

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER,  
AT THE SEMINAR OF SENIOR OFFICERS, MALAYSIA  
IN PETALING JAYA ON 3RD JULY 1967

**Gentlemen,**

I am very happy to be here with you to-day, both officers from the Federal Government and also, senior officers from Sabah and Sarawak.

Perhaps, I might explain first of all, the idea behind the Seminar which, in fact, was my own idea based on what I said over Radio Malaysia one day on my departure from a visit to Eastern Malaysia.

With your permission, I would like to re-quote my own words:-

"With the setting up of Malaysia and the working out of the practical mechanics of the relationships between the Central Government and the Government of Sabah and Sarawak, there have been what I might call administrative teething troubles. From time to time, there have been delays in communication and this has resulted in occasional frustration, both in State headquarters and at Federal headquarters in Kuala Lumpur.

There has, however, been a steady improvement in the administrative machinery, but, so that there will be even greater improvement, greater co-ordination and greater co-operation, I propose sometime later this year to hold, either in Jesselton or Kuching, or perhaps in Kuala Lumpur, a Malaysian Government Seminar lasting several days. At this Seminar, each one of us who has the responsibility of administering the Government will be able to meet and discuss with our counterparts any problems we may have connected with our work and to discuss, suggest and devise ways and means whereby we can speed up and streamline the whole machinery of Government. We shall place particular emphasis on the development programme machinery, so that the people of Sabah and Sarawak - no matter where they live, in urban areas or in remote rural areas - will get the best service and the quickest service that we, as true Malaysians, can give to our fellow Malaysians".

So, therefore, Gentlemen, you know why you are here for this Seminar, and I hope that in your talks and discussions, there will be an honest effort on your part, both Federal and State officers, to try and close the gap of the machinery of government both State and Federal, to ensure that all our Malaysian citizens in Eastern Malaysia, get from us the best service **both in development and in administration** that we can give them.

It is perhaps, unfortunate that the timing of this Seminar co-incides with political developments in Sabah, where members of U.P. - K.O. are making an unnecessary fuss about the conditions as laid down in the Inter-Governmental Committee Report, when Sabah first joined Malaysia.

I do not want to talk at length on the political situation. I do not think, in any

case, that it will affect you as civil servants because, although politicians may come and go, like myself, the back-bone of administration is vested in the hands of you civil servants who are the permanent back-bone of our country.

This Seminar is a stepping stone to try and streamline the machinery of governments between the Central Government and State Governments, particularly, of those in Eastern Malaysia, so that we can go about our job with new vigour and with new understanding and tackle our problems, vis-a-vis, state and Central Government as expeditiously as possible with the maximum amount of speed and minimum amount of paper work!

The first condition to achieve efficiency between the Central and State Government, is a condition of understanding, and I feel that the more contact there is between State officers and Federal officers in every Department throughout the whole structure of Government, then we will be nearer to the goal which we all wish to achieve; a smooth and efficient administration giving the people of Sabah and Sarawak, the best that we can give them, not only in the field of development, but *also* in the field of day-to-day administration.

I do not wish this Seminar to be an academic exercise. It is more a "getting together" with frank, free and *un-inhibited* discussion, with the object to achieve a greater and deeper understanding, not only of the development aims of Malaysia, but *also*, to answer the question; How we can, by closer State co-operation and Federal Co-operation set Malaysia a faster pace on the path of progress?

Looking at your programme, I see that you have a talk on development by the Head of the Economic Planning Unit on our Development Plans!

All of you concerned with development, should by now know our development plan by heart; and it should be a working part of your mental system, and, therefore, no further explanation is necessary, and this item should be more of a discussion to clear up any doubts that you may have on the implementation of our Development Plan.

Similarly, I see that you have a talk on Development Administration, and I hope this will arouse your minds as to how you can, in your day-to-day work put more push and punch into the administration of our country!

Then, I see that my Cabinet colleague, the Minister of Labour', is to talk to you on "Labour Policy", with emphasis on East-West Malaysia, and this is interesting because, I remember, very well during the initial Malaysia talks, the representatives of Sabah and Sarawak wanted Immigration to remain as a State subject, because there was fear on Sabah and Sarawak joining Malaysia, that there would be a tremendous influx of immigrants from Singapore and from Western Malaysia.

This fear was unfounded, but our problem now is how can we entice people to migrate to Sabah and Sarawak, preferably skilled labour, in order to go ahead with the task of development.

Therefore, I hope you will pay particular attention to my Cabinet colleague when he talks, and give the value of your experience and knowledge, towards solving the shortage of skilled labour which exists in Eastern Malaysia, and which is, in fact, not only putting up prices, but also delaying development.

Net on your programme, I see that you are to be given a talk on '**decision-making**'.

I **make decisions every-day**; the making of decisions is the most simple part of the process; what I am concerned with, as Minister of Development, is the **implementation of these decisions**.

