

**SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER'S
AT THE MALAYSIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT DINNER
ON 3RD MAY 1967**

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to be here with you to-night and I sincerely hope that you do not expect from me a long dissertation on management because it is such a vast subject!

At one extreme you have the case of management of the girl in the *bikini bathing costume* on the beach and her backstrap was broken; so all the men rushed up to her and tried to help her to repair her bikini. But she replied with confidence and determination, "No, Thank you very much. I can manage myself.

The other extreme, you have the management of Government and the management of large industrial organisations.

Management is a vast and varied subject, too detailed for an after-dinner speech because to go back to the bikini, I understand that the ideal of after-dinner speech is *like a lady's dress*.

It should be *long enough* to cover the subject, but at the same time, *short enough* to be stimulating and interesting. But sometimes nowadays boy's dress like the mini-skirt and the bikini, they cover the subject in parts.

There is no activity in modern times which does not call for good management; in factories, in firma, in business and in banks, including Bank Negara, in hospitals and in homes, although I give you a word of warning on home management.

A home is probably the only place which can suffer from *over-management*, and I hope that the female members of your Institute will not acquire an excessive knowledge of management and give their poor husbands bell when they get home and over-manage them!

I was most interested to read the Constitution of your Institute, and I must say that the objects that you have set out to achieve are very near in my heart.

In fact they are the same objects which I have been trying to apply to the machinery for development, and to the machinery of government as a whole.

In the old days, when life was less complex, management was also less complex. As a result, there has been a tendency of inherit and apply traditional system of management instead of applying the very best of modern techniques, and, as I see it, the main contribution of

your Institute to our country is to act as a tremendous stimulus in this search for, and application of, modern methods in all business and government organisations in Malaysia.

Combines with this, you could also help stimulate a continual vigilance and review of organisational methods, to ensure that we build up within our country, organisations based *on the quality* of man-power, rather than *on the quantity* of manpower.

Let me tell you a story I heard the other day when I was involved in Defence talks.

The 25-pounder gun which was invented many many years ago, used to be drawn into battle by a team of horses, but in these modern days of mechanisation, horses were substituted by jeeps.

However, in spite of this change, it was discovered that the *crew* of each gun remained the same in number; one man to pass the shells, one man to open the breech, one man to fire the gun, and one man to direct the fire on a compass-bearing; and yet, on analysis, it was found that there were still *two extra men* sitting around doing nothing during the time the guns were in action.

Two extra men doing nothing on *many thousand* gun is many thousand redundant men and no one could find out what their job really was.

Therefore, a systematic analysis was made to find out why these men existed and remained on the pay-roll.

What had happened was, on the old days, guns were drawn up by horses, these extra men had a specific job of *holding the horses* from running away when the guns blasted off, and yet on the transition to modern methods, no one *had ever thought* of cancelling their posts or giving them new jobs.

And I think, so it is, in both government and business organisations, we tend to multiply and multiply our posts and position, a tendency for quantity and *not* quality, and the only way that we can ensure efficiency is continual review of our organisational structure so that we do not have a lot of redundant people holding invisible horses!

Another aspect which I would like to touch on; and that is, to achieve good and efficient management, we have got to depart from the *traditional method* of *automatic promotion* on a time basis; we have got to do a bit of blood-letting bringing some fresh air into our organisations, both government and business, to ensure that the man of best ability and leadership has a chance of coming up to the surface and does not stagnate in a pool of frustration, thus causing an efficiency blockage which, in turn causes an unnecessary brain-drain because his talent and potential are not being used to the full.

Let me give you another example from my experience as Minister of Defence;

I understand that during the last war, most infantry battalions fighting in the jungle had, apart from their Colonels, Majors, Captains and men, had also 41 mules which were used as pack animals, and by the time the war ended some of these mules has been in and out of the jungle on *several campaigns*', they had probably much more jungle experience and much more military *experience* than the men commanding them, but they *were not* promoted as Colonels, Majors or Captains because, in spite of their long term service, they had never progressed beyond being a "mule".

I leave it to you to interpret the moral of that story!

The message I am trying to convey to you which is an important aspect of management, and that is, that we have to evolve both in government and in the private sector, *new more realistic, scientific and sophisticated* methods of *promotional incentives* to harness the maximum of our human resources available, and to ensure that there is no brain-drain or outflow of ability due to frustration caused by applying out of date methods of management. Today, we are striving to achieve growth in all aspects of our national life.

In order to achieve this growth, we need strong and enlightened leadership; we need to stop any brain-drain which may take place; we need to harmonise the various interests - business interests, trade union interests - political interests - government interests, so that we man and age and co-ordinate these interest for the sound growth of our country.

We will only achieve this co-ordination of these interests provided that we place national interests high above the separate interests of the separate organisations which comprise the mosaic of our nation. Let me explain this. The English language has seldom been enriched by American words, but I believe, in America they have an expression known as "*passing the buck*", of which perhaps the equivalent is "to pass the baby".

I understand that Truman when he was President of America had a large sign on his desk in the White House which read: "This is where the buck stops!"

This has a double lesson for us; the first one in management, that if very responsible officer at all levels in all organisations shoulders his responsibility and does not "pass the buck," then we will be well on the way to being an efficient and modern nation with up-to-date dynamic management.

The second lesson at national level; if *each component part of our national economy*, the private sector, the trade union movement, State governments and the Federal Government maintains a high national

aim and we do not "pass the buck", to each *but get together* more often to integrate our aims and aspirations into one determined direction for progress. Then we will achieve the national growth which we all so ardently desire.

An institute like yours can do a tremendous contribution to the sound growth of our nation in these modern times.

We need more and more managerial skills, more and more understanding between government and the private sector, and we need to *breed a new class of Malaysians with a highly developed sense* of leadership, efficiency and managerial sense of responsibility.

These needs are not always in the curriculae of academic disciplines in Universities, and it is too late now for the Economist, the Architect or the Engineer who is already doing his job, to go back to school and learn to be a good manager, in addition to being a good professional exponent of his own discipline.

If our economist, our engineers and all our other professionally trained Malaysians cannot go back to University to learn managerial skill, they can still go forward with your Institute to acquire these essential managerial skills.

This is where your Institute can fill a tremendous need and has a very proper and important place in the economy and development of our country.

I sincerely hope that your Institute will develop from strength to strength, and I can honestly say, on the part of my government, that we will give you every support and encouragement necessary, because the role that this Malaysian Institute of Management can play in the future of our country, by creating a highly efficient managerial class of Malaysians, is vital and could be one of the greatest deciding factors in the progress of our Nation - whether we are going to become a modern progressive and prosperous Nation or not.

I wish you the best of luck in your endeavour and hope that you will become one of the most dynamic institutes in our country.