sun and the sea are creations without a soul. Man who gives his labour to fulfill creation has a soul and man has the great dignity of the human person. The Psalmist says of man:

“Thou has placed him only a little
below the angels, crowning him with
glory and honour, and bidding him
rule over the works of thy hands.” (Psalm 8)

Labour, the activity of man, is the most valuable and the most important of all the energies which develop and beautify matter. The worker is the most important and most valuable to society. And, in a universal way, all are givers of labour: the owner of capital who puts it to work, the owner of land who puts it to use and the worker who gives his labour to make the land produce, to develop its resources and to provide services necessary to a modern nation.

All of us are workers and we rejoice that our Government and people have marked this day to honour the dignity and the importance of our Belizean worker, and indeed the workers of all countries.

We know how valuable and how important our Belizean workers are and how they should have their rightful place in our new nation. Representatives of our workers are on our National Economic Development Council and on many government committees. It is right that workers should be also owners of capital and of land, and in this way, they will have a real stake in the economic life of our

country. From labour, capital and land must come the resources and the energies to build a prosperous and happy nation. Government has made available large tracts of land for development and government has given security of tenure to this land. This policy continues to prevail all over the country.

When all these three resources of development move forward in harmony, in partnership and with efficiency there will be not only a good climate for development but there also will be prosperity. Many workers are part-owners of our Development Finance Corporation, many are owners of land and many have saved their money in the beginning of capital formation. There must be many more such enterprising workers.

You have supported us from the very beginning of our movement of independence and we know your worth. That is why we respect your ability to understand and to support our plans to better our country and its people.

We believe in truth and in sincerity. That is why we publicly accept the facts and the problems of our country, which at this stage of its history is a country largely undeveloped for many years, but now striving with might and main to develop its resources and to better the lives of its people.

It is easy and, indeed, tempting to gain a temporary political advantage, by making glowing but impossible promises which the financial, economic and commercial facts of our country cannot fulfill at this moment. It is easy, but dishonest, to blame our government for not doing things that cannot be done at this moment by any government in our country.

To avoid economic setbacks and social strife, there is constant need for workers to use the intelligence with which the Belizean worker is so well endowed. There are some hard and unpleasant economic facts which we as a people must face, and it is not our policy to hide from you these facts.

One fact is that our country is a small and poor country. Because our economy is backward, your Government is working hard to develop its resources and to provide more sources of income for its people who contribute to the building of our nation. There has been progress in the sugar and citrus and pine resin industries. But there is need for more industries and greater farming activities in order to provide employment for every Belizean worker who wishes to work.

Another fact is that this country does not have all the capital and skills it takes

to push the country forward in economic development. At this stage of our development, we must depend largely on capital and skills from abroad. And to get these capital and skills, our Belizean people must hold out incentives to investors from abroad. We have to share with them the fruits of our labours until the happy time when they themselves will be content to let our Belizean workers manage their affairs. They are the ones who have the capital, the skills and the international markets, and we must be partners with them. And partnership means sharing justly and rightly the fruits of our labours.

Still another hard economic fact is so well put in the fable of the goose which laid the golden egg. While our government is most anxious to ensure a greater and greater share for our workers, it would not be right to deprive one group of our workers in order to benefit another group. An example of this would be to place the income of some workers so high that there would not be enough money left to employ other workers and thus we would set up a privileged working class while many other workers would be jobless.

Equally wrong would it be to allow other sources of production to grab for themselves the lion's share of the fruits of production. As I said earlier in this talk, it is vitally necessary to create a climate of development in which the workers have a share in capital and land as well. This is the best insurance for an orderly, peaceful and profitable development of our resources.

I have mentioned some hard facts of the economic life of our country. Any person who contradicts them and holds out glowing but impossible promises, for a fleeting political advantage, would be a false champion of the workers.

There is no need to be despondent as we recall the facts of the present time. I would not be speaking an untruth when I say that our country has progressed in the last three years. Despite the many problems we have faced and we shall continue to face, visitors to our country have had to admit that we are a nation fast emerging.

We should not be frightened by the hard economic facts in our country today and in the world abroad. On Labour Day we measure them with truth and sincerity. We face them with courage and with the hope that by hard work and sustained effort and community endeavour, we shall improve the life of every Belizean.

As we celebrate Labour Day, we are true Belizean patriots, true Belizean workers when we face these challenges of building a nation and determine ourselves to

work harder and to stand firm behind the movement of independence. This movement has brought our country and people far along the road of progress. With the continued support and confidence of the people, the movement of independence will take us ALL THE WAY.



Nation-building is a demanding task. We all know that it demands sacrifice and hard work. ... This fabric of unity has always been displayed by you, and today as we move forward to Independence, the times demand that our goal be national unity conceived in the high principles of Christian Democracy and nurtured by the goodwill and invaluable contribution of every Belizean. ...

Settlement Day offers a wonderful opportunity for all Belizeans to review the past, assess the present, and move towards the future with dedicated determination to mold and to build the new Belize – UNITED, SOVEREIGN and INDEPENDENT.

Settlement Day, 19th November 1966, Punta Gorda



Settlement Day

Punta Gorda
November 19, 1966

My Fellow Belizeans,

Happy Settlement Day.

It is a privilege for me to be with you today and an honour to receive your address. (I thank you for the expression of appreciation and confidence where your Government is concerned.)

All Belizeans are grateful for the decision of Eligio Benai to remain here, when one hundred and forty-three years ago, our first Carib settlers landed on our shores and we rejoice for the many valuable contributions made towards the cementing of the foundation of our budding nation.

Nation-building is a demanding task. We all know that it demands sacrifice and hard work. We know also that above all it demands a people united and moving together for the betterment of the nation.

This fabric of unity has always been displayed by you, and today as we move forward to Independence, the times demand that our goal be national unity conceived in the high principles of Christian Democracy and nurtured by the goodwill and invaluable contribution of every Belizean.

This basic unity must serve to mute, and then reconcile any difference which arises as we work hard for the Independence of our beloved Belize.

Settlement Day offers a wonderful opportunity for all Belizeans to review the past, assess the present, and move towards the future with dedicated determination to mold and to build the new Belize – UNITED, SOVEREIGN and INDEPENDENT.

With God all things are possible, and we face the future in the firm knowledge that with His guidance we cannot fail.

Fellow Belizeans – a happy, happy Settlement Day.

