

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AT THE OPENING OF THE SIXTH JAYCEES
NATIONAL CONVENTION AT THE BRITISH
COUNCIL HALL, KUALA LUMPUR ON 4TH
NOVEMBER, 1961

Mr Chairman, Hon'ble Ministers, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased indeed to be here this morning at your request to open the National Conference for the Junior Chamber of Malaya, but I regret that owing to the pressure of events I cannot stay for very long as I have to leave here shortly to attend another meeting.

Nevertheless, as Minister of Rural Development I would have been loathe to let this occasion go by without a chance to speak to you on this all-important subject, this task of national betterment which is of such profound significance and importance to everyone in this country. Although the emphasis on rural development is very naturally directed to the people of the rural areas, the rakyat who work and live on and by and for the land, the rakyat from whom almost all our productivity springs, at the same time rural development is of equal importance to those who live in the cities and towns, the commercial and industrial areas.

The Junior Chamber of Malaya, being by its very nature an association of young men who are active in business, commerce, or Government service, has its branches centred on various towns. This year the theme for the work and efforts of the Junior Chamber is simply and nobly stated as "Service to the Rural Community".

Now what does this mean in effect? This means that the Jaycees who live and work in towns must find ways and means to project their efforts into the rural areas if they are to carry out their set purpose for the current year.

Now as a voluntary organisation (and being typical of a number of other such bodies) there is no question at all that you desire to do something constructive and worthwhile so that you will

play your part actively in this great national effort. Your problem is really to find a direction in which you can express this goodwill, purposes or goals which can be not only beneficial to the rakyat but also rewarding for yourselves, projects which can be of lasting benefit, and not simply projects to overcome temporary problems.

Now may I suggest to you that each Jaycee's branch in its own State should make a point of going to see the District Officer and learn about the operations taking place in rural development in their immediate Districts. By doing this you will get, sooner or later, a good idea of where your efforts, whether in money or material, or in active personal efforts, can be of most use. When you have made this survey in your own State, then I suggest you should decide on at least half a dozen goals for the forthcoming year.

I do not want you to overlook the important fact that in this current phase of rural development the emphasis is on the spirit of Gotong Royong. Therefore, I think" you should look for practical ideas which will enable your members personally to take part in their spare time. Although it takes a lot of time and effort to raise money, it is comparatively easier to do than to give active direct personal help. Raise money for a particular project, by all means, but your active help will be direct evidence of the earnestness of your purpose. And the people whom you will be immediately helping, knowing your presence and seeing your work, will have a strong feeling that you and they are all in this together, that this is a job which must be done, that you and they want to see less talk and more deeds. Everyone will appreciate your efforts, and you yourselves will go home each time with a feeling of having done something really worthwhile.

The spirit of self-reliance is essential if rural development is to progress with the speed and results we want. One of the lessons we have learnt from colonial days is that it is no longer any use for people to wait to be told what to do, to be spoon-fed by Government, to sit back and hope for somebody to perform wonders. If we let this happen again, (although I am very glad to say that in independent Malaya it is rapidly disappearing) then I do not think we are entitled to call ourselves free men. Freedom implies responsibility, responsibility implies effort and action and self-reliance, and the achievement which springs from personal effort has a value which cannot be priced. Apart from this, efforts

