

Ladies and Gentlemen, you are all gathered here under the auspices of the International Association of Historians of Asia, to learn more about one another's history and I hope you will be meeting again and again under the same auspices in various parts of Asia.

Thank you.

"THE RIGHT APTITUDE"

HOW TO DECIDE CAREERS FOR YOUTH

"The correct career for any young Malaysian should and must be decided not by the availability of courses but by personal aptitudes to accept and follow an academic discipline in applying his own particular aptitude and ability." This advice was offered by Tun Razak when he spoke at the Symposium of Technical Association of Malaysia at Alor Star on January 5th. 1968. He went on to say that half the battle of life in our daily work is to do the job for which we have the right aptitude.

If you look up the Encyclopedia and read the current definition of "*Technocracy*": for example, in the Encyclopedia Britannica, it is written that "Technocracy" is a *movement* that originated in 1932 with many principles.

It was the fourth principle which worried me, and I will quote it for you word for word—

"The Economics of the social order of this world are too complicated to be understood and controlled by politicians' Control should be placed in the hands of the Engineers and Scientists of the world!"

The presentation of interesting and important papers relating to the many main aspects of the development of our country, has gone further by tying the academic and paper-side of your profession. *to the practical.* by including as part of your programme, a visit to a development project in progress, on the ground, the Muda River Irrigation Scheme.

This proves to me that you as an Association of technical people are not only proficient on paper, but also, have the essential ability to get down to earth; because as I see the future of the

development of our country. Malaysia, this is what we need: "The closing of the gap between theory and practice."

The 14 papers which are to be presented to this Symposium, are written in a way, both interesting and stimulating, and present, not only to those of you attending this Symposium, but also to the public, the manifold mosaic of the factors and problems affecting the development of Malaysia; from human resources to natural resources, from roads to railways, from mining to mass media, from new towns to rural housing, from man and his land to the mechanisation of agriculture, from electricity to telecoms, from paddy to paper and pulp, and although scientists say that you *cannot mix oil and water*. I see that you have achieved this in your Symposium by *mixing petroleum, admittedly* produced by Shell!—*with wafer* produced by the D.I.D.!

Eight years ago, when we established the Ministry of National Development, and I had the responsibility of becoming the Minister of Development. I realised that our country would not achieve progress in the true sense of the word, unless and until we achieve a high standard of both co-operation and co-ordination between the various aspects of the machinery of Government *to work together as a team* towards development.

This is why I set up, in every State and in every District, Development teams with Development Operations Rooms in order to ensure that the administration of the development machinery of our country would work together as a closely knit machine to get on with the job.

I am very happy therefore, to see that the real object of your Association is, in fact, to apply this principle of both co-operation and co-ordination to the technological disciplines, professional, sub-professional and technical in their skills, in all fields of development, which are so vital to the future progress of Malaysia.

We have only a limited amount of funds to put into our Development Programme, and to make the maximum use of the funds available, we have not only to think as a nation, about our financial resources, but we have also to think as to how we are to make the fullest use of our human resources, to learn and to apply the best skills available to push ahead Malaysia along the path of Progress.

How are we going to ensure that the best available brains of our young men and women are to be applied to the right profession and skill—essential for our further progress?

What are the factors which influence them in deciding to take up the correct career?

The *correct* career for any young Malaysian should, and must be, decided, not by the availability of courses, either at our own Universities here or overseas, but must be decided by personal aptitudes to accept and follow an academic discipline which is in keeping with an enjoyable way of life in applying *his own particular* aptitude and ability.

I ask the question—

How many Engineers are there;

How many Doctors are there;

How many Lawyers are there;

who went to a place of learning to study a given subject, *not* because it was what they really wanted to do. but because it was the *only course available* at that time!

We must do something about getting the correct *flow* of the right students into the *right* profession; in other words, our young Malaysians, with proper potentials must be correctly channelled into the *right* profession.

How can we ensure this?

I think that three sets of people must do something:

- (i) *Parents* must be educated to advise their children to take up the correct profession;
- (ii) *Technical Associations* like yours must do more to present the picture of the profession to which you belong, so that our youth can fully understand, and be in a position, before they leave school, to decide on the correct profession;
- (iii) *Government*, with the help of parents and Technical Associations, can intensify our present programme of films, radio and television to be listened to, watched, and absorbed, by all students throughout our nation so that our up-and-coming youth can, for themselves, choose the best professions for which, not only are they trained, but they have an in-built aptitude.

After all. half the battle of life in our daily work is to do the job for which we have the right aptitude, and. therefore, enjoy doing it that is when work becomes a pleasure!

Therefore. I suggest that your Association, together with all the other technical and professional Associations in Malaysia, come together *to produce a joint venture* with Government, particularly, with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, to project on the screen, on the air. and on paper, what it means to be a professional Engineer, a Technologist, a Technician, an Architect, a Surveyor and all other professional jobs, so vital to the progress of our country, so that our young students who still have no idea of which profession to adopt, can. with the help of your association, and the resources of audio-visual communication available to Government, be able to decide for themselves what in fact is the best technical qualification to which they can apply their own *latent* ability.

In the field of education, particularly, technical and professional education, the opportunities which exist for further education *do not stop* when one has reached school-leaving age.

It seems to have become a fixed Malaysian attitude that if one's education is arrested at an early age, one has no further *hope* of gaining a professional qualification.

This is not so!

I would like to see *a new attitude* in this year 1968. Among those of our youth, who, by some misfortune, or mis-chance, have had to leave school without fully completing their education, let me give them hope and a slogan!

"You can still *learn* while you earn."

In other words, even though one has left school, and one has still got to earn one's living in some particular job; nevertheless, opportunities exist for further study, at night schools, at Technical Colleges, and other Institutions; it is still possible for *any one* working anywhere in any job. still to acquire *technical* or *professional* qualification, no matter what may be their age!

May 1 remind the youth of our country that even our Prime Minister passed his Law exams long after he became a mature man!

This is my second, and last message to your Technical Association; to help, and to encourage, those members of your Association who may be, what you call, sub-professional or technicians; they still can, by their *own* efforts, industry, and hard-work, if *they apply themselves* and their brains correctly, achieve a professional qualification; a qualification which *may* have been denied them early in their youth by an accident of family circumstances. but nevertheless, as long as they are alive, is still within reach of human endeavour—provided they work to improve themselves!

WHAT DIPLOMAS MEAN TO BUMIPUTRA

Timely advice on what they should do after they have obtained their diplomas and certificates was given to students by Tun Razak at the MARA Institute of Technology graduation ceremony at Petaling Jaya on 1st December, 1967. He reminded them of the aims of the National Education Programme.

It appears to me that graduation ceremonies seem to occur with more frequency every year. It shows that MARA is in fact fulfilling the aim it was given when launched two years ago!

I am glad to say that as the days go by we are beginning to achieve more and more bumiputra participation in the private sector of our economy, but, nevertheless, in your case, bumiputra participation *does not stop dead on the day* of the presentation of Diplomas and Certificates; bumiputra participation, in fact, means active, efficient and purposeful practice by those of you who have been lucky enough to attend this College, and have acquired knowledge and skills with which you are now equipped, so that you can play a positive part in the commercial and industrial life of our country.

As more and more of you graduate from this College and take your rightful place in the economic development of our country, the happier I and all true Malaysians become. This is proof of the correctness of the policies of the Alliance Government.

We are getting nearer and nearer our ultimate aim of a *balanced* Malaysia, a balanced economy, and we are well on our way to