Premier's Address to open "International Women's Year" in Belize

March 2, 1975

This year is the year the United Nations proclaims "International Women's year"; and Belize has the honour to share in its celebration and to recognize its importance.

It is the endeavour to encourage the full integration of women in mankind's advance to a fuller life in a better world.

The government of the People's United Party with its peaceful, constructive Belizean Revolution has set the pace. It has won for all women over twenty-one the right to vote. It fosters the formation of women's groups and provides guidance in home-making skills and handicraft.

It affords and guarantees training and advancement in the Public Service and restores to Belizean women the right to serve as jurors. It gives legal protection to unwed and separated mothers and renders social assistance to them and their children.

The changes for the better brought about by the peaceful, constructive revolution have made way for women police officers and women politicians and leaders in other professions. Indeed it was our government who appointed the first woman Cabinet Minister and three women Senators.

As we go forward in the RIGHT direction, the challenge for the Belizean woman is as new and as old and exciting as that posed by Isaiah the Prophet when he proclaimed:

Rise up, you women who are at ease.
Hear my voice...
Then justice will dwell in the wilderness
and righteousness abide in the fruitfield.
And the result of righteousness – quietness
and trust forever. (Isaiah, Chapter 32, verses 9 and 16)

This is our wish and prayer for you as we declare "International Women's Year" in Belize.







The Guatemalan claim is in fact precisely what it appears to be -- entirely fictitious, entirely unfounded, entirely unjust. But I should like to stress that, absurd as Guatemala's claim might be, the threat of a new colonialism represents a frightening reality that is having harsh consequences on the people of Belize. ... We have a distinct national personality, a blend of the multi-racial origins and the various cultures of our history. ...

Let Belize live, let her maintain her territory intact, and let her be sovereign and independent, able to contribute to the development of the world as a full member of the United Nations.

Premier's Address to the Fourth Committee of the United Nations, 7th November 1975, New York City.



Statement made by the Premier of Belize Hon. George C. Price to the Fourth Committee of the United Nations

United Nations, New York

November 7, 1975

Madame Chairman, distinguished delegates of the Fourth Committee, I am greatly honoured to address you in this respected forum and to convey to you the greetings and the gratitude of the government and people of Belize. We thank you for agreeing to hear the case of our small country, and we are confident that you will not turn your backs on us in our hour of need.

We in Belize regard this time as a historic moment that will help to decide whether Belize shall be free, or whether we shall be condemned to choose between an indefinite prolongation of colonialism on the one hand or dismemberment and the imposition of a new colonialism on the other.

We are heartened by the progress we have witnessed at the United Nations, where the ranks of member nations continue to swell with the admission of newly independent nations that yesterday were in the position we are in today. We welcome this development, and I take the opportunity to congratulate the distinguished representatives of Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, Mozambique and Papua New Guinea. We wish the peoples of these sovereign States increased development, peace and prosperity.

HOPE IN THE UNITED NATIONS

Madame Chairman: the people of Belize have for many years looked to the United Nations with hope. Indeed the United Nations helped to inspire the birth of the independence movement in Belize twenty-five years ago. Later, in 1960, we were greatly encouraged by the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Resolution 1514 XV), and soon after this the British assured us that our country could become independent whenever it so desired. Our struggle for independence was happily conducted peacefully, and in 1964 we implemented a new constitution that

gave the elected representatives of the people full control over the internal affairs of Belize. Defence and external affairs remained the responsibility of the British Government.

That constitution, like similar ones applied in other colonial territories, was meant to last a very short time -- three or four years at most. It was to be merely one other step -- the last one -- before the attainment of full independence. And yet, twelve years later, Belize remains a colony, denied its right to independence by one lingering obstacle - fear for our survival after independence, a fear engendered by the unfounded and unjust claim of Guatemala to the territory of Belize, and its thinly veiled threats to pursue this claim by force if necessary.

INTIMIDATION BY GUATEMALA

This fear of military action on the part of Guatemala is a very real fear, a fear based on substantial grounds, a fear fueled on several occasions by certain Guatemalan military movements near our borders. The Belize Government, conscious of and confident in the British commitment to defend Belize, continues to welcome whatever level of British military presence in Belize that is necessary for our adequate defence. It is therefore with my Government's full knowledge and consent, and indeed at its request, that there has been a temporary British reinforcement in Belize, a reinforcement undertaken in response only to recent military moves on Guatemala's part, aimed at intimidating Belize.

GUATEMALA'S CLAIM UNJUST

We in Belize, as well as an increasing number of the world's nations, find it difficult to understand the basis of Guatemala's anachronistic claim to Belize. Guatemala claims to be the inheritor of Spanish colonialism, although Spain never exercised effective jurisdiction over the territory. Guatemala, for her part, admits that she never occupied nor administered the territory of Belize before or after her independence from Spain. Belize has never been a part of Guatemala. Before Guatemala became an independent country, Belize existed as a distinct reality within its present boundaries.

The territory of Belize has remained inviolate since at least 1798, when the last Spanish attack on the settlement was repulsed. Indeed, the present boundaries were recognised and defined in a treaty of 1859 between Britain and Guatemala. Eighty years later, however, Guatemala laid claim to the territory of Belize on the ground that a clause in that boundary treaty had not been complied with. That

clause called on both parties “conjointly to use their best efforts” to build what was described as a “cart road” between Guatemala City and the Atlantic Coast. The road was never built, and after eighty years Guatemala claimed that the non-compliance of this joint responsibility caused the entire Treaty to lapse, and that therefore the entire territory of Belize belonged to Guatemala.

The Guatemalan claim is in fact precisely what it appears to be -- entirely fictitious, entirely unfounded, entirely unjust. But I should like to stress that, absurd as Guatemala’s claim might be, the threat of a new colonialism represents a frightening reality that is having harsh consequences on the people of Belize.

Let us never forget that we are talking about more than just a piece of territory, a piece of land. We are talking about a people who constitute a distinct nation, but who are prevented from exercising their right to independence for which they have struggled for twenty-five years.

RIGHT OF SELF DETERMINATION

For the Belizean people the right of self- determination is not an empty claim without substance of history or present reality. We have for centuries been a distinct and separate people, living on the American continent and identified by our historical development and our cultural, political and economic growth.

We are a people with a rightful claim to the land on which for centuries we have lived and worked. And when we consider the attributes of a nation, Belize has them all.