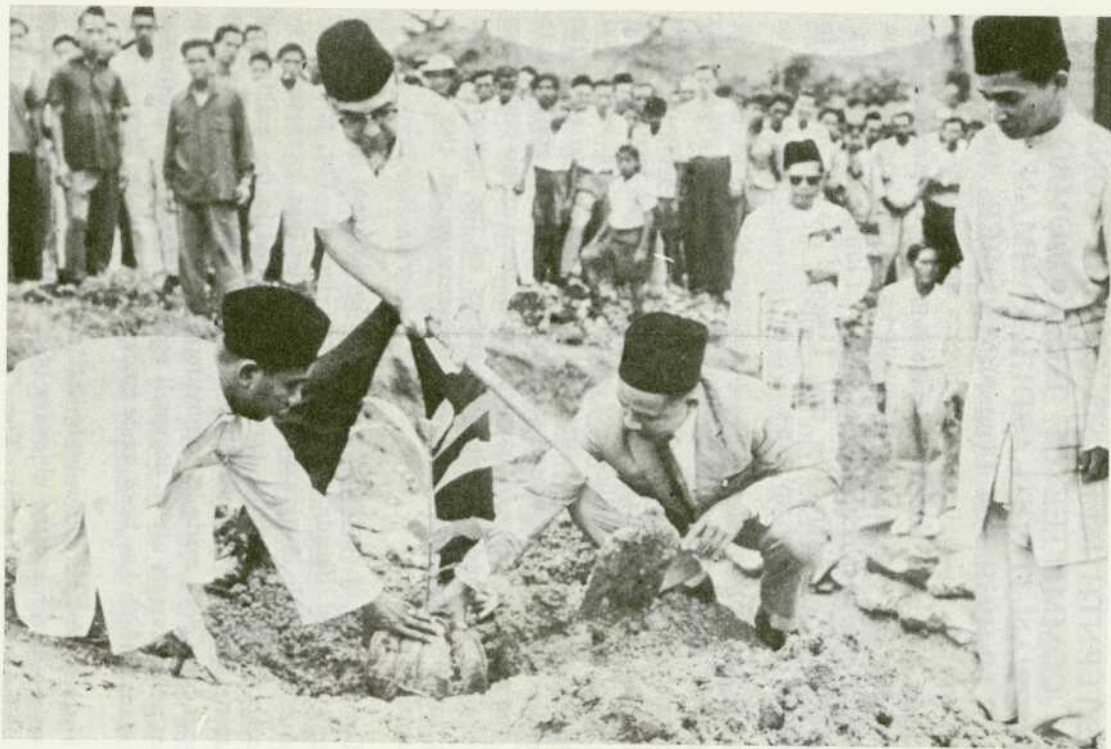
to do things to help ourselves and others breed in themselves a determination and confidence, create a strong bank of moral resource, a bank on which we Malaysians can draw whenever the need should arise.

There is a Malay proverb which says, "Hendak cari rotan, jangan takutkan onaknya" which in English means, "If you want to look for rotan do not be afraid of its thorns". This is a poetic way of saying "If you want to do something good do not be afraid of the trouble you will have to face". Difficulties always exist in every human enterprise, but it is no use wringing one's hands and deploring the difficulties. A self-reliant man admits difficulties and then decides on ways and means to overcome the obstacles. So do not be deterred by difficulties, or the magnitude of What you may decide to undertake.

I do not think there could be any better message that I can give to the Junior Chamber of Malaya in this National Conference than to ask you to combine the goodwill and efforts you have shown in the past with a more direct and practical application to the rural areas. I welcome any efforts you will make in this direction, and I urge you seek advice from the District Officers, decide on your projects, plan your campaigns, resolve to keep each phase of your plans up-to-date, and by doing so you will, I am sure, infect many others with the same enthusiasm, the same sense of effort, the same sense of achievement.

I would like your National Convention to set a target date within the next couple of months for each branch to report on the projects it intends to finance and undertake. I do not suggest that you should shelve for the time being those institutions or organisations in which you have shown an interest in the past (most of which are in the towns) but rather that you should make your rural efforts additional tasks with first emphasis and greater priority.

I will be very happy indeed to receive a report from your National Committee on your intentions for the year, 1962, and I can assure you that there is not one development officer in the country who will not welcome the additional support and effort which an organisation such as yours can give to the great task of national advancement of rural life and work.



Tun Abdul Razak sedang menanam pokok di hadapan perhentian bas RIDA untuk ke Lembah Belut di masa lawatan beliau ke Bentong, Pahang pada 3hb November, 1961. (Gambar Jabatan Penerangan Malaysia).