

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TO
STUDENTS FROM THE IMPERIAL DEFENCE
COLLEGE AT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE,
KUALA LUMPUR ON 3RD AUGUST, 1961

First of all, gentlemen, I should like, on behalf of myself and my Government to welcome you to Malaya. I do hope that you enjoy every moment of your visit.

I am glad to see that your programme, during your stay in Malaya, includes visits to rural areas of our country, and I am also glad to notice that it is so varied as to range from finance to football; the only thing which appears to be missing on your programme is perhaps a game of golf, but perhaps it is not too late to remedy this defect.

My first reaction, when asked to give a talk to you today was that perhaps my few words to you are quite unnecessary, considering the fact that in recent years two British Officers, extremely well versed in Malayan matters General Bourne and Sir Robert Scott, who had served Malaya with considerable distinction and were rewarded by being elevated to the distinguished position, described in newspaper language, as "the Professors who polish up the brains under the brass hats of Belgravia".

As you may already know, in the implementation of our National Development Plan I myself spend considerable time in touring the rural areas, and I should like very much if you, gentlemen, had the time to stay longer here in Malaya, and come out and around with me on my tours, so that you could get the "feel", at first hand, of what we have set out to achieve.

However, as this is not possible, I have decided on the next best course, and that is, that after talking to you for a short time, I shall take you on tour with one or two short films showing our national development, and then, I hope, after their screening, you will feel at liberty to ask me any question about anything and I may say, gentlemen, you may be as frank and pertinent as you wish.

Let me first say a few words about the political and social background of Malaya.

As you already know, we are a multi-racial society and many might think that in this may lie our weakness. In fact my Government, the Alliance Government, are convinced that it is in this blend of races that the real strength of our nation can be found.

Even the best whisky or the best cigarettes on the market depend for their quality on the strength of their blend and also the strongest structures in the world are made not of one material but of a blend of cement and steel to form reinforced concrete.

However, in the structure of our nation which comprises the three main races, Malay, Chinese and Indian, we do occasionally find prejudices deep-rooted in the traditions of the old generation which may still have a lingering loyalty to the country of their original domicile.

However, this state of affairs is a fairly natural one, because, gentlemen, you yourselves know that even the Scotsman in England appears to become more nationalistic and sings more loudly to the glory of Scotland the farther he is away from his native cave. But, nevertheless, the Scotsman, when he wants to, can speak your National Language—English—and can be as loyal to Britain as anyone else provided, of course, that the British Government never destroys by legislation, their culture of the "kilt".

And so it is with our National Education Policy, and our hopes for the future of Malaya. We have no wish to destroy the culture of either the Chinese or the Indians, but we do wish to build up, and to maintain and sustain a national spirit and a national loyalty.

This can best be done by the development of our National Language; and our real hope lies in the future generations of Malaysians who were born and bred in this country and who in fact are the backbone of a truly hundred per cent Malaysian Nation which will be invulnerable to Communism and will stand as a pillar of strength for freedom and democracy.

Our Constitution and our System of Government is one which is dedicated to the principles of democracy and I think you, gentlemen, will realise that in order to apply these principles the method and system which we apply in Malaya must be one which is flexible, modified from time to time, to suit the particular characteristics of Malaya; we cannot follow blindly something which has been proven successful in a country of the west, because

there are, as you know, in this part of the world, different problems, and different circumstances, to which we must be ever ready to adjust ourselves, if we are in fact to maintain and sustain a democratic way of life.

Let me now turn to development. Our National Rural Development Policy was designed, giving full recognition to the universal principle that no nation anywhere in the world can hope to develop, or progress, to any extent, except by the full-hearted co-operation and energetic efforts of each and every one of its citizens; and the degree of progress achieved by a nation, is in truth, really a reflection and direct result of the progress made by each individual citizen in his daily task of raising and improving his own standard of living.

However, in applying the above principle to our National Rural Development Programme, my Government, before calling on the people of the rural areas to play their part, shouldered its own responsibilities first; responsibilities such as planning at District, State and National level, the implementation of projects which are Government tasks in their entirety, and the re-organisation, streamlining and gearing of the Government machine towards greater efficiency for the benefit of the rural people.

Our Rural Development Programme has, therefore, been planned in several phases.

The first phase is devoted to a concentration of effort on Government action in the laying of the foundation framework for development projects in the rural areas.

This framework consists of such Government projects as road-making, improving health, educational, veterinary, agriculture and other services; a faster system of land alienation; the development of rural and cottage industries; an increase in the number of schemes established by our Federal Land Development Authority; and other similar Government activities.

Pressure of action on phase one continues at a high tempo, and will continue thus, throughout the period of the Five-Year Plan.

My Government has taken all possible measures to maintain and sustain the greatest effort on the part of its officers to fulfil and implement the plans and projects included in the "Red Book" Rural Development Plan; and in order that we may keep our

finger on the pulse of progress, a National Development Operations Room has been designed, and is being set up, in which the Development Plans of each department, District and State, will be kept charted on maps, and where progress will be plotted from month to month.

By spotlighting the progress of all aspects of our National Rural Development Plan, it will be possible, at the same time, to detect, diagnose and remedy any delays in development, when and where they occur.

While action on phase one continues, phase two will, in the near future, be launched. In outline, this phase consists of a "call to action" by the people to play their part and to give of their best in this great task of nation-building; this phase is designed to make sure that the rural people have a clear understanding as to how they themselves can obtain a better way of life by their own efforts in building on the firm foundation framework laid by the Government in phase one.

The main emphasis in phase two will be laid on taking all steps possible to encourage the rural people to develop their land to the fullest extent and stress will be laid on the realisation that their own particular plot of land is in fact a small part of Malaya, the progress of which is on trust to them and entirely in their own hands; and that, therefore, their duty to the nation as a whole, is to fulfil this trust to the best of their ability.

Another aspect of phase two will be the revival and rejuvenation of our national tradition co-operative village effort which has held its place in our rural communities for many, many years; it is the practice of what is now known in new words, in other countries, as Community Development; a time-honoured practice which has been the mainstay of our rural life in Malaya for many years.

Every encouragement will be given to the implementation of minor projects by the people themselves in the spirit of what we call "Gotong Royong," provided, of course, that such projects do not detract from the time, energy and effort which should be rightly devoted to the development of their own land.

Also, the rural people will be called upon to contribute to development by learning better agriculture methods, better health methods and other knowledge necessary for them to apply, and practise, in order to raise their standard of living.

With regard to this, it has been the policy of my Government to expand and enlarge the Extension services in the various departments and to achieve this, trained Government officers will tour the rural areas lecturing and demonstrating to the people. It is the intention of my Government to create a more effective form of Extension services by giving opportunities to the rural people to come forward and acquire such training themselves, so that they may, on return to their villages, put their knowledge to the greatest use.

Further included, as part of our phase two, will be the National Adult Education Drive—to eliminate illiteracy, to increase fluency in the National Language, and to instil in the hearts and minds of our people, a sense of consciousness of their duties and responsibilities as citizens of an independent country. The literature used for teaching in Adult Education Classes will be so compiled as to incorporate useful and valuable knowledge essential to the maintenance of such essentials as better health, better crops and better living.

And that, gentlemen, very briefly, is an outline of our Development Policy. I could in fact talk to you for many hours, because it is a subject so very close to my own heart; but perhaps you are already tired of the sound of my voice, and I shall now ask the film operator to switch on his projector and take us into the rural areas.