We have a distinct national personality, a blend of the multi-racial origins and the various cultures of our history. The population of Belize closely parallels that of the nations of the Caribbean Community. We are predominantly of African descent with a rich mixture of indigenous Maya, Mestizo, Carib, Asian, and others, who live together in peace and harmony -- no mean achievement in this world of racial turmoil. We have no desire to become a minority living at a disadvantage among a majority whose way of life is foreign to us.

THE BELIZEAN PEOPLE

Guatemala has referred to the original settlers of Belize as the aboriginal Amerindian tribes, descendants of the Maya, and cited this historical fact in support of its territorial claim. We find it difficult to take this contention seriously.

Geographically, Belize is on the Central American mainland. In pre-Colombian times, it was part of the Maya civilization which also included Guatemala, southeastern Mexico, and northwestern Honduras. Were Guatemala to set itself up as the only legitimate heir to the Maya empire, it would logically lay claim to parts of Mexico and Honduras as well - - surely a preposterous situation. Indeed, there is no question but that Guatemala's violation of our territory in some atavistic quest of an ancient hegemony would amount to the suppression of a people distinct from those of Guatemala.

We also regard as absurd and unkind Guatemala's reference to the present population of Belize as being a result of migrations from different sources -- we are referred to as a "transplanted population", presumably with no rights over the land we have exclusively occupied for centuries. Are not most nations of the Americas made up of "transplanted" populations? Do the "transplanted" peoples of Spain in Guatemala and other Latin American States have more inherent rights than the "transplanted" peoples of Africa and Asia?

The fact is that Belizeans are a blend of the mixtures that have occurred among the indigenous population and the other ethnic groups that have settled there over the centuries. As for the indigenous Maya, they are fully integrated into Belizean society. They are, and regard themselves as, Belizeans; they enjoy equal rights and privileges with all other Belizeans and they join equally in the rejection of Guatemala's pretensions.

The pattern of settlement in Belize is one that runs from centuries ago to the present, but today more than 95% of the population are Belizean born. In these centuries of living together in a common physical, social and political environment, the people of Belize, of diverse origins, have come together as one people with their own way of life. They fully realize that absorption by the Government of Guatemala would amount to the extinction of Belizean society and the denial of the human rights of the Belizean people who have a unique national identity which defines them and the loss of which would amount to an act of cultural genocide.

BELIZE UNITED BEFORE UN

That is why Belizeans are united in their resistance to Guatemala's unfounded claim to our land. There is no party, group or individual in Belize who looks with favour on Guatemala's pretensions. Earlier this year the Government and Opposition Parties in the House of Representatives issued a joint statement repudiating the Guatemalan claim and asserting their unity on this national issue.

An opposition delegate forms part of the Belize office to the United Nations, and I am happy to have here with me the distinguished Leader of the Opposition.

BELIZE AS A SEPARATE NATION

Madame Chairman, distinguished delegates: Belizeans are a people who speak two of the main languages of the Americas. This enables us to understand better and live in harmony with our English and Spanish-Speaking neighbours. The situation is unique in the Central American concert of nations.

Belize has its own parliament, its own Cabinet with executive powers, its own Civil Service, its own head of Government. All these institutions are based on free elections, operate democratically and reflect the will of the people.

We have our own courts of law and system of justice rooted in a long history of law and order and the rights of free citizens. We have our own security forces and we give international recognition and protection to a consular corps of foreign nations. Our literacy rate, at over 90%, is one of the highest in the world.

We have an economy based on the development of our own resources and managed under a system of Government which recognizes the right of every Belizean to participate in its growth and to share equitably the bounty of our Belizean land. The Belizean people and government have worked hard over the years to make this economic policy a success; and, within the limitations imposed by our dependent position, we have achieved a degree of success which compares favourably with the rest of the region.

ATTEMPTED UNDERDEVELOPMENT

Unfortunately, I must mention that apart from the normal restraints on our development resulting from our dependent status, our economic development has been severely hampered by deliberate policies on the part of the Government of Guatemala to perpetuate our underdevelopment. In the fields of trade and aid, and in respect of individual countries as well as regional and international lending institutions and trading blocs, the Government of Guatemala has consistently exerted pressures to deprive Belize of much-needed trade and aid advantages. So seriously has Guatemala pursued this policy that in 1972 Guatemala invited the Organization of American States to impose economic sanctions against Belize. Fortunately, this attempt at our economic strangulation was defeated with the help of our Caribbean colleagues in the O.A.S. If this choking of a small country has as

its objective the capitulation of our people, this policy has failed. Despite all these pressures, Belizeans remain firm in their demand for total liberation.

We believe, moreover, that we have a right to expect some understanding of our situation from the countries of Latin America, who cannot in conscience ignore the interests of a whole people whose only patrimony is being unjustly claimed by a larger and better-endowed neighbour. We cannot believe that with their traditions the Latin American nations can wilfully agree to penalize for the indefinite future a Caribbean country whose people have made their unmistakable call for freedom. We share the Americas as our homeland; we are common members of the Caribbean Development Bank with other Latin American States: we note that some of our Latin American brothers are members of the non-aligned movement; we see a future of increasing cooperation between the Caribbean and other Latin American countries. All of this gives us hope for receiving sympathetic understanding of our cause from the countries of the Americas.

BELIZE AND THE NEW ECONOMIC ORDER

An independent Belize can contribute much to advance the new economic order in Middle America. Our membership in the Caribbean Community, a dynamic and fast growing international community, which is developing close links with Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Central America, enables us to have a special relationship with the rest of the Western Hemisphere.

We also believe that it is in the best interests of Central America, including Guatemala, for Belize to become an independent nation with its territory intact. An independent Belize could cooperate with Guatemala for the joint development of certain regions in both countries, and could provide a useful link between the Caribbean Community and a Central American Community. Our political history and the smooth functioning of our democratic institutions can only give confidence in our potential contribution to peace and stability in the area.

By contrast, a non-independent Belize, whether a Belize forced to remain a colony because of fear for its survival or a Belize occupied by another Power, would be a thorn in the side of Guatemala. Our people would be resentful and antagonistic, and could only be suppressed by overwhelming force. Surely this is not a prospect favoured by Central America nor by any other State in the world.

BELIZE EXTREMELY PATIENT

Madame Chairman: we maintain that the people of Belize have been extremely patient. For twenty-five years we have struggled for our independence. Twelve years ago we won the exercise of the right to govern our own internal affairs and looked forward expectantly to full independence, only to witness the frustration of our aspirations by the presence of an anachronistic and unfounded territorial claim.

