

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER IN MOVING
THE SECOND READING OF THE SUPPLY BILL AT
DEWAN RAKYAT ON 25TH NOVEMBER, 1965

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to join the Honourable the Prime Minister and my other colleagues in replying to some of the comments and criticisms made by the Honourable Members, particularly the Members of the Opposition. Unfortunately, Sir, there is only one Member of the Opposition and I should say that he is a friendly Member of the Opposition.

Sir, the Honourable Member for Ipoh¹ stated that the Alliance Government's policies were becoming more and more dictatorial; the Alliance Government is suppressing and crushing the Opposition. Sir, this is an old tune which has been played again and again in this House. Everyone knows, the people of this country know, the Alliance Government, as the Prime Minister² stated this morning, believes in democracy — and we have upheld our democratic constitution strictly. Indeed, if there is any criticism at all against us, it is because we have been too liberal. Opposition parties have complete freedom to say anything against the Government, to criticise the Government, and indeed the Opposition Members have made full use of this freedom.

Sir, we take pride in the fact that since we achieved independence, the last eight years, we have been able to make democracy work in this part of the world, and I must say that this cannot be said of some of the newly independent countries. Now, the Honourable Member in his speech says that he still draws inspiration from the leadership in the Government of the country south of the Causeway. I hope, Sir, he would realise what it would be like to be a Member of an Opposition party under that Government, and as the Hon'ble the Prime Minister said this morning, those who think highly of Singapore, and the life in Singapore, can go and live in Singapore and we would not miss them. Sir, we have never interfered in the work of the Opposition. We believe in loyal Opposition and so long as they uphold the Constitution as we do, all Members of the Opposition should have no fear. I suggest to the Honourable Member for Ipoh, it is no good turning the old record again and again. We here stand by what we do. We allow the people to judge our actions, but we trust that the Members of the Opposition should not blame the Government for their own ineffectiveness. We in the Alliance believe in democracy and will continue to uphold the principle of democracy, so long as we remain in power.

¹Encik D. R. Seenivasagam.

²Y.T.M. Tunku Abdul Rahman Putia Al-Haj.

As the Prime Minister said this morning, we built this Parliament House as a symbol of our democracy and as a symbol of our belief in parliamentary democracy.

Sir, the Honourable Member for Tanjong³ stated that he chose in 1959 to go into Opposition to the Alliance Party, because he wanted to prepare for what he calls "just such a moment of truth" that will come to the Alliance and the people must look for the dynamic and positive leadership. Now, Sir, we knew the Honourable Member for Tanjong left the Alliance, because he had differences with the sincere and loyal leaders of the MCA and with the majority of the members of the MCA. The Honourable Member talked of his great concern for the problem of unity of purpose in our multi-racial society. We on this side of the House have stated that we sincerely and strongly believe in the unity of our people, in welding together our people of various racial origins into one united nation. But we have also said, being practical men, that this process must necessarily take time. We cannot be theoretical, or idealistic, as the Honourable Member for Tanjong is. We must be realistic and face facts as they exist today. The Honourable Member for Tanjong wants all the people of this country of various racial origins to accept themselves as equal members of our national community and think, plan, and act as Malaysians. The Honourable Member should know that our people, under the colonial rule, have lived under different communities, have lived as different communities, were allowed and even encouraged to follow their respective ways of life. Under those circumstances, it is not possible, Sir, and let us not blind ourselves to the real fact that we cannot, all of us, in a matter of few years think ourselves as Malaysians, and completely forget that we belong to different racial origins. Our people must be given time to adjust themselves to sink their differences. Our people must be given time to foster their spirit of goodwill, understanding, and friendship with one another. It is not possible for us to think of ourselves as one national community, when there are still differences, inequalities and economic imbalances. These problems must be solved and adjustments must be made so that our people of various races would feel that they have a rightful place in our country. This is what the Alliance Government is doing and has been doing. We laid down the framework in our Constitution and within that framework we have worked in harmony and friendship towards the ultimate goal of a real national unity. This goal must be achieved and will be achieved if all our people, particularly leaders, do sincerely work together towards this end and completely refrain from making use of communal issues, in order to gain political power, or to obtain

