

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER IN  
PROPOSING THE TOAST OF THE COMMON-  
WEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION OF  
THE PRIME MINISTER'S DINNER AT DEWAN  
TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN, KUALA LUMPUR  
ON 9TH NOVEMBER, 1963

The Hon'ble the Prime Minister, Your Excellencies, Hon'ble Ministers, the Chairman and Delegates of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the very pleasant duty of proposing the toast of "The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association" and I am very happy to do so.

In the past few weeks, and particularly during the seven days preceding this Dinner, the whole Malaysia has become very familiar with the widespread interests of the Commonwealth through the speeches and activities of all the delegates. In fact we have heard so much about the Commonwealth that when I was considering what I should speak about tonight it seemed to me that there was nothing new that I could contribute.

However, in thinking it over it occurred to me that no one has drawn attention to the fact that all the delegates to this conference are professional politicians. This is a personal link we have in common, and we all know that it is a natural characteristic of politicians to be ready and able—and in lot of cases only too willing and eager—to stand up and make speeches. This is true all over the free world, and I don't think that anyone has ever noticed any deviations from this norm even on the other side of the Iron Curtain. Our unpredictable neighbours on the other side of the Batik Curtain certainly betray neither difficulty nor diffidence in this regard, as we in Malaysia know only too well. It does'nt matter where politicians come from, whether their countries are allied, non-aligned or neutral,

they all have the gift of the gab. It has often been said that silence is golden. That may be all right for philosophers but for politicians it will not do at all, otherwise we would all be out of business.

Next it occurred to me that by some extraordinary stroke of good fortune I seem to be the only professional politician at present during this conference who has had nothing at all to say. Before anyone begins to accuse me of unprofessional conduct, let me freely admit that tonight I am caught at last. Whether this is due to envy on the part of the organisers or a quiet determination that the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia should not be allowed to get away with it, I don't know.

However, let me assure them that I am glad to be trapped, because it gives me a chance to pay a personal tribute to the all-round success of this Ninth Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. I am told that in the foyer of the State Legislature in Victoria the following words are inscribed in mosaic on the floor—"In a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom". I think these words are very appropriate indeed for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

The Conference just concluded was truly a remarkable and representative assembly of political leaders from all parts of the Commonwealth, not only from those member nations that are fully independent but also from territories or areas that are either drawing near to full independence and from States with internal self-government or Colonies, as well as from many internal States or Provinces, in short all phases of achievement or transition.

Among you are men old and hale, with the wisdom of long political experience and men who are young, commencing their careers with the zest, initiative and ambition of youth; men who have been Prime Ministers or held high offices of Cabinet rank; men who are State Premiers or Leaders of the Opposition; and men and women of all political parties and of nearly every race and creed. All of us are politicians, all of us are devoted to the service and interests of our respective nations or States, and all of us are united in belief in the ideals and lasting value of the Commonwealth. It is because

of the ties that link us together that this Commonwealth Parliamentary Association came into being. Like the Commonwealth itself this Association is a natural and necessary growth because it springs from genuine feelings of goodwill and friendship and the will for peace and happiness. By personal contacts with one another through this Association, we learn to appreciate and understand problems and difficulties and to profit from each nation's experience, and as each conference comes to an end reality and value of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is demonstrated and stressed once again.

We in Malaysia, happy to have been your hosts, look forward eagerly to the next Tenth Conference of this great Association in luxuriant Jamaica, and we have every confidence that this Association will continue to show to all the world the living and abiding spirit of the Commonwealth.

It is my great pleasure and privilege now to ask all present to rise and to drink with me a toast of long life, good fortune and success to "The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association".