Guatemala has no case against the territory or people of Belize. The only possible issue that may arise is one between the United Kingdom and Guatemala, concerning the consequences of a mutual failure to build a cart-road as stipulated in the Anglo-Guatemalan treaty of 1859. Should the people of Belize be now forced to pay the price of the unfulfilled promises of a century ago by giving up their right to independence?

With the persistence of Guatemala's unfounded claim, our status as a British colony also persists. The Government of Guatemala, by its avowed intention of re-subjugating a people already on the road to freedom, obliges us to remain the reluctant wards of a European power that has long since declared its willingness to see an independent Belize. This prolongation of our colonial status, with all its attendant indignities and hardships, is not conducive to the preservation of peace and stability in the area. Needless to say, we desire a peaceful resolution of the differences between Great Britain and Guatemala which have been impeding our progress to nationhood. We have cooperated with Britain over the years in all attempts to reach a settlement. We have only two conditions that are not negotiable: there must be no erosions of our sovereignty or independence; and our territorial integrity must be preserved.

In previous negotiations, proposals have been presented which would effectively negate our independence, granting powers to Guatemala over our own internal and external affairs. More recently, Guatemala has proposed that Belize surrender a substantial part of its territory as the price for the independence of the remainder. These proposals are in direct violation of the principles of self-determination and territorial integrity, as clearly set out in Resolution 1514 (XV).

SELF-DETERMINATION AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY

We rely on the application of that resolution in its entirety to the people and territory of Belize. We rely on paragraph 2 of the Declaration, which states that "all peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely

determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.” In six consecutive universal adult suffrage general elections over the past twenty years, Belizeans have clearly signalled their desire to be free and independent, and resolution 1514 clearly guarantees us the exercise of the right to self-determination and independence.

We rely also on paragraph 6 of that historic declaration, which states, and I quote, “any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.”

Madame Chairman, allow me to dwell for a moment on the significance of this declaration. The declaration speaks of the territorial integrity of a country, not of Member States, and was clearly intended to apply to non-independent countries, and help them to move forward to independence with their territory intact. The intention was to prevent the dismemberment of these countries before they attained independence -- that is why this principle appears in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. We must not allow this principle to be so distorted as to allow another State to deprive the peoples of a colonial country of their right to self-determination and the preservation of the territorial integrity of their country. To deprive the people of Belize of these rights would be to make a mockery of resolution 1514.

We observe that Guatemala has tried to refute the right of Belize to self-determine its destiny as a free and independent State by claiming to rely on the principle of territorial integrity as a basis for asserting its claim to Belize. But this is a totally wrong application of the principle of territorial integrity.

In today’s world, in accordance with established U.N. practice, this principle is generally applied in cases where an existing state is confronted with a territorial secession of part of its national territory which is actually, or has been, under its government and under its control.

BELIZE NEVER A PART OF GUATEMALA

Belize has never been a part of Guatemala nor has it ever been governed or administered by a Guatemalan Government. Moreover, Belize is not just a territory. It is a land with people who constitute a distinct nation. The principle of territorial integrity, correctly applied in this situation, would guarantee and protect our sovereignty and not threaten it.

Wrongly applied, the principle would threaten not only Belize, but indeed many States of Africa, Asia and Latin America. African nations in particular have become associated with a firmly established practice whereby colonial boundaries are not altered before a colony becomes independent. The wrong application of this principle would also threaten the territorial integrity of many Latin American States in view of the manner in which they themselves became independent. Such an application - or misapplication of the principle of territorial integrity would set a dangerous precedent and fly in the face of established U.N. practice.

We are also convinced that stability in the Latin American region would be threatened by any such frontier changes as Guatemala proposes.

We believe that an independent Belize would best promote peace and stability in the area, which is what we all hope for. Belize desires close and friendly relations with all our neighbours. Destiny put us geographically together on the Central American mainland, and common sense dictates that we live together in peace. Our only condition is that our independence and sovereignty should not be denied, and that all relations must be worked out in conformity with the principle of the sovereign equality of nations.

Belize is denied the right to self-determination while at the same time its territorial integrity is threatened. It is told that it can achieve a secure independence only if it gives up a quarter of its territory. It is warned that if it becomes independent without ceding any territory, it will not be allowed to survive.

We are, however, confident that the international community will not stand idly by and allow our people to be so unjustly treated.

SUPPORT FOR BELIZE

I recall, with gratitude, the decision of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference in Kingston, Jamaica earlier this year, which gave its full support to the aspirations of the people of Belize for an early and secure independence.

Belizeans are equally grateful for the total support given to our cause by the Fifth Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries held in Lima, Peru in August.

The Lima Declaration stated:

“The Conference expresses its unconditional support for the people of Belize whose aspirations for independence continue to be frustrated by territorial claims. In affirming the territorial integrity of Belize and the right of its people to independence, the Conference agrees to lend its support to all efforts directed to those ends.”

Belize takes this unanimous declaration of support from the Non-Aligned countries very seriously. We realize that these countries themselves feel deeply committed to the pledge they made in Lima to support all efforts directed towards the preservation of the territorial integrity of Belize and the exercise of the rights of its people to self-determination and independence. I therefore call with confidence on all our brothers of the Commonwealth and of the Non-Aligned to vigorously support the resolution in the Fourth Committee which affirms the rights of the Belizean people.

I take this opportunity to express the gratitude of my Government and people to the Commonwealth and Non-Aligned countries for their declared support for the independence of Belize, as well as to other countries that have pledged us their support. In particular, I wish to thank our brothers in the Latin American group -- Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Jamaica, Grenada and the Bahamas -- for their indefatigable promotion of our cause in various international forums. We are bound together, not only by ethnic, historical, cultural and social ties, but also by our common membership in the Caribbean Community and Common Market.

BELIZE TURNS TO THE UN

Madame Chairman, distinguished delegates: On two previous occasions, in 1967 and again in 1974, my Deputy Premier addressed the Fourth Committee on the question of Belize. On both occasions we harboured hopes for fruitful results of on-going negotiations and hence asked for no specific action. After so many years-of patient endeavour, however, we are convinced that only a categorical affirmation by the United Nations of our rights to self-determination and territorial integrity will break the deadlock and permit us to continue our forward march to a secure independence.