³Dr.LimChongEu.

a few extra seats in the election. If we all do this, and I ask Members of the Opposition if they sincerely believe in this and not merely takking as political slogans, then we will be able to reach this goal much more quickly. We, in the Alliance Government, are not in a habit of shouting slogans, empty slogans, but we are practical and sincere people, who always carry out what we believe is in the true interest of our people. Our record is open for everyone to see. People can judge us, history can judge us, whether what we have done and are doing the right thing. Our main desire and concern is to serve the people, to make this a happy and united country. We have been in power for over 10 years, but we have used that power solely to serve our country, and we have not sought power mainly for the sake of personal glory, or personal importance. We place the welfare of our people and the interest of our country above everything else. We place the peace, harmony, and the goodwill of our people above our own personal desires. We draw inspirations from no one but from our hearts and from our sincere desire to serve our country and our people.

Now, Sir, I come to the Honourable Member for Bungsar⁴. Again, Sir, the Honourable Member for Bungsar sang the old record that we have not helped the poor and only make the rich richer. Sir, the Honourable Member is not qualified to speak for the "have-nots", particularly those in the rural areas. The Honourable Members in his speech said that we have not provided electricity for the rural areas. But, Sir, electricity in the rural areas is not an item of great priority in the kampungs, or the villages. There are other things of far more importance, and far more necessary, which we have provided and are continuing to provide for the "have-nots" in the kampungs and the villages. They are schools, health facilities, prayer houses, roads and such amenities of life. We have also helped the "have-nots", as I had already said, to increase their incomes, so that they will be able to live a decent life of a civilised society. The Honourable Member talks about electricity supplies — just because Taiwan have vast rural electricity supplies we should also have. I say, Sir, it is our intention to provide electricity supply to the kampungs and the villages. We have done so in a number of cases and we will continue to do so. But we know the needs of the villages, because most of us, indeed all of us, have lived in the villages; we were brought up in the villages. Our Second Five-Year Plan was prepared by the people themselves, by their elected representatives. They told us what they wanted and were merely carried out their wishes and their desires. This is how we work and how we implement our development programme. It is not our policy to impose town life into rural areas, or to impose a foreign way of life into our

⁴Encik C.V. Devan Nair.

society. Our policy is to improve the existing social life so that our people will enjoy the amenities of life which they desire.

The Honourable Member for Bungsar has a lot to say about the Budget and I have no doubt my colleague the Minister of Finance will give him an adequate reply. The Honourable Member spoke that at the height of the Emergency, we held our heads with pride. What does he mean by that? At the height of the Emergency, we were under British rule. We were a colonial territory. Does the Honourable Member mean that we held our heads with pride, when we were a subjected people, and now that we are an independent and sovereign nation we do not hold our heads with pride? He talked of us, of our country, being a nation of dejected beggars. Sir, these are very strong words which are completely unjustifiable. As everyone knows, despite the fact that we have to shoulder the burdern of increasing defence and security expenditure and the burden of carrying out an ambitious development programme, our economy is still strong. We are still held in high respect by the financial and banking world. Of course, as a developing nation, and because we have to shoulder these burdens of defence and development, we naturally have to seek aid from outside. As the Prime Minister said, which country in the world does not have to ask for aid — not even a rich country such as the United States of America. Now, Sir, the Honourable Member is fond of using strong words, fond of using slogans, empty slogans, which for the last two years we have heard so much and have become sick of them. We on this side of the House, in the Alliance Government, do not believe in words or in slogans. We believe in results, and we believe in achievements.

We have produced results in our development programme. We have shown to the people that in time of national emergency, we are prepared to defend the country. We are held in high respect by nations of the world, particularly the Afro-Asian nations, because we do things with dignity, because we always have our national pride. The Alliance Government, as I said, stands by its records for the world to see. Of course, we do not expect appreciation from the Opposition members. But we know that the people of this country respect us and have confidence in us. We know that countries of the world also hold us in high esteem; and these are our main concern, Sir, and we shall continue to serve our country and our people in the way that we think best.

