

DRAFT SPEECH TO  
GOVERNMENT OFFICERS IN SABAH  
ON 18TH JULY 1967

**Mr. Chief Minister, Ministers & Gentlemen,**

I am happy to have this opportunity of visiting Sabah once again. Since the first national election to the State Assembly, I have wanted to come here but have not been able to find the time. I should like to congratulate first, the Chief Minister and his colleagues and the Alliance Party of Sabah for having won the election and have now formed the first fully elected Government for the State of Sabah. Also, I should like to congratulate all of you and the people of Sabah for the successful way in which the election was conducted. Considering that it was the first election that the people of Sabah have ever had, it was carried out in a smooth and orderly manner and I would like to pay particular tribute to the leaders of political parties in their exercise, and to you all, including in particular the Police, for having supervised the election in such a way as to make it a success that it was.

Now that the election is over, it is the duty of everyone here, not only the Government in power, but everyone, members of the public service, including Opposition Parties, to work together to administer the State and to give the people of Sabah the progress and the happiness that they all deserve. I regret that since the election, members of UPKO have been making unnecessary fuss and about the conditions as laid down in the Inter-Governmental Committee Report when Sabah first joined Malaysia; and are making political issues over these matters which have all being agreed to before and which have been embodied in our Constitution. I must make it clear that while we practise democracy and we cherish the parliamentary democratic system of Government - freedom of speech, press and expression - we obviously cannot tolerate any attempt, whether intentional or unintentional, to alienate the feelings of the people to the Central Government. After all, the Central Government is a Central Government for the whole of Malaysia and represent the people of Malaysia, whether they come from West Malaysia or East Malaysia, whether they are Kadazan, Murut, Iban, Malays, Chinese or Indian. This is, of course, not an occasion for me to make a political speech because you all are civil servants and the political situation would not affect you directly because although politicians may come and go, like myself and the Chief Minister, the backbone of the administration is vested in the hands of you all who are the permanent officers of the state.

However, I must say that Malaysia is a young nation, now entering its 4th year and during the three years of its life, we were faced with confrontation by the Soekarno Regime of Indonesia and now that confrontation is over, it must be the duty of all of us to make Malaysia succeed, to see that our country do forge ahead in stability and in progress. It must be the duty of all of us to bring our people of various races together and to bring the various parts of our country closer together

to make the people, wherever they may be - whether in the remotest parts of North Malaya or East Malaysia - feel that they belong to one country and one people and that the security and the sovereignty of our country are safeguarded. The unity, happiness and the progress of our people are matters which must be placed above everything else in the minds of all of us. The people of Sabah have joined Malaysia out of their own freewill and it was clear to us, not only before Malaysia was established, but during the last election, that almost the whole of the people of Sabah are behind Malaysia and consider that their future lies with Malaysia and that independence through Malaysia is the only way in which they can meet with their hopes and aspirations, not only for themselves but for their children. It was clear to them in 1963, as it is now; and it was clear to us and the Central Government then, as it is now, that there is no other future for Sabah and Sarawak. That is why we in the Central Government have decided to stand solidly behind the people of Sabah. We have done everything possible to defend Sabah during the period of confrontation. We have made tremendous sacrifice. We have contributed to the development of Sabah during the last 4 years more than we promised at the establishment of Malaysia. Therefore, it is only fair that we ask you people here to be loyal to your own country and not to do anything that would upset the peace, happiness and unity of our people.

Although confrontation is over, we are still faced with an Emergency. We still have communists in our midst who are only waiting for the opportunity to carry out acts of violence to overthrow the Government by unconstitutional means. Therefore, we cannot allow anyone, whether he be a politician or civil servant, or member of public, to do anything that would further the activities of the enemies or add to the difficulties that the Government is facing in the defence of our country. I feel the time is appropriate for me on behalf of the Central Government to make this position clear because we have the interests and the welfare of the people at heart and we are responsible for the maintenance of law and order and peace in our country. We will not tolerate anyone who acts against the true interests of Malaysia and its people.