In his address to the Fourth Committee, my Deputy Premier said, “Your Committee, and indeed the entire United Nations Organization, remains our last great hope should the drifting current of events take us in a direction we do not wish to go. It is to you that in due course we must turn if all else fails.”

Unfortunately, I must now report that all else has indeed failed, and we now turn with confidence to you.

Today, Government and Opposition parties in Belize come before you united in our request for an affirmation of our rights. We come with an urgency inspired by the harmful effects that Guatemala's unfounded claim continues to have on our people and on our development.

RESOLUTION TO FREE BELIZE

The resolution that has been circulated in this Committee, co-sponsored by the Caribbean countries and by so many other countries of the world, countries that have earned the undying gratitude and respect of the Belizean people, is a most reasonable one.

It reaffirms the right of the people of Belize to self-determination and independence, and declares that the territorial integrity of Belize must be preserved. It calls for urgent negotiations between Britain and Guatemala for the resolution of their differences of opinion concerning the future of Belize.

By endorsing the call to negotiations, we do not thereby imply that Guatemala has any right over the destiny of Belize, but rather we recognize that a negotiated settlement which fully respects the inalienable rights of the Belizean people is the best possible solution to this unfortunate situation that has so long frustrated the exercise of those rights by a people who deserve them no less than any other.

We do not believe that our requests are unreasonable. We appeal to all countries to support this just resolution. All we ask is that Belize be free to determine its own future without fear of external domination, free to proceed to sovereign independence in friendship and cooperation with its neighbours.

We are also aware that in other colonial situations the Committee of Twenty-Four has sent a visiting mission to the territory in question in order to gain a first-hand assessment and report back to the General Assembly. My government has an open mind on the feasibility of a visiting mission to Belize and certainly if such a visit were deemed necessary in the future we would welcome and cooperate fully with the Mission's representatives.

THE MARCH OF HISTORY

Madame Chairman and distinguished delegates: There is no justification for reversing the march of history by allowing the unjust Guatemalan claim to Belize to kill the national aspirations of a freedom-loving people. We must move abreast with a world in evolution and in revolution, a world which struggles to gain a better life for all its peoples. We too claim our rightful place in a world where the will of a people is the basis of government, where a people have the right to self-determination, where colonies no longer exist for they are a humiliating affront to peoples and a disgrace to the political, social and economic order of mankind.

In a statement to this Committee on 3rd December, 1974, Mr. C. Maynard, on behalf of the delegations of the Bahamas, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica and Barbados said, and I quote :

“Belize has remained for too long trembling in the limbo of fear between the threats of a neighbour on the one hand and the empty promise of independence on the other. It is high time that the United Nations, the repository of hope for the weaker nations, take full notice of the most regrettable situation in Belize.”

The people of Belize have waited long enough to meet their appointment with history and achieve their rightful status as a free people in the community of nations. Forced to a halt on the too-long road to independence, our dignity is constantly affronted, our development is impaired, our membership in the family of nations is denied us.

Belize today stands at the crossroads. The eyes of all the people of Belize are on the United Nations. They look with hope that you will not condone the recolonization or dismemberment of their country. I am confident that they do not hope in vain .

LET BELIZE LIVE

Let the people of Belize remain a nation in waiting no longer. In this, the year of the fifteenth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, let not a people who have struggled for national independence for twenty-five years, and who have been self-governing for twelve

years, be condemned to further unnecessary delay in achieving their just goal.

Let Belize live, let her maintain her territory intact, and let her be sovereign and independent, able to contribute to the development of the world as a full member of the United Nations.

Madame Chairman, distinguished delegates, I thank you again for affording Belize the opportunity to address you.

Thank you very much.

Premier's Speech to PUP Freetown Convention

Belize City

May 21, 1979

The political development of Belize shows that the Belizean people do not want any part of their country to be given to or to be taken by any other country. Their political will is to keep and preserve their national identity and heritage separate and distinct from other nationalities and heritages. They want to be themselves as a people in the international community.

How to do this is the tremendous problem which faces all Belizeans. How to attain this objective in a world where colonies are no longer the order of the day, and where the United Nations decolonization programme presses metropolitan countries to divest themselves of colonies and lead them to independence. It is a serious challenge to end the claim of Guatemala to Belizean land.

The solution is not to continue to exist as a colony. The solution is either to give way to Guatemala's unfounded claim or to advance to a secure independence with all our territory.

THE FUTURE OF BELIZE

When we consider the future of Belize, in the context of today's world, where colonies are not acceptable to the countries of the Americas and the rest of the world, we should be convinced that Belize cannot continue to be a colony; and even if it could remain as a colony, to do so would be dangerous to our existence as a people. For it would give more time to Guatemala to press its unjust claims to all or part of our land.

There are two future possibilities. They are: (1) either to become a part of an independent country, or (2) to become securely independent. And when we speak about the independence of Belize, we mean a secure and safe independence, with all Belizean territory.

The policy of the United Kingdom regarding its few remaining colonies is to lead them to independence. This policy has been carried out successfully; and with political will on both sides, it can be done in the case of Belize and thus save Belize for future generations.

Belizeans, who have a sense of national dignity and who love their country, would have no quarrel with this policy of the United Kingdom; because as long as Belize is not independent, it continues to have a second-class standing in the rest of the world.

COLONIAL STATUS UNDIGNIFIED

While Belize is not independent, Belize cannot be a full member of the United Nations or a full member of the United Nations bodies and agencies such as the CEPAL (the Economic Commission for Latin America) or UNCTAD (the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development). Neither can Belize have direct access to financial institutions and other organizations except in the case of institutions of the Caribbean Community.

The laws of nature, both spiritual and material, ordain that countries like people should reach their full development in the order of creation. Accordingly, just as a human being grows from childhood to adulthood, so do countries grow from a non-self-governing or colonial status to full and sovereign independence.

It is shameful and undignified, in this modern age, for a people to want to stagnate in colonialism, subject to outside masters. It is shameful and undignified for a political party, such as our opposition, to attempt to turn back Belize to the old days of colonialism when a privileged few enjoyed the benefits and many were deprived of opportunities to better their living standards.

OPPOSITION SUPPORT STRATEGY OF GUATEMALA

Guatemala, which claims unjustly all or a part of Belize, knows that once Belize becomes securely independent, her chances to assert and win her unfounded claims would end in the face of international recognition and support for an independent Belize.