Sir, the Honourable Member for Batu⁵, when speaking on the expenditure on Defence, spoke about the wasteful expenditure on defence. I am afraid, Sir, it is difficult to understand the logic of the

⁵Encik Tan Chee Khoon.

speeches of the Honourable Member for Batu and of his colleague, the Member of Datuk Keramat⁶ from the Socialist Front. They are against us allowing our friends in the Commonwealth to assist us in the defence of our country, and they are against increasing the defence expenditure. Sir, how else can we look for the defence and security of our country? With Malaysia, we have a bigger area and a longer coast line to defend; and we are at present the subject of aggression by a bigger and stronger neighbour. Surely, it is the duty of this Government to take appropriate and adequate measures to defend our country. We have to expand our Armed Forces - our army, our navy; we have to station on the Borneo territories as well as in the Peninsular to defend our independence and our sovereignty. We have to have ships to patrol our coasts; we have to have our Air Force to transport our men and to provide supplies. It is true, because of 'confrontation, our defence expenditure has to be increased at an accelerated rate. But even in normal peace time, we have to have enough men to help maintain law and order and to defend our country in case of invasion. We have to have ships to patrol our coast line, as I have said, and we have to have an air force. There are inevitable commitments of an independent sovereign nation. In an uncertain and disturbed world in which we live, we have to maintain a certain amount of defence force, if we value our freedom, our independence and our sovereignty. It is the policy of this Government not to embark on huge defence expenditure or unnecessary expansion of our forces. We only aim to have a sufficient force to protect our shores and our coast line and our boundaries. We intend to have a highly trained force, mobile, and assisted and supported by large reserve of trained men in our volunteer service and also in our call-up reserve.

Sir, the Honourable Member for Tanjong has remarked that one way of cutting down defence expenditure is to have a large reserve of volunteer men — that is what we are doing. As Honourable Members are aware, we have the Territorial Army, Local Defence Corps, the size of which is kept under constant review from time to time. We also intend to expand the training of our call-up boys so that we have a large reserve of men available for active service when we require.

Now, Sir, the Honourable Member for Batu, as usual, is inclined to support his theory of socialism, and he is very often out of step with current events. He alleges that the Alliance Government refuses to use the Budget and all the administrative power we have to redistribute wealth of the country in such a way as the peasants, the workers, the farmers can get a decent living. Of course, Sir, it is not possible for the distribution of wealth to be effected in the ordinary

⁶Encik Lim Kean Siew.

recurrent Budget. The re-distribution of wealth is carried out in our Development Budget. In our development programme in the past five years, and also in the next five years, we give priority to the "have-nots" — the poor and the under-privileged — in the kampungs and villages and in the towns. In the past five years, we have provided these people with amenities of life such as roads, water supply, medical services and so on, and also we have helped them to increase their income. In our Development Budget for the next five years, we intend to continue with this policy, to extend our programme for assisting the "have-nots". Our policy, and the right economic policy in a newly independent country and in an under-developed country, is to level up and not level down. We must expand our economy. We must encourage the flow of capital, so that opportunities would be provided for our people to obtain employment. We tax the rich, so that with the money we help the poor to get a better standard of living and a better way of life. This is our policy, and this policy has produced results and we intend to continue with this policy whatever the Members of the Socialist Front choose to say. The people in the kampungs, in the new villages, and in the semi-urban areas know what we have done for them and what we intend to do for them, and it is for them to judge whether our policies are right or not.

