

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE  
DINNER OF FELLOWS OF THE ROYAL  
COLLEGE OF SURGEONS EDINBURGH AT  
THE LAKE CLUB, KUALA LUMPUR ON 12TH  
FEBRUARY, 1972

Tuan Pengerusi (Prof. Balasegaran), Y.B. Datuk Harun<sup>1</sup> dan Datin Salmah, Y.B. Encik Lee Siok Yew,<sup>2</sup> Dif-dif yang mulia, saudara-saudara sekalian.

Saya terlebih dahulu sukacita menyatakan penghargaan dan terimakasih kepada Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh atas jemputan untuk saya dan isteri saya menghadiri Majlis Jamuan malam ini.

Mr Chairman,

I am grateful to you for the unmerited honour you and Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh have done me tonight. I would also like to thank you for the kind compliments you paid me to which I think I might add a footnote. After all, Pantai Valley has had a good start all along and I must say has been and is in good hands. It is for this reason that I have agreed to be with the pioneers in the hitherto unknown frontiers at Bangi in Kajang.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a rare privilege for me to be in such an eminent company this evening. In fact, I sincerely feel that my place is below the salt to be among the galaxy of distinguished and learned members of the Edinburgh fraternity whose skill with the scalpel and brilliant academic records are well-known in the medical world.

We are proud of the fact that Malaysia has produced many distinguished Surgeons in various faculties; and lest I shall be accused of being partial to Surgeons, we all take pride in the presence of equally able Physicians in our Medical Service and outside, many of whom I believe are from Edinburgh.

<sup>1</sup> Y.B. Menteri Besar Selangor.

<sup>2</sup> Y.B. Menteri Kesihatan

Mr Chairman,

I would like to join you in your tribute to Professor Ong Guan Bee whom I have had the pleasure of meeting just now. I heartily endorse your compliments for Datuk Dr Haji Abdul Majid Ismail (you would excuse me for not using the honorific Mister) who rightly deserves the highest seat of honour this evening. If I have anything to add at all, it is only to thank him once again for his role as Chairman of the Committee of Enquiry into Campus Life in the University of Malaya, whose report I would not hesitate to recommend for reading to everyone here.

We all know Dr Majid as a man of many varied versatile interests, and only recently he made a brilliant debut as a Flamenco dancer. I have known Dr Majid since our youthful days and spent some years of our youth or to be accurate mispent together. I know him to be a man not only of unbounded energy and stamina but of great ability and character—benevolent and generous hearted. We have therefore entrusted the future of the nation's health in his capable hands. I know that trust is indeed well-placed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Talking generally, I am satisfied to see the progress we have made in improving the state of the nation's health, and in the implementation of our national health programme. However, there is still much to be done. Encik Lee Siok Yew, although only a month in the saddle, has kept himself very busy and is just back from a trip to the North and East Coast States launching the anti-polio campaign. I hope you will give him all the assistance and co-operation which his Ministry requires so that we will be able to successfully meet the targets of the Second Malaysia Plan. We are short of doctors, surgeons in various branches. It is our intention in due course to provide them internally.

I mentioned earlier on of my commitment with the Universiti Kebangsaan. It is my hope that by the time the students move out to the campus in Bangi, we shall have by then a vigorous and forward looking Medical Faculty. In this respect, I think the Vice-Chancellor, Datuk Dr Ariffin, will have to depend on

some of your present to render him assistance in the planning of the Faculty and later in providing the manpower to help train our future Surgeons.

I personally regard this as a great challenge and I am confident some of you here will gallantly respond to this national cause.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It was in August 1970 that I last had the opportunity of being with medical professionals when I addressed the gathering of Malaysia/Singapore Congress of Medicine and the Commonwealth Medical Association. Much has happened since then. I understand the M M A Building is almost nearing completion and with the facilities available, the Association will be able to pursue your programme in preparing candidates for the Primary Examination for the Fellowship which Prof. Balasegaran referred to earlier.

Perhaps it is not out of place that I should also mention the role of those of you outside the Government service. There has been rapid development of Specialist Centres particularly in Kuala Lumpur and I think this is a very praiseworthy contribution to the society as a whole. After all, those who can afford it should have the best. On our part, the Government will continue to improve the services particularly in rural and suburban areas, to the extent of providing specialised services. Wherever we can, we shall certainly utilise our own personnel but for the time being, we shall have to depend on loan personnel from friendly countries whom we are indeed grateful.

Lastly, I would like to refer to the latest issue of the M M A Newsletter which calls for attention to the environmental changes around us today and their attendant problems. I am much heartened to see such positive attitude forthcoming from you as a professional body who rightly must be aware of the problems and be concerned with them as the responsibility of each and every citizen.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I must not allow myself to indulge in any further remarks. The one great virtue in after-dinner speeches is brevity. I am glad that you have been able to bear with me and once again, I wish to thank you all for a very pleasant evening.