In order to avoid losing this claim and in order to maintain a status which helps to promote this claim, Guatemala has instigated and abetted the spread of fear of independence among Belizeans.

False arguments are propagated that (1) the economy of Belize cannot pay for independence and (2) that Belizeans cannot government[sic] themselves. We hear these false arguments repeated by our opposition. Both arguments are false because the economy of Belize is viable: This is the conclusion of the World Bank.

Government collects sufficient revenues to finance its recurrent budget and has surplus of some ten million dollars to finance its capital budget. Other finances, like in the case of any independent country, comes from loans and grants in economic cooperation programmes.

As regards the other false argument that Belizeans cannot government [sic] themselves, the self-evident answer is that the people and government of Belize have worked the constitution and have governed these past years with stability, experience and progress. As a result, we have all the attributes of independence and by now we should have been independent.

SHORT SIGHTED AND SELFISH POLICY

In some countries where people struggle for freedom, there is an element of the population which opposes independence for the simple reason that it wants independence only when it is the government. In the case of Belize, this is a short-sighted and selfish policy. It is not in the best interest of our country or its people.

This policy of our opposition on the secure independence of Belize is not only a negative policy but it is a confused policy. It not only seeks to terrorize the people with one scare after another, but like the weather it changes from time to time: first it favours independence; then it is against independence and in favour of a moratorium for at least ten years; the latest shift of policy is independence not right now.

The opposition has an affinity, a sameness, of policy with Guatemala. Guatemala strives to delay the independence of Belize for the obvious reason that a postponement of independence would give Guatemala more time to strengthen its military might and to subvert the people of Belize. Subversion takes its wicked course as monies and aid from Guatemala support those who oppose the government of the People's United Party and thus, knowingly or unknowingly, support Guatemala's unjust claims to Belize.

TOOLS OF SUBVERSION

In addition to giving aid and abetment to the opposition, Guatemala uses the weapon of fear. Such fear is spread by the opposition: fear that there will be war on Belizean soil if the Government gets independence; that Guatemala, will invade and Cuban troops will fight.

The danger is that Guatemala will invade whether Belize is independent or not independent; but there is no arrangement or agreement or understanding that Cuban troops will enter Belize territory. The real enemy to Belizean independence is Guatemala and not Cuba. One wonders if the followers and supporters of the opposition policy do not realize the affinity or sameness of policy of Guatemala and the opposition.

Let not the enemies of Belizean independence lull us to sleep in the belief that by postponing the day of a secure independence we have chosen the safest course. We have not. In the end such a course can lead only to disaster and destruction.

RISK OF LOSING BELIZE

We have seen that in a mistaken attempt to save Belize, those who oppose a secure independence run the great risk of losing what they want to save. We have seen that adherence to such an ill-conceived policy would lead us in a new direction that is the wrong direction.

To prevent this from happening and to save and safeguard Belize, the People's United Party realises the serious risk of delaying independence and advocates a policy of a secure and safe independence of Belize with all its territory by one of two ways: (1) a peaceful negotiated settlement of the Anglo-Guatemalan dispute and/or (2) a security arrangement.

It should be clear to all that the first way, a negotiated settlement, depends on the agreement of Guatemala which wants Belizean land and that if land is not ceded, then Guatemala will not agree to a settlement. Thus, Guatemala will delay a settlement in the belief that the longer it takes to reach such a settlement, Guatemala will have more time to build up its military forces and to subvert the Belizean people.

SECURE INDEPENDENCE THE SAFEST SOLUTION

In the face of these facts, clearly then the right direction and the correct policy is to keep on struggling and working for a secure and safe independence with all our territory. This means an independence guaranteed by a security arrangement or a military post.

We must also bear in mind that the Belizean people have the final say: either in accepting or rejecting a negotiated settlement by a referendum which was arranged

by the People's United Party, or in mandating, the future status of Belize as a non-selfgoverning country with all the known risks or as a securely independent country or struggling on to obtain a security arrangement that would protect our independence.

BEST INTEREST OF BELIZE

All right-thinking and patriotic Belizeans should know in their hearts that the best interests of Belize demand a state of independence. This is the law of nature and the law of nations. With independence there will be more economic and social development beyond the attainment of a non-independent country.

To save and safeguard Belize for future generations, let us not be stampeded into a senseless fear of a secure independence with all our territory. For we know that the final decision rests with the Belizean people.

As a conscientious and courageous people, who understand clearly the issues at stake, we must keep on working to save and safeguard Belize. We must do so in order to put a stop to the unfounded claims of Guatemala, and to attain an independence protected by a security guarantee that will enable us to live as a united, sovereign and independent country, the Central American nation of Belize.

With your continued support and with God's help we shall attain this just objective. As we move forward to the national elections, let us vote PUP - all the way.

Address of Premier George Price of Belize at the Official Opening of the Extraordinary Session of CARICOM Ministers Responsible for Foreign Affairs

Belmopan
March 17, 1981

Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Hon. Ministers of the Cabinet and Members of the National Assembly,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished guests,
My fellow Belizeans,

Please accept a heartfelt welcome to Ministers and distinguished guests from our fellow Caribbean States who are here to take part in this extraordinary session of the Standing Committee of Ministers responsible for Foreign Affairs. We see some familiar faces of good friends among you. For some of you this is not your first visit to Belize, for others it is. You are all welcome.

Apart from attending the scheduled meetings, you will have an opportunity to meet and talk with a cross-section of our Belizean people. This will give them an opportunity to personally thank all of you for the effective work you have done to help Belize reach this important milestone on the road to a secure Independence with all our territory.

Yesterday, a release was issued simultaneously in Belmopan, London and Guatemala City setting out the Heads of Agreement reached at the talks just ended between the United Kingdom and Guatemalan governments over the country of Belize. Copies of these Heads of Agreement have been circulated to delegates and are being given wide publicity among our people.

As I signed the agreement in London on behalf of the Government of Belize, I was very conscious of the fact that without your solid support it would have been impossible to have reached this far in attaining our just objectives.

This support has been given by your Governments and people wholeheartedly the United Nations, at the Organization of American States, at the Conferences of the Non-Aligned countries and elsewhere.

Fortified by the knowledge that you were at those international forums championing our just cause gave us the determination and courage to keep going -to keep struggling for our freedom.

