

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
FOR THE ESSAY CONTEST ON RURAL
DEVELOPMENT ORGANISED BY THE *TAMIL*
NESAN ON 14TH JANUARY, 1961

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I must say at once that I am very pleased indeed to have been asked to come here today to present prizes on this occasion.

Now I know that this is the kind of opening remark which audiences hear very frequently, but I can assure you that when I learned what had been going on among hundreds of Tamil-speaking people to express their personal interest in rural development, I was very proud and pleased indeed.

From the very first moment when our Prime Minister¹ spoke of the Government's top-priority policy for developing the rural areas, it was obvious to us in the Government, and more especially to me as the Executive Minister responsible, that the whole success of this great national idea would depend basically on the personal interest taken by the people.

This essay competition organised by the *Tamil Nesan* is concrete proof that the necessary fundamental interest is an actual fact, that the ideal we seek is rapidly becoming a living force—and that is exactly how it should be, particularly in this year.

I have already made it plain that the preliminary period of finding out what is needed, drawing up the plans and priorities, establishing co-ordination among Federal and State authorities and creating a machine to carry out the work—in short the vital first phase of rural development—that this phase² is over.

We are now entering the important second phase³ when all these ideas and plans come to life to begin a national effort which will continue until we have achieved our aim—to improve the standard

¹ Y.T.M. Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra.

² Rancangan Lima Tahun Yang Pertama.

³ Rancangan Lima Tahun Yang Kedua.

of living and opportunity, the security and prospects of the rural areas in every possible way, and to do this (something revolutionary in Malayan history) within five years.

In this second phase, and particularly this year, the people must understand the part they plan and they must give their full devotion to the task. The whole success of the rural development plan depends upon integrating the finance, resources and material the Government can provide with the physical help the people can give. A bullock-cart will get nowhere without understanding and co-operation between the driver and the bullocks.

And although I use that example, it is not our intention to proceed at a bullock-cart pace; we want to go very much faster than that, because there is so much to do in every sphere of rural life that every day is valuable. I would like the understanding of the people to be such that no day should go by without their feeling that they have advanced their part of the work one step further.

You see now why I am extremely pleased to realise the great amount of interest aroused by this competition, and I am particularly touched by the thought of the organisers in putting all the ideas of the essay writers into a special "Little Red Book". I can assure you that we will consider them and use every idea we can employ in a practical way.

Now before I give away the prizes, I wish to congratulate *Tamil Nesan* and all the entrants for their initiative and enthusiasm, and I hope that they will go on spreading their ideas and interest in rural development like the widening ripples on a pond. The efforts you have made are splendid, and I thank you for them most heartily.