

**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE
OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 10TH ANNIVER-
SARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE SOCIETY OF
PARASITOLOGY AND TROPICAL MEDICINE,
MALAYSIA AT THE NURSES AUDITORIUM,
GENERAL HOSPITAL, KUALA LUMPUR ON
11TH JANUARY, 1973**

Professor C. P. Ramachandran, President of the Society of Parasitology & Tropical Medicine, Malaysia; Tan Sri Lee Siok Yew, Minister of Health; Distinguished Delegates, Ladies & Gentlemen,

It gives me much pleasure to be here this evening at this Opening Ceremony of the Tenth Anniversary Celebrations of the Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine Malaysia, and, at the same time, to declare open the Seminar specially organised for the occasion. I would like to join with you, Mr President, in welcoming our guests from overseas who have been so kind to participate in the celebrations. I am sure, Ladies and Gentlemen, your hosts will spare no effort to make your stay here both pleasant and memorable.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Going back a little on history, I have been given to understand that at its inaugural meeting in 1964, this Society was named "The Society of Parasitologists." But the chief convenor and the first President of the Society decided to have the name changed to "The Society of Parasitology & Tropical Medicine" because it appeared that he was often embarrassed by well-meaning friends who addressed him as the chief parasite. This personality is none other than Professor A. A. Sandosham¹ who I understand is being honoured today by the Society for his past services. In fact, it was less than a month ago, at the gathering of the King Edward VII, Faculty of Medical Alumni that I had the pleasure of citing one of Sandy's spicy anecdotes and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate him for all that he had done in the cause of medicine. It is also a happy coincidence that in his quest for

¹ President of Confederation of Medical Association of Asia and Oceania.

knowledge as to the cause and origin of the Elephantiasis, a disease much dreaded by the fair sex in particular, Sandy found his way to my home district of Pekan where this disease was widely prevalent—at one time. I think the young girls there owe a debt of gratitude to Sandy for having saved them from this unpleasant disease.

I am indeed happy that since much earlier on as Deputy Prime Minister and now as Prime Minister, I have been closely associated with many medical organisations besides the Alumni, viz. the Academy of Medicine, the Orthopaedic Surgeons, the General Practitioners, CMAAO and now the Society of Parasitology. I have been following the excellent work and record of the Society and its ever-expanding interests in providing a common meeting ground for scientists not only from within the region but also beyond to meet at seminars and conferences like this to discuss and exchange scientific information.

I would like to offer my hearty congratulations to the Presidents and members (past and present) of the Society and I am sure the succeeding Presidents of the Society will continue the good work of the Society and uphold its name and prestige in the years to come.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

If I correctly recollect, it was not very long ago that the post-graduate study in Tropical Medicine could only be done overseas, either in London or Liverpool, in so far as those candidates from the former British territories. We have since made tremendous progress on our own in this country—particularly after we have established our Medical School ten years ago which, up-to-date, has graduated our home-grown doctors.

However, I feel somewhat disappointed with our young doctors if the article in the recent issue of MMA Newsletter truly reflects their ambition and aspirations. It is not quite right, to my mind, especially at the present stage of our national development, for our young professionals—be they doctors or engineers or architects—to be impatient to achieve a higher status. It is bad enough for the Government to lose the services of medical officers who resign either to specialise by their own effort or just to enter general practice. But, it is far worse, if in their desire to make a

success of their practice and achieve affluence quickly, they either forget or even flout medical ethics by prescribing imitation drugs or indulging in other unethical practices.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Parasites are universal; they are of all sizes and shapes; they are to be found in the vegetable and animal kingdoms including the human society. Being fully aware of what these medical, social and political parasites could do to hinder our national development and progress, I would like to refer to our government's New Economic Policy for the benefit of our guests specially.

The principles and beliefs guiding the development of Malaysian society are enshrined in the Rukunegara or the National Ideology. It is our hope to build a new Malaysian society with a common value system which transcends existing ethnic, cultural and socio-economic differences. The Rukunegara provides the cohesive force for national unity and solidarity and seek the emergence of a modern socio-economic environment in which there will be adequate opportunities for advancement to all Malaysians, irrespective of racial origin. In its essence, the New Economic Policy is designed to eradicate poverty amongst all Malaysians, irrespective of race; and to restructure the Malaysian society so that the present identification of race with economic functions and geographical locations is reduced and eventually eliminated.

The objectives of the New Economic Policy are set within the perspective framework of twenty years or approximately a generation, for their achievement. The Second Malaysia Plan marks the first five years of this Perspective period.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the effort to eradicate poverty, our objective is not only to increase income but also to ensure that the poor have access to such basic needs, and amenities such as adequate nutrition, health, housing, education and transportation. More important, the Government seeks to cultivate the spirit of self-reliance and a positive attitude among the people to actively participate in the whole range of socio-economic development programmes and improve their standard of living and that of the generations to come.

The first three years of the Second Malaysia Plan have witnessed considerable expansion and the progress has been remarkable despite the world-wide down-swing in economic activity during 1971-72. The health sectoral plan of the Second Malaysia Plan is an important part and parcel of the Government's total socio-economic programmes based on the New Economic Policy and has been drawn up to make further advances in the just distribution of the health services between the urban and rural areas.

I am greatly satisfied with the progress and achievements of the Ministry of Health which with 577 projects completed, 255 projects under construction, 95 projects out on tender, 285 projects in various stages of planning, and, these out of a total of 1,374 projects planned under the Second Malaysia Plan, leads all other Ministries and Departments. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Health² and his officials and staff for their fine record and performance. If I were to indulge in a little crystal gazing, I can see clearly that this area in front of us bounded by Jalan Pahang, Jalan Raja Muda and Jalan Pekeliling will become one of the finest Medical Centres in the Southeast Asian Region, for medical research and the teaching and training of medical and para-medical scientists, both at graduate and post-graduate levels. The new Hospital Besar, the new IMR and the Faculty of Medicine will together provide specialised training facilities for the all important categories of technical manpower that are necessary for adequate and efficient medical and health-care services as envisaged under the New Economic Policy.

The Government has been most generous in the allocation of funds for the development of health and other social services in the country. As an example of this, in the 1974 budget the largest slice (27.89%) goes to the Social Services and of this \$1,206.1 and \$857.1 million go to the Ministries of Education and Health respectively.

I hope the Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine will continue to grow from strength to strength by providing a forum for medical research workers to get together to discuss and exchange information and scientific knowledge.

Once again, I would like to congratulate the Organising committee for preparing such an excellent programme to celebrate the

² Y.B. Tan Sri Lee Siok Yew.

Tenth Anniversary of the Society in a manner befitting its stature and standing. I have no doubt that both the celebrations and this Seminar will meet with success.

It now gives me a great pleasure to declare open the Tenth Anniversary Celebrations of the Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine, Malaysia. Thank you.