Tuan Yang di-Pertua, saya suka hendak menjawab sedikit pandangan-pandangan daripada Ahli-Ahli Yang Berhormat. Yang pertama sekali Ahli Yang Berhormat dari Kelantan Hilir⁷, telah menyebut berbagai-bagai kesusahan dan bahaya yang dihadapi oleh rakyat negeri ini, seperti kemarau, hujan, penyakit-penyakit dan macam-macam lagi, seolah-olah mengatakan yang Kerajaan Perikatanlah yang menyebabkan perkara-perkara ini berlaku. Tuan Yang di-Pertua, perkara-perkara ini berlaku di atas dunia ini semenjak dunia ini dijadikan oleh Tuhan sudah lama sebelum Perikatan berkuasa, akan tetapi semenjak negara kita mencapai kemerdekaan dan semenjak Perikatan berkuasa, Kerajaan Perikatan telah cuba dengan seberapa daya upayanya memberi pertolongan kepada rakyat supaya keadaan hidup mereka itu dapat diperbaiki dan supaya bencana-bencana dan musuh-musuh dalam negeri ini dapat di atasi. Semenjak lapan tahun yang lalu, berbagai-bagai perubahan telah dicapai di seluruh negara kita ini.

Akan tetapi Ahli Yang Berhormat dari Kelantan Hilir, datangnya dari negeri Kelantan, dan negeri Kelantan tidak ada apa-apa perubahan, kerana negeri Kelantan ialah ditadbirkan oleh Kerajaan PAS, dengan sebab itulah Ahli Yang Berhormat itu, tidak tahu yang perubahan-perubahan berlaku di negara kita ini.

⁷Tuan Haji Ahmad bin Abdullah.

Bila Ahli Yang Berhormat menyebutkan tentang rakyat di kampung hanya pendapatan tidak sampai \$30 sebulan, ini harus berlaku di negeri Kelantan, tetapi di tempat-tempat lain keadaan rakyat telah berubah, pendapatan-pendapatan rakyat telah bertambah. Setengah-setengah rancangan Kerajaan telahpun mengeluarkan hasil \$300 atau \$350 sebulan bagi tiap-tiap seorang. Di tempat-tempat yang lain dengan adanya rancangan-rancangan Kerajaan, menolong mereka itu - sama ada dengan cara menanam padi dua kali setahun ataupun dengan jalan mengadakan perusahaan-perusahaan kecil untuk menambah mata pencarian ataupun dengan jalan pertolongan-pertolongan yang lain — pendapatan mereka telah bertambah berganda-ganda daripada masa yang lalu. Saya mengaku, Tuan Yang di-Pertua, bahawa tidak semua rakyat di negara kita ini telah menerima faedah daripada rancangan-rancangan Kerajaan akan tetapi sebahagian besar daripada mereka itu telah menerima faedah-faedah itu, dan Kerajaan Perikatan berazam hendak meneruskan rancangan-rancangan dan Kerajaan hendak menambah lagi ikhtiar-ikhtiar yang patut yang telahpun diterangkan untuk menolong rakyat di kampung-kampung, di luar bandar, untuk menambah dan membesarkan, serta meluaskan lagi mata pencarian dan pendapatan mereka itu.

Tuan Yang di-Pertua, ucapan yang semacam ini, yang diperbuat oleh Ahli Yang Berhormat dari Kelantan Hilir, semata-mata menyebut masalah-masalah yang dihadapi oleh rakyat dengan tidak menerangkan apa-apa caranya untuk membaiki atau mengatasi masalah itu, tidaklah berguna kepada Dewan ini, kepada Kerajaan dan kepada negara kita. Kita semua tahu masalah-masalah yang dihadapi oleh rakyat tetapi Kerajaan telah menjalankan berbagai-bagai langkah untuk mengatasi masalah-masalah dan kesulitan itu. Kerajaan hendak mengetahui daripada pihak Pembangkang atau dalam perbincangan ini, apa pandangan pihak Pembangkang di atas langkah-langkah yang Kerajaan jalankan itu dan apa cadangan-cadangan, selain daripada itu, yang patut dijalankan, akan tetapi kita tidak menerima satupun cadangan atau syor yang berfaedah, atau syor yang bertujuan untuk memperbaiki atau syor yang constructive. Kebanyakan percakapan dari pihak Ahli-Ahli PAS — Pembangkang — semata-mata mencaci, menidak-nidakkan apa-apa perkara yang dibuat oleh Kerajaan, tetapi dia sendiri tidak tahu apakah yang telah dibuatnya sendiri.