It is therefore in a spirit of deep gratitude that I say to you today that the agreement signed in London on March 11th will provide a framework within which the Anlo-Guatemalan dispute over Belize may be honourably and finally settled. It is an inspiration for Belizeans to press forward to ultimate victory and I hope a similar inspiration for you to note what the small nations of the Caribbean Community have and can achieve in a unified and cooperative effort.

The agreement is not a full and final settlement of the dispute. There is a lot of hard work still ahead of us. In this respect, we will be consulting with you to get your valued counsel and support in the days and months ahead as we work out the details of a final treaty or treaties. There are hard and difficult issues still remaining to be negotiated. Nevertheless, the important thing as we told the Belizean people in our report to the nation is that by the present agreement “Belize can proceed to independence and Guatemala WILL accept and respect the independent state of Belize with its traditional boundaries without quarrel and without war”.

It is gratifying to note that together we have been able to protect ALL the basic and fundamental rights of the Belizean people.

Our meeting here in Belmopan comes at a time when world attention as never before is focused on Belize as a test case in finding a peaceful and honourable solution to an ancient territorial dispute. It comes at a time when the whole region has come under the close scrutiny of the world. An independent Belize will enter the region with much to offer our neighbours who are plagued with internal problems. It is our hope and prayer that our emergence as a New Nation in the Caribbean basin will help to bring stability and social justice to our troubled corner of the world.

Future historians no doubt will interpret the decades of the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century as a vibrant period of national and international transformation.

In the fifties and sixties, there was the formation of regional groups all over the world. In our western hemisphere, the Caribbean Community and the Central American Common Market came to life and became internationally viable.

The beginning was good. Many sound and substantial developments marked real progress towards cooperation and regional community life.

As time went on, the structures left by centuries of colonialism could not in every section and angle withstand the pressures of modern capitalism and socialism which blow with the winds of change.

Inevitable strains and stresses have resulted and now we face together the challenges of transformation on every level.

The period in which we live can be a blessing or a curse.

Whatever happens, let us make it a blessing for all our people. All is not lost; let us continue to build on the solid structures we have cast, trim our sails to the winds that blow and advance to a better future.

To this end, we must not withdraw to what appears safe and untroubled isolation. We have a duty to the region to work together for the common good and to effectively safeguard freedom in the midst of political pluralism.

We have a duty to the region to promote justice and equality in a truly participatory society so that applying rightly the power of science and technology we create resources for all to share and thus rescue humanity from underdevelopment.

There are the objectives that loom before us. Let us go forward with the prayer that the God of the Universe, Almighty and Eternal, bless our work and guide us by His counsel and fortitude.

May we have a good and fruitful Conference.





Belize attained its independence on September 21, 1981, and today becomes the one hundred and fifty-sixth member of the international community. Please accept the deepest gratitude of the people and Government of Belize for this solid support.

As we become a member of the world community, we hear the question asked: What is Belize and its people? and how will they fit among you? In reply: Belize is a Caribbean and Central American nation which works and lives a revolution that is peaceful, constructive, new, progressive, and Belizean. It is our own, with all our national attributes, land and resources.

Statement of the Prime Minister George Price on Belize's Admission to the UN, 25th September 1981, United Nations, New York



Premier's Address on Radio Belize

Radio Belize, Belize City

April 4, 1981

My Fellow Belizeans,

On Thursday, April second, a state of emergency was declared in Belize by His Excellency, the Governor.

This state of emergency does not suspend the constitution. Ministers of government will continue to have the responsibilities under their portfolios and the work of government will continue.

The government of Belize, which was duly elected by the majority of Belizeans in free and democratic elections a little over a year ago, has a sacred duty to work the democratic process in a climate of peace and stability.

We have built the foundations of this new nation on the principles of democracy and human rights. But these very foundations are threatened today by those amongst us who try to postpone our rightful destiny as a united sovereign and independent nation in Central America. It is threatened by those who try to instill in our people a senseless fear of their own freedom.

There is no need to fear freedom. Indeed, Belize can only become safe and secure from external threats by being born as an independent nation with full Opportunities to grow and develop for the benefit of all our people.

We will continue to govern and to lead Belize to a secure independence with full sovereignty and all our territory intact.

This morning a delegation headed by the Deputy Premier left for London to attend the Constitution Conference. The opposition party was invited to attend this conference which is scheduled to open at Marlborough House on Monday, April the sixth.

On the issue of the Heads of Agreement, I continue to appeal to all Belizeans to let reason and good sense prevail.

The Heads of Agreement are a list of sixteen subjects for future negotiations. They are in no sense a final agreement. In the negotiations ahead we are committed to maintaining the full sovereignty and territorial integrity of Belize and to protecting all the rights and interests of the Belizean people.

Indeed the first paragraph in the Heads of Agreement provides that the governments of the United Kingdom and Guatemala recognize and respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Belize, in accordance with our existing and traditional frontiers. This is the essential basis for future negotiations.

More fundamentally, we have given a commitment to submit any final agreement which may emerge from these negotiations to the people for their decision in a referendum. Thus the people will have the final say in a referendum to accept or reject any treaty or treaties that may emerge from the negotiations.

Let us understand the issue that confronts us now. The real issue is a direct challenge to our democratic way of life. Let us then resolve to maintain the democratic process and avoid senseless and violent confrontation. It is not good for any of us and it will only breed resentment on all sides.

Let us then continue to build and to protect our heritage and to save Belize with God's help and with the people's support.

Premier's Statement at Flag-Raising Ceremony

The Government House, Belize City

September 20, 1981

We dedicate this new flag of independence to the people and Government of Belize, secure in its sovereignty and owner of all its territory.

As a pledge of national unity, the formerly blue and white Belizean flag, the flag of the revolution, has evolved into the blue, white and red flag of the new Independent State of Belize.

May this symbol of unity also be a pledge of our continuing determination to dedicate ourselves to hard and productive work as we develop and organize our resources to sustain and serve the welfare of our people.

Let the flag of an independent Belize be also a sign to all neighbours that we accept the responsibilities, the opportunities and the rewards of freedom and the peace, stability and prosperity in the region of the Caribbean and Central America.

May this flag be a pledge of our recognition and our gratitude to all who have helped and worked with us to achieve this just objective for which we daily prayed: to Her Majesty's Government and the British people, to our international friends and allies, to all and everyone.

It is our flag. May we keep it, love it and guard it. LONG LIVE BELIZE!

