

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AT
THE MALAYSIAN YOUTH SEMINAR HELD AT
THE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE, KUALA LUMPUR
ON 9TH AUGUST, 1961

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am very pleased indeed to be here today to meet youth Leaders from our own region of South-East Asia—Brunei, North Borneo, Sarawak, Singapore and the Federation of Malaya—or as it is now known, Malaysia.

On behalf of the Government of the Federation, I would like to extend a special welcome to our friends—the Youth leaders from our neighbours, to this country. We welcome them as brothers—blood brothers—of the same racial origin as our people here.

We have close ties in all fields of activities, be they political, social and economic. Indeed, we are one people and one country.

I hope that during your stay here, you will be able to meet our people and see them in their own homes and see also the progress that has been made in the various fields since Merdeka.

Since Merdeka, we have been endeavouring to give a new life to our people. We are determined to give them a new and better standard of living so that, as citizens of an independent nation, they can enjoy the real dignity and privilege of man. We hope our friends will enjoy their stay with us.

It is the practice, throughout the world, that the privilege of opening beauty competitions, and youth seminars, are given to old man.

You here today, the representatives of the youth of Brunei, Borneo, Sarawak, Singapore and the Federation of Malaya, may also think that I have been given this privilege of opening your Seminar because I, too, am an old man.

Let me first correct any misguided thinking which may exist in the minds of my youthful audience here today.

I may look old. but I feel, at heart, as young as any one of you who are listening to me now.

Youth is a time when one's brain, one's thoughts, and, in fact, all one's abilities are much more lively than at any other time in one's life. And just in case you do not think I am qualified to open this Seminar. I will tell you a story of my own youth.

When I returned to my home late one night, I went to bed with a guilty conscience. It was because of the lateness of my return.

The next morning, my father said to me: "When you returned last night. I heard the clock strike one o'clock."

I, full of the spirit of youth, replied: "No, father, I returned at 11 o'clock: but, because I did not want the striking of the clock to awaken you, I stopped it after it had only struck once, and not eleven times."

Ladies and gentlemen, you may or may not believe that story. But the point I am trying to make to you is that I myself was young and was, therefore, full of ideas. But most of my mental energy was concentrated for the benefit of myself.

In the days of my youth, there were no seminars to guide my youthful thoughts toward the service of my country, or the service of anything other than my own self.

And I do think that today the youth of our time are lucky to have this seminar in Kuala Lumpur—a seminar of youth, a seminar designed to discuss ways and means to harness the energies of our young people so that they may be guided towards greater things, not only in the service of self, but in the service of their country towards greater prosperity and towards a better world.

Now, the Federation Government is continually being asked whether or not we have prepared the path of progress for the youth of our nation.

To this question, I think the answer is that our task is not to prepare the path of progress for the youth, but rather to prepare the youth to be capable of following the path of progress. When I say progress, I of course mean democratic progress.

But, you may ask. what is democracy? Let me illustrate democracy with a simple story which was told to me recently.

Some days ago, His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agung graciously opened our Football Competition in the Merdeka Stadium, and I was told that when His Majesty arrived, somewhere in the crowd there was a visitor from a non-democratic country. This visitor asked his host: "Where is His Majesty's bodyguard? In my country, the head of State cannot go to a function such as this without a bodyguard of at least twenty or thirty armed men."

His host, a true Malayan, replied: "But don't you know? His Majesty is surrounded here and now by a bodyguard not of twenty or thirty, but by a bodyguard of thousands and thousands of Malayan citizens who are spectators here tonight."

Now, that story, whether you believe it or not, does in fact illustrate our democratic way of life in Malaya and also brings me to the main point that I would like to stress in opening your Seminar today. And that is that the first and foremost aim of all youth organisations in our various countries should be to ensure and do everything possible in our power to stimulate, sustain and to maintain a sincere spirit of loyalty to our country.

When I say loyalty, I do not mean a type of lip-service loyalty. I mean an "active" loyalty so that the youth of our various nations are loyal not only in words, but also in every activity of their own lives.

It has been said again and again throughout the world that the youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. Remember, therefore, that the discussions and deliberations of your Seminar can have a tremendous influence for good on the thoughts and activities of our youth today, so that they will be prepared for their task of leadership in the future.

I am very pleased to see that the main emphasis of your Seminar is to consider the part to be played by youth in our various countries: in rural development, and, if I may, I should like to give you a word of advice.

As you are members of voluntary organisations, it is not for Government to decide, lay down, or to suggest, the part that you should play in helping to implement your Government's development plan. But it is, I think, much better if you make a full and detailed study of your Government's policy with regard to Rural

.Development and then, through your own initiative, and your own organisation, work out your own plans as to how you think you can best help in rural development.

Having made your plans, appropriate to the various areas in which you live, then you should start to implement them, on your own initiative, and stick determinedly to task in hand until such time as you have achieved complete success.

You all know that today we live in a world in which there is much planning, much talking and much emotional thinking. But the tangible results in this world are only achieved by those who have the energy and the determination to convert "emotion" into "motion". If you can remember this at all times throughout your deliberations, I am sure that in the days to come we will be able to witness, on the ground, and in the various countries, the fruitful and tangible results from this Seminar.

Finally, I wish you all the very best of luck in your discussions. I sincerely hope once again that those of you who are guests in our country will enjoy every moment of your stay here in Malaya and when you have finished your discussions, please do not forget me and remember that I will be delighted to have a copy of your deliberations and your conclusions.

Now, Mr Chairman, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I take great pleasure in declaring this Seminar open.