

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE
MALAYSIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION DINNER
AT NIRWANA ROOM, HOTEL HILTON, KUALA
LUMPUR ON 7TH APRIL, 1973

Datuk Dr Pillay, President of MMA., Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My wife and I are very much honoured by your kind invitation this evening and on her behalf and for myself, I sincerely wish to thank you and your Committee for this very pleasant and memorable occasion.

I would also like to associate with Mr President, in welcoming our distinguished guests from neighbouring countries who have come to participate in the Congress of the Confederation of Medical Associations in Asia and Oceania which my colleague, Tan Sri Lee Siok Yew, opened two days ago. I sincerely wish our guests particularly those who are in our country for the first time a very pleasant stay in Kuala Lumpur.

I thank the MMA for responding to my call to contribute to those who have sacrificed their lives for the defence of the country. Your generous contributions to the Tabung Amanah Perwira is very much appreciated.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our good host has said so many kind words about me and other fellow guests present here. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all of you, to reciprocate the kind sentiments and more especially to congratulate Datuk Dr Pillay for having been elected President of the Malaysian Medical Association for the current year. I was told that the recent election for the Presidency was very keenly contested between the two candidates, one representing public and another the private sector, and according to my informant, the election campaign which was conducted personally as well as through various agents of the two candidates all over the country, came a shade close to the U.S. Presidential election.

I am sure everyone here agrees with me that the MMA fully deserves the leader you have chosen and under the able leadership of the new President, the MMA can look forward to another year of sound progress and outstanding achievements.

To digress a little on the subject of our kind host, I think this evening is one occasion I can think of when he is faced with the dilemma whether or not to abandon his familiar dictum to all his many charges among government officials not to eat food with high calories. Whatever his professional advice to us might be, I am sure he and his Committee wanted us to do justice to this sumptuous dinner.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yesterday, I had the honour to officially open the new MMA House which is situated just outside the new General Hospital Complex. It is a fine building worthy of the medical profession and, for the benefit of those who were not present, I would like to take this opportunity once again to congratulate members of the MMA for their sense of solidarity and belonging as symbolised by the simple functional structure. Indeed, I must say that the MMA as a body has contributed immensely to our national life and many of its members both in private practice as well as in Government or academic institutions involved in one way or another as members of various government commissions and committees and we are most grateful for their services.

Coming on to the more familiar arena of politics, I am both grateful and proud of the pillar of strength in the person of Tun Dr Ismail, both in the Cabinet and in the Government Party. The long record of Dr Tan Chee Khoon in the Opposition front bench in Parliament should have a worthy place in MMA annals.

One very interesting feature which has taken place in recent months is the growing involvement of the more affluent members of your fraternity in industrial ventures. I think this is a most welcome trend especially in the context of our New Economic Policy and thereby assist the Government in providing employment opportunities to our youth in the less developed states. I know of one who is Chairman of a Cement Industry Complex and another who is building a top-class hotel in Kota Bharu. It goes without saying that the industrial rat-race is no longer the prerogatives of the legal profession.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In his address just now, our host brought up a very interesting subject concerning medico-legal problems affecting your profession viz-a-viz the public. I have been following on these issues myself as a matter of interest, especially when such matters are likely to be raised by members in Parliament. Fortunately tonight, we have with us Justice Tan Sri Suffian who is in some way a medicine-man himself and I would ask him to address himself to these problems. However, in my view, so long as everyone, be he in the medical profession or in other professions, carries out his duties and responsibilities sincerely and with dedication, he should have no qualm for any consequences arising out of his actions.

Datuk Dr Pillay compared a Lawyer and a Doctor. I want to tell you the story of a Doctor and an undertaker.

A young man went to see a Business Manager to interview for a job and brought a letter from his father. The Business Manager opened the letter and said to this young man.

“This letter from your father indicates he is an undertaker”.

The young man said “Yes, that’s right”.

“But you said he was a doctor”.

“Oh, No, you must have misunderstood me, I said that he followed the medical profession.”

Yesterday, I had the honour of opening the MMA building. After the opening someone told me of this story.

A wealthy businessmen who was very sick went to see a doctor who is a member of the Building Committee. I won’t mention name of the Committee Member.

The doctor said to this man “I think, though you are very sick, I can pull you through”.

The man then said “Doctor, if you do that when I get well I’ll donate \$100,000 to your MMA Building Fund”.

Months later the doctor met his former patient “How do you feel”, he asked. “Wonderful, Doctor, fine—never bother”. Doctor said “I meant to speak to you about money for the MMA Building”.

“What are you talking about Doctor?”

“You said if you got well you would contribute \$100,000 to the MMA Building Fund”.

“Did I say that, doctor, then that just shows how sick I was then”.

A doctor went round to see his patient and found him looking very sad. Doctor said “Cheer up, my man, I have the same complaint as you have”. The patient replied “Sure enough, but you don’t have the same doctor”.

Surgeon—story of a Surgeon and a patient, “Have you ever been operated on?” asked the doctor.

“Yes” replied the patient.

“What for”.

“\$500”.

“I mean what did you have?”.

“Only \$250”.

You still don’t understand me—what was your complaint”.

The man replied “The bill was still too high”.

A surgeon was walking with his wife one evening and passed a vivacious young girl who hailed him gaily. The doctor’s wife eyed him narrowly and said “Where did you meet that woman, my dear”.

“Just a young girl I met professionally”.

The wife retorted “Whose profession, yours or hers?”.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I don’t think I should detain you much longer. I can see that the younger ones among you (not forgetting the old ones, of course) are keen to take their partners to the dance floor. So, let me thank you once again for the opportunity of meeting all of you here and also for the very pleasant and enjoyable evening. Thank you.