Declaración del Premier en la ceremonia de alzar la bandera de Belice Independiente

The Government House, ciudad de Belice
20 de septiembre de 1981

Dedicamos esta nueva bandera de independencia al pueblo y gobierno de Belice firme en su soberanía y dueño de todo su territorio.

Como prenda de nuestra unidad nacional, la bandera beliceña azul y blanca - la bandera de la revolución - ha surgido en la bandera azul, blanca y roja del nuevo estado independiente de Belice.

Que este símbolo de unidad sea también prenda de nuestra continua determinación a dedicarnos al trabajo arduo y productivo, mientras desarrollamos y organizamos nuestros recursos para sostener y servir el bienestar de todo nuestro pueblo.

Que la bandera del estado independiente de Belice sea también una señal a todos nuestros vecinos que nosotros los beliceños aceptamos las responsabilidades, las oportunidades y los beneficios de la libertad, la estabilidad y la prosperidad en la región del Caribe y de la América Central.

Sea esta bandera prenda de nuestro reconocimiento y agradecimiento a todos quienes ayudaron y cooperaron con nosotros para lograr este objetivo justo por el cual hemos rezado todos los días: - al gobierno de Su Majestad y al pueblo británico, a nuestros amigos y socios internacionales y a todo y cada uno.

Es nuestra bandera. Tengámosla; amemosla; guardemosla. ¡Viva Belice!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

WOULD YOU PLEASE JOIN IN A TOAST TO HER MAJESTY THE
QUEEN OF BELIZE AND THE HEAD OF THE COMMONWEALTH.
TO HER MAJESTY

Premier's Address following His Royal Highness Prince Michael's Delivery of the Proclamation of Independence

Belmopan
September 21, 1981

This symbolic transition to the independent state of Belize signifies the fulfilment of decolonization which, as a metropolitan country and founding member of the United Nations, the United Kingdom undertook to accomplish under the Charter.

Belize was the last British colony on the Central American mainland; and the transition deserves the admiration and the support of all peaceful, freedom-loving nations.

At our request, and with our gratitude, the military presence of the United Kingdom will remain here for an appropriate time to be decided according to future circumstances.

No longer as a colonial power, but as a welcome partner, the United Kingdom has agreed to help us preserve and promote peace and well-being in our region.

We continue our work, not only to build Belize to yet greater levels of economic growth and social progress, but, in doing so, to remove causes of conflict and to cooperate in the economic development of the region with all our neighbours in friendship, harmony and peace but with equal status of a sovereign nation with all its territory secure against external threats.

Other nations have a like responsibility and, no doubt, determination to help us preserve and promote this peace and stability and security. To enlist their formal and legal cooperation we apply for membership in the United Nations, the Organization of American States and the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations informed us a few days ago that today, on attaining its independence, Belize becomes a member of the

Commonwealth. May other organizations to which we apply also do the same.

Present with us are distinguished members of these world bodies. We welcome you and thank you for coming to our celebrations. We ask that you continue to help us as you have done successfully so that our nations can work together in this great task of creating a better region in a better world.

As we become a member of world communities, we hear the question asked: what is Belize and its people and how will they fit among you?

In reply, Belize is a Caribbean and Central American nation which works and lives a revolution that is peaceful, constructive, new, progressive and Belizean. It is our own with all our national attributes.

Belize is a people with all the attributes of nationhood having one flag, one government, and one constitution. Our mind imbues the democratic process. Our hand works the mixed economy. Our heart beats with social justice and our soul cherishes treasures of the spirit.

Your Royal Highnesses, Presidents, Excellencies, distinguished delegates honoured guests, my fellow Belizean: may you take to your homes and to your countries assurances of our deepest gratitude and most solemn respect of the rights of others.

Do carry this message:- Belize, with the help of God and the support of its people will stand upright and will do its duty to help bring peace, stability and prosperity to our region and to wider circles of our planet earth.

This is our wish and our prayer as we bid all at home and abroad a very happy Independence Day.

Statement of the Prime Minister George Price on Belize's Admission to the United Nations

New York City
September 25, 1981

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, Distinguished Delegates, Your Excellencies:

Thank you Mr. President for your kind words! We share the congratulations extended to you on your election as President of the Thirty-sixth General Assembly of the United Nations.

The State and People of Belize thank you for the welcome and assurances we have received in the United Nations, and in particular the kind statements of the Representatives of the regional groups.

We thank the Representatives of the United Kingdom for the welcome and for setting right the record; and for the welcome and assurances of the host country, the United States of America, for its welcome.

We thank Representatives of Mexico, our nearest neighbour, also Nicaragua and our Central American neighbours; of Guyana, a fellow member of the Caribbean Community; and of Venezuela, a State of the Caribbean Basin.

Belize attained its independence on September 21, 1981, and today becomes the one hundred and fifty-sixth member of the international community. Please accept the deepest gratitude of the people and Government of Belize for this solid support.

As we become a member of the world community, we hear the question asked: What is Belize and its people? and how will they fit among you? In reply: Belize is a Caribbean and Central American nation which works and lives a revolution that is peaceful, constructive, new, progressive, and Belizean. It is our own, with all our national attributes, land and resources.

Belize is a people with all the attributes of nationhood, having one flag, one government, and one constitution. Our mind imbues the democratic process. Our hand works the mixed economy. Our heart beats with social justice, and our soul

cherishes treasures of the spirit.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates: Belize accepts the duties and obligations of the United Nations charter, and will live in peace and friendship with our neighbours in the Americas and in the world.

We remain steadfast in our determination to secure our Independence with all our territory intact. And we continue our work, not only to build Belize but to build Belize to yet greater levels of economic growth and social progress, but in doing so, to remove causes of conflict, and to cooperate in the economic development of the region with all our neighbours in friendship, harmony and peace, but with equal status as a sovereign nation.

There is a threat to this peace because a neighbour to whom we extend the hand of friendship and the offer of regional economic cooperation has not yet responded yet to our invitation.

Yet we stand ready to pursue the formula for peace agreed upon by the United Kingdom, Guatemala and Belize, in a determined endeavour to search for a peaceful solution to the dispute between the United Kingdom and Guatemala, without prejudice to our sovereignty and territorial integrity.

To all who helped bring Belize to a secure independence with all its territory, and to membership of the United Nations, we extend our deepest thanks.

Belize, with the help of God, and the support of its people, will stand upright and will do its duty to help bring peace, stability and prosperity to our region and to the wider circles of our planet Earth.



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