

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT OVER RADIO
MALAYA ON 10TH AUGUST, 1961

Today I wish to talk to you about development—national development in particular rural development. As you know, since the first National Elections in 1955 the Alliance Government has set its heart and mind on various programmes for the progress and happiness of our country and our people. The first task was of course the achievement of Merdeka. This took place under the most auspicious circumstances on the 31st August, 1957. After that, without losing any time, the Government decided to devote all its resources and energy towards ending the Emergency. By the grace of Allah this was achieved on the 31st July, 1960.

Immediately after the Emergency was officially brought to an end, the Government turned its resources and energy, and the whole Government machinery towards development of the country.

As a result the Government established the new Ministry of Rural Development and announced its policy, to launch a National Rural Development Programme, which was given top priority among all Government's activities. The Alliance Government was determined to give the rural people a fair deal, to remove the economic imbalances between the rural and urban people and to give the rural people full opportunities for development and progress. During the twelve years of Emergency, the rural people suffered much and had served the country well. Also, during that period little could be done towards providing amenities in the rural areas. Therefore, with the ending of the Emergency it was only right and proper that the Government should turn their attention to the rural people who have served them so well.

What is more, with the achievement of Merdeka it is necessary to show to the ordinary men and women in the country what Merdeka means and what it should be, i.e., better standard of living and a better way of life. With the establishment of political democracy in this country it is necessary there should also be economic democracy. Economic democracy means the good things of life must be made available to more and more people and gross inequality and imbalances between the rural and urban

people should be removed. The less unfortunate people of the rural areas must be given certain essential economic needs which will give them the opportunity to develop their creative faculties and give them a better and higher standard of living.

The Alliance Government is determined to carry out this policy and to make this national programme a success. The first task that faces the Government was that the machinery of Government should be geared to undertake this National Programme. There should be co-ordination of Government Departments responsible for development at all levels and that Government should function as an efficient machine manned by a purposeful, single-minded team driven towards one goal and one ideal that of rural development. A directive was immediately issued known as Directive No. 1 setting out the various committees to be established at National, State and District levels and setting out also the aim, the scope and the functions of these committees. These committees were required to co-ordinate all the activities of all departments so that the whole Government machine worked towards one aim, one policy and one heart.

Before the launching of this National Rural Development Programme, although projects were put up by Government for the benefit of rural people, the rural people did not in fact get the best of what could have been given to them by Government. This is because there was no real co-ordination of Government's activities at all levels for the purpose of achieving the maximum development of rural areas. There was no Master Plan, there was not a sufficient combined directive control at the top to ensure that Government and the people on the ground of the rural areas functioned as an efficient machine. There was also insufficient day to day co-ordination and co-operation to Government departments and Government officers on the ground due to lack of understanding of each others tasks. It was therefore the foremost task of the Ministry of Rural Development to remedy these defects in the structure of Government which we inherited from pre-Merdeka days.

It was therefore decided to launch the "Red Book" which set out clearly the methods of achieving co-ordination in Government machinery at all levels and also the way in which the proper

planning should be effected at all levels so that there will be a Master Plan of all Government development projects to which departmental plans and plans at State and District levels must fit in.

Six months after the issue of this "Red Book" all planning was completed and I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all Government officers elected Councillors and in particular District officers for the way in which they responded to the call of Government in this important national task.

With the completion of the "Red Book" planning, Government set out formally the Second Five-Year Development Plan which would embody the projects in the "Red Book" as well as other projects of national importance which should be implemented during the next five years. This Second Five-Year Plan was duly completed and approved by Parliament in April this year. With the approval of the Second Five-Year Development Plan the whole work of planning was completed and the Government machinery was then geared to implementing the projects embodied in this Plan.

As a result of the launching of the "Red Book" and also as a result of my extensive tours throughout the country, to every State and District, I can now say, admittedly with modesty, that many of the defects in the Government machinery have been remedied and the whole machinery has been geared to undertake this national task with efficiency and vigour. In other words the aim of phase one for Rural Development Programme—a phase which will continue throughout the whole period of the Five-Year Plan—was to get all Government departments to work together as a team at Federal, State and District level and to produce a definite plan for each State and District—plans which we have co-ordinated into the National Five-Year Plan. It was also the aim of phase one to streamline the system of land alienation in order to make more use of available land staff, surveyors, etc., to give priority to those applicants who really needed land.

The Alliance Government felt that in an elected and democratic Government it is only right and proper that in the first phase of our Rural Development Plan the Government should first and foremost shoulder this whole responsibility of providing the rural people with certain essential amenities. By doing this the Government is in fact laying the foundation framework of development.

It has also been the aim of the Alliance Government to make the
* people of our country feel no matter how far and distant they
may be from the national capital, the Government which they
have elected out of their own free will, is a Government which
will never forget them, or forget their needs, their hopes and their
aspirations. In fact the Red Book was conceived and designed to
ensure that no matter how far away any kampong may be,
nevertheless, the hopes and needs of its people are forever near
to the heart of Government.

Having launched this phase one of our Rural Development
Programme for just over a year, I am fairly satisfied that the
progress already made and I have seen for myself on my many
tours around the country the many, many completed projects such
as roads, bridges, water supplies, schools, clinics and other such
developments all designed for the benefit of the people living in
the rural areas.

I am also satisfied that there has been a considerable improve-
ment in the co-ordination and tempo of efficiency of the
Government machine; There is also evidence of a new spirit of
service, a greater sense of urgency and deep-rooted devotion to
duty on the part of all officers responsible for the implementation
of our Development Plan.

Having therefore launched the framework of phase one the
time is now appropriate for us to launch phase two, and call
the people of the rural areas to action, to give of their utmost in
improving the standard of living and in creating a better Malaya.

We must mobilise the spirit and the energy of the rural people
to their own betterment and for the progress of the nation.

Before the advent of colonialism in this country, there was real
community life in the villages. Each community was able to meet
its own need from its own resources and strength. That community
life had become disintegrated under the Colonial rule. We must,
therefore, revive this old spirit of independence of adventures and
the desire to provide one's own means through one's own strength
and resources.

Our Rural Development Programme will mean a change in the
way and in the standard of life of our people. But change there
must also be continuity. The old way of life, the spirit and the

energy must be revived and revitalised. Malaya is a young country and it must progress and continue to progress; but if in the process of change it also balances with continuity, then the country grown on solid foundation.

This Second Phase, therefore, means the revival of the old spirit " S E M A N G A T " of our people to meet the challenge of progress.

As I said earlier, the degree of progress achieved by a nation is really the reflection and the sum total of the progress made by its individual citizen in its daily tasks of raising and improving his own standard of living. Therefore, if Malaya is to grow into a prosperous and happy nation, each one of its citizens must play his part. We must have the courage and the strength to do our duty for our country and to ourselves. That strength should be drawn from the good qualities of our people and not from any external sources.



Tun Abdul Razak sedang berjalan di sepanjang titi gantung yang baru bernilai \$16,000 di Kampung Sengkala ketika lawatan beliau di Raub, Pahang pada 17hb Ogos, 1961. (Gambar Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia).