

Independence Day Address 2011

By Leader of the Opposition

The Hon. John Briceño

21 September 2011

On that historic day 30 years ago, right here in our Nation's Capital Belmopan, our first Prime Minister, the Hon. George Price said and I quote:

"This symbolic transition to the independent state of Belize signifies the fulfilment of a 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 threat.

"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.

"As we become a member of the world committees, 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 in 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, 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.

“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.”

This was the vision of George Price; this was the legacy he left us, the vision of a new and prosperous nation. In many ways this vision remains in partial fulfillment –the next part is ours to achieve. Our generation must place our nation on the path to economic equality and sustainability.

Mientras miramos hacia el futuro debemos luchar en contra del pesimismo y debemos de continuar con la esperanza que ha sido siempre nuestra fortaleza. Recordemos que dentro de todo Beliceño existe un espíritu tenaz. ¡Nunca nos rendimos...y nunca nos damos por vencidos! Creemos en que siempre hay un mejor mañana.

Reconocemos que cuando se trabaja duro y cuando nos protegemos y respetamos mutuamente...esto nos hace prosperar. Como dijo el gran poeta y autor Español...Ramón de Campoamor...“la libertad no consiste en hacer lo que se quiere...sino en hacer lo que se debe”

So as we look to our future, let us never give in to hopeless. Let us instead embrace the hope that resides in all of us. Always remember that in every Belizean is a resilient spirit. We never quit, we never give up. We always believe that there will be better tomorrows. We know that when we work hard, do what is right and protect and respect each other that we prosper.

Our very Anthem proclaims it so – “For freedom comes, tomorrow’s noon”. Therefore, arise ye sons and daughters of Belize. And let us do right by George Price to continue the work of building our beloved Belize.

God bless us all and God Bless Belize.

Long Live Belize

Que Viva Belize

Happy Independence Day.