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SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AT THE PRIZE-GIVING CEREMONY OF THE MALAYSIAN SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION ESSAY COMPETITION AT THE TOWN HALL, KUALA LUMPUR ON 19TH OCTOBER, 1966.

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to be invited to participate in this prize-giving ceremony for the winners of the Science Essay Competition conducted by the Malaysian Scientific Association. I am told that the object of this Essay Competition is to promote and foster among young Malaysians, the spirit of belonging to the realm of science. This is indeed a very commendable exercise, as interest in science and technology could be stimulated and enhanced by competitions such as this. At the same time the potential scientific ability in the students could also be developed and tapped by new methods of instruction and competition. We should therefore do everything possible to bring forth the "flowering of Talent" among our youths in the fields of science and technology for attaining our national economic and social goals; and I would like, in this connection, to congratulate the Malaysian Scientific Association for their efforts in organising this Science Essay Competition.

In recent years, governments all over the world have shown considerable and increasing interest in promoting science and scientific research and in their effective application in the pursuit of economic growth. In Malaysia, the Government has itself undertaken that part of scientific research that it must provide to accelerate economic development. This has been done by encouraging and financing Ministries, Departments and agencies to undertake research relevant to their basic operational responsibilities. To mention only a few, we have the Rubber Research Institute, the Kepong Forest Research Institute, the Institute of Medical Research (IMR), the University of Malaya, the research divisions of the Departments of Agriculture, Mines and Geological Survey.

Each of these institutions has made and will continue to make major contributions to our development efforts.

As Minister for National and Rural Development, I am keenly interested in what applied science can do for the development of Malaysia. There are indeed many ways in which applied science has contributed to the development of this country. The development, progress and strength of our main industry (i.e. rubber) have been made possible through intensive research contributing to increased rubber yields of over four to five times the previous yield per acre. Similarly, agricultural research in rice and other crops has led to increased production in these crops.

Unlike other advanced countries which have the requisite technical manpower and financial resources for space explorations, Malaysia's main focus in science will have to be geared towards economic development to increase the standards of living of our people. Since skilled scientific manpower and financial resources are limited, we should make efficient use of these resources and not dilute our efforts by engaging in scientific research over too many areas which are already being undertaken by other more advanced and affluent countries. Although the strength and international prestige of countries are today measured in part by their achievements in nuclear and space science, in my opinion, the more important consideration for developing countries is the use of science for conquest of poverty and eradication of diseases.

In other words, we must aim at raising of living standard. We ought therefore to try and achieve a technical lead so that our exports can sell and compete in world markets on quality. This policy has been proved correct in Malaysia. We have succeeded in attaining scientific and technological eminence in the field of rubber research through specialisation. And it has given us rich dividends in terms of increased production and hence increased income for our people and the country. If we attempt to produce a spread of scientific research over too many areas or units, each poorly equipped in terms of personnel and finance, then the results would be ineffective and benefits will probably be nil.

Equally, there is an urgent need for coordinated research and development efforts and for improved scientific education and

technical training. The progress in science and technology has such wideranging implications for human welfare that there should be coordination and collaboration in research not only between the private and public sectors within a country but also among countries of the world.

In this connection, the Government will, in the near future, establish a body known as National Scientific Advisory Council, to advise on the most effective methods of coordinating scientific and technological research activities and to obtain the maximum value and results from expenditure on research undertaken by the University, Government Departments and statutory bodies. This Council will ensure that there is full and efficient use of scarce resources; that there will be no unnecessary duplication of efforts and that the provision of training facilities for science will be properly coordinated within Malaysia and with other countries in the region.

Our task in nation-building in this modern scientific age is by no means an easy one. Where other advanced countries have managed to develop gradually through the phases of agrarian and industrial revolutions, we are faced with a problem of telescoping these two stages of development into one to be achieved within a decade or two. If we are to succeed in this Development Decade in raising living standards of the people, scientists must also come forward to play their role in the government's programme of agricultural diversification and industrialisation. Scientists must continue to work on projects and in areas which can stimulate economic growth and confer most benefit to the country.

As a contribution towards this direction, the Malaysian Scientific Association, I am told, will soon be launching two major projects, namely the establishment of a Science Research Fund to promote scientific research, and the publication of a journey to serve as a medium of communication for scientific work and advances made locally. If the very good response to the Essay Competition organised by the Association is any indication, I am sure that these two projects will receive the public support that they deserve.

Well, we have yet to hear what our budding scientists, the

winners of the Essay Competition, have to say about: "What Applied Science can do for the Development of Malaysia" and "What I would do if I were the Minister for Science".

I now have the greatest pleasure in declaring open this Prize-Giving Ceremony and in doing so I wish the Malaysian Scientific Association success in your efforts.

Timbalan Perdana Menteri Tun Abdul Razak sedang menyampaikan hadiah kepada pemenang pertama, Miss Lau Phaik Choo dari Perak dalam Pertandingan essay anjuran Persatuan Sains Malaysia, di majlis penyampaian hadiah, di Dewan Bandaran Kuala Lumpur pada 19 Oktober 1966.