As I have said that with the ending of confrontation and the completion of the first general election, you all in Sabah are faced with the task of carrying the administration of the State in accordance with our system of Government. The elected Government is responsible for formulating policies but it is the duty of the Government servants to implement those policies faithfully and loyally. The public service is free from political influence but should be loyal to the Government of the day. It is your duty as civil servants to express your views to your Ministers fairly and frankly and to put facts before them squarely based on balanced and unbiased judgment. It is for the politicians to accept or not your views. Civil servants are pensionable but politicians are not. They come and go. Therefore, under our democratic system of Government we are dependent on the civil servants. They must be lively, active, balanced and unbiased and able to serve the Government with a spirit of dedication on the one hand and on the other have a lively mind.

We have inherited the virtues of colonial heritage. The civil service is too much tied to paper and this attitude of mind must be adjusted in keeping with

modern times if Malaysia is to survive and to succeed in its efforts to effect economic progress. As you know, we are a Federal system of Government and it is not easy to run this system of Government. In Malaysia today, there is not one Government, but there are 14 Governments. It is like an aeroplane with 14 engines. But if the country is to progress and move forward happily and to achieve that measure of peace and stability, then all the 14 engines - all the State Governments together with the Federal Government - must work in complete harmony and cohesion. Every engine must be perfectly tuned in unison because if one engine is out of step with the other, like the aeroplane, the chances are that the aeroplane will crash. That is why you can see, I personally and my colleagues do make frequent visits to States to adjust the timing and tuning so that the machinery of Government runs smoothly. If, therefore, as a nation Malaysia is to progress, we must not only streamline the Central Government but to ensure that each component part of the federation - each Government - is streamlined to tackle the task and problems that face us on the path of progress and be able to give our people the best service.

The ordinary people in the villages do not know which are the responsibilities of the Federal Government and that of the State Government. They only know one Government and therefore it is necessary that we the Federal Government and the State Government must appear to the people as one Government working in complete harmony and co-operation for the interests and the welfare of the people. We in the Central Government will do everything possible to try and improve the efficiency of our public service; to improve the co-operation between the State officers and Federal officers. We have held now one seminar and I hope to have many more so that the officers in the Central Government and those at the receiving end in the States do understand one another. It is only through personal contacts and the meeting of minds can they work in order to carry out that co-operation and co-ordination which are so desirable for the smooth and efficient running of our Government.

It is also our intention that there should be an exchange of officers. We in the Central Government would like to see officers from Sabah working in some of the Federal Departments. In the same way, there should be exchange of officers at State and district levels so that the officers would gain better experience and in this way we will be able to bring our people in the various parts of Malaysia closer together. I very much regret to say that there is a feeling in some part of Sabah, and this feeling has been engineered by some politicians, against the officers from West Malaysia. Officers from West Malaysia come here to serve and to help the people of Sabah. They must therefore be regarded as one of your officers. In the same way, the people of West Malaysia regard officers and the people of Eastern Malaysia as their officers and their own people. It is only by this way can we really become a happy nation. That is why we cannot tolerate any attempt to alienate the feelings of the people against our officers, wherever he may come, or any discriminatory treatment against any officer, whether he be a State or Federal officer.

That is why I ask this opportunity to talk to you frankly on the various problems that we have to face and to know your responsibilities as civil servants.

I must ask you to give your whole-hearted and undivided loyalty to the Government of the day. You may have your own political feelings or leaning, but you must not allow your political feelings to influence in your work, as civil servants should be free from politics and if any civil servant feels that he has got any political leaning, then really his place must be in the political arena and not in the public service.

We are a young Nation, some officers may not be used to the change in their status and in their role. It is therefore the duty of the Heads of Departments and senior government servants to explain to their subordinates to see that they do play their part effectively and will give their loyal and dedicated service to the people of Sabah and to Malaysia.

We want a loyal and uncorruptible civil service and we in the Central Government have now transferred the powers of promotion and discipline from the Public Services Commission to senior civil servants because we feel that Heads of Departments and senior government officers should have the power of supervision over their subordinates. It is only if they have this power can they see that their subordinates do their work well and that any improper and corrupt practices are reduced to the minimum. I do hope it is possible for Sabah to follow the same system. We are prepared to trust our senior officers because it is their responsibility to get things done and unless they have the power over their subordinates, obviously they cannot get their subordinate officers to do their work.

Once again, gentlemen, I thank you very much for coming to this meeting and we trust you will give your whole-hearted co-operation to the State and Central Governments and also to give your best and undivided loyal service to the people of Sabah and to Malaysia.