Our development plans have been thought out, our decisions, on the direction on which Malaysia is going to progress, have been made.

My **chief concern**, at the moment, is to so **galvanise each and every** officer concerned with these decisions to implement them in the **shortest** possible space of time!

Looking further down your programme, I see also that you are going to be given a talk on the **role of the Civil Service** in a developing country. This is a subject very near my heart.

I talked at length on this subject at our recent Afro-Asian Seminar on Development held in this very same building, and rather than repeat to you what I said, I hope that you will do me the courtesy of reading the message which I tried to convey in that speech.

Also, in your programme, I see that my learned friend from Attorney-General's Department, Tuan Syed Othman bin Ali, is going to talk to you on "Federalism".

As a preface to his talk, may I repeat to you my own views on the working of a Federal Government, which I explained the other day to both the elected and established Government of Johore. Again, I re-quote my own words:-

"I never, if I can help it, travel in a plane with only **one** engine; I don't feel secure. The **more** engines the aeroplane has, the safer and more secure I feel, because the **more** the engines, the more the **thrust**, the **drive** and the power!

This principle should also apply to a country like ours which is a **Federation**, and if you compare it to an aeroplane, we have not just **one** engine to propel the policies of the government, policies of development and **policies for progress**; we have 14 engines, if you regard Federal Government as one engine and every State Government as a separate **boosting charge** with 14 engines helping us on the way to progress.

Even though an aeroplane may have several engines, that in itself does not guarantee that it can rise to great heights.

The important thing to achieve speed and power is that each and every engine must be perfectly tuned in unison, because if one engine is out of step with another, the chances are that the aeroplane may crash.

So it is, with this Federal form of government which we have adopted and practice in Malaysia.

As Malaysia flies on its way to progress and prosperity, we have got to make sure that all our engines, in other words, all our State governments are perfectly in tune with each other and the central engine, the Federal Government, and the purpose at this present time of my visits to each State is to first and foremost adjust the timing and tuning so that with speed and efficiency and with dynamic power, we can get Malaysia into orbit, and reach the altitude of success higher even than our hopes.

If, therefore, Malaysia is really going to progress, we must not only streamline the Central Government, but also, ensure that each component: part of our Federation, each State Government is also streamlined and updated to shoulder the task of tackling the problems which face us on the path of progress, and be able to give our people the best service within our ability."

This, really, defines the reason behind this Seminar, and I hope that you put all your energies into capturing this spirit behind the making of Malaysia.

Perhaps, the high-light of your programme is on Wednesday, the 5th of July, when I see the subject of discussion is "Identifying Administrative Problems between Federal and State Governments".

This is the main crux of your coming together. I hope that you will really go to town and speak your mind during this discussion, so that we will be able, as a result of your group-findings, to pin-point any defects in our present administration of Malaysia. There are also on your programme, two other talks by my ministerial colleagues.

One by the Minister of Lands and Mines on "Politics and Administration",

As civil servants, I hope you will appreciate that you are free political influence because in a true Democracy, the civil servant has a duty to perform: and I speak from experience, having been a civil servant myself; to place fairly and squarely, facts before the politician, based on balanced, unbiased judgment which the politician "can take it or leave it" as he so wishes. After all, civil servants are pensionable; you have nothing to lose; politicians are not pensionable; they come and go!

Because, I see the future of our country's democratic way of life is dependent on you to a certain extent, you must become lively, active, balanced and unbiased civil servants, able to serve our government with a spirit of dedication on the one hand, and on the other, have a lively mind!

We have inherited by virtue of our colonial heritage, a Civil Service which is too much tied to paper and desk, and this attitude of mind must be adjusted in keeping up with modern times, if Malaysia is to survive and succeed in its present battle for Development.

Later on your programme, is a talk by my colleague, the Minister of Education<sup>2</sup>, on "Education and its role in Nation-building".

This perhaps, is one of the most important aspects in the process of national development.

I say this, because, although we are a country abundant in natural resources such as tin, timber, rubber and iron ore, our greatest resource lies really in the resources of our own people.

We, in the last five years of our development, have invested a tremendous lot in our economic infrastructure. Now we need to strengthen our nation by investing in our youth.

The future of any country, which is dependent upon the will and wisdom of its citizens is damaged when any of its children are not educated to the full extent of their talents from Primary school to Secondary and higher education.

The trend of our development, at the moment, having laid the infrastructure!

is, therefore, focussed on an investment in human skills about which my ministerial colleague is ably competent to discuss with you.

Now, Gentlemen, to sum up, **I** feel that, perhaps, "Seminar" is a wrong word for this gathering, because it gives the impression that you are coming back to school.

Please believe and understand me when I say this.

**I** want you, throughout all your discussions and deliberations in this building, to talk freely and frankly with one aim in my mind. With one question to be answered: How can we, both the elected government and you, as government servants, **improve, streamline and speed up** the efficiency of the administration and development of our country - Malaysia.