

**SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AT
THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF A SERIES OF
PUBLIC LECTURES¹ ON THE CONSTITUTION
OF THE FEDERATION OF MALAYA AT KUALA
LUMPUR ON 26TH JANUARY, 1960**

For nearly two months you have been attending this series of lectures on the Constitution of the Federation of Malaya, and your sustained interest in them is evident of the great importance you place on a thorough understanding of the working of our Constitution.

As you might know this series of lectures form part of a country-wide campaign to familiarise the people in the town and rural areas with the aims of the Constitution and how it affects each of them individually as citizens of this country.

This present series of lectures, which come to an end tonight, have been made possible by the co-operation of the Faculty of Law of the University of Malaya and its Dean, Professor L. A. Sheridan, Members of the Bar, and senior officers of the Government. These lectures, by virtue of their profession and specialised knowledge, have talked to you on the various aspects of how the Constitution works and affects you, and it is my hope that you will pass on to your friends what you have learnt in these lectures.

At this juncture of our country's history it is of the utmost importance for every citizen to understand how democracy works, and our Constitution is the embodiment of democratic principles to guide the Government chosen by the people in how to sustain a democratic society such as is established in the Federation of Malaya. The bound volume of our Constitution should not be regarded as a book to be put on the shelf and forgotten. On the

1 The series of public lectures was organized by the Information Services in conjunction with the Faculty of Law of the then University of Malaya in Singapore.

other hand, the citizens of this country must make the Constitution a living thing. We have now a Government elected by popular vote and it is up to the people themselves to see to it that their Government practises the principles set forth in our Constitution. Time was when the Government of this country was regarded as something remote from the people and, that is, was a machine that did not need the assistance of the people in its operation.

Today we have a Government of the people whose representatives sit in our Parliament to make the voice of the people heard in the highest councils of the land. Therefore, in such society the people are intimately involved in the Government of their own country, and they have thus a responsibility to see to it that this Government functions according to the people's wishes.

I must also thank the Information Services for sponsoring this series of lectures. In the rural areas the Field Staff of this Department are devoting their time and energy to telling the kampong folks how the Constitution works and affects their lives. Though this current series of lectures might end tonight, yet the work of explaining the Constitution to the people will go on throughout the country until everyone possesses a good grasp of what the Constitution means to him or her.

I wish to place on record my deep gratitude to all the lecturers and chairmen for sacrificing so much of their time to undertake the lectures and to preside at these meetings. They show a great public spirit which, I hope, will not pass unnoticed among you and the public in general. To-night you have heard Encik Muhammed Ghazali bin Shafie, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of External Affairs, speaking about Malaya's role as a Member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

This country has now come to a stage where it must also look towards friendly relationships and intercourse with nations, not only of the Commonwealth but also of the world. The rest of the world is watching how Malaya is making democracy work, and it is my belief that you who are here tonight and the general body of Malayan citizens, can make Malaya a shining example of a progressive, stable, and contented democratic society in this part of the world.

As these series of lectures on our Constitution come to a close to-day, we are opening, on the 30th, a page in our Constitution by the inauguration of the Minggu Bahasa. Our Constitution provides that Malay shall be the Official and National Language of the country. It is therefore necessary for us to do all we can to enlarge and enrich it so that it becomes a real and effective National Language.

In every country in the world its people take pride in their own national language. Due to the accident of history, the national language of Malaya and hitherto taken second place to a language. Since language is a unifying force, the Government is exerting all its efforts to foster the daily use of our national language among all Malayan citizens particularly those of non-Malay origin so that it will become second nature to them. To attain this goal the Government is sponsoring Minggu Bahasa Kebangsaan from January 30 to February 6. During this National Language Week all citizens of non-Malay origin are expected to use the national language in their homes, offices, and in their intercourse with friends and business associates.

It is hoped that this concerted use of the National Language throughout the country during the National Language Week will inculcate in all citizens the habit of using it regularly. It is only in this way that they will feel they belong to this country, and that the National Language is a real living force that binds them together.

If, after the end of this Language Week, everyone continues to study and use the national language till they master it, it will not be long before it becomes the only vehicle of communication between all the citizens of Malaya. I ask you all to support the Minggu Bahasa and make this National effort to encourage the use of our National Language a success.

In closing, I also wish to thank Mr B. L. Chua, Acting Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Malaya, for coming all the way from Singapore to preside at tonight's lecture.