

SPEECH BY THE HON'BLE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER'S
ON 1967 DEVELOPMENT ESTIMATES ON
20TH JANUARY 1967

Mr. Speaker¹, Sir,

I beg to move that the motion standing in my name on the Order Paper be referred to a Committee of the Whole House, namely:-
"That this House resolves that a sum not exceeding \$836,095,454 be expanded out of the Development Fund in the year 1967, and that, to meet the purposes of the Heads and Subheads set out in the first and second columns of Development Estimates for 1967, laid on the Table as Command Paper No. 50 of 1966, there be appropriated the sums specified opposite such Heads and Subheads in the 7th and 8th columns thereof: and that the Resolution passed by this House on 25th October, 1966, in respect of expenditure to be met out of the Development Fund for the financial year 1967 is hereby rescinded."

Mr. Speaker Sir,

This House may or may not know that for 24 hours some years ago after the General Election in 1959, after a Cabinet reshuffle, I was in actual fact Minister of Finance, but luckily because of Tengku's ever attentive ear, he listened to my plea and gave me a more cheerful and happier portfolio.

So I have every sympathy with my friend and colleague the Minister of Finance in performing his depressing task of introducing a hard-hitting Budget and as I was listening to him, I said to myself, "There but for the grace of God (and Tengku) "Go I." Therefore, Sir, if the Minister of Finance² depressed you with his speech, it is now my task to cheer up both you and all Members of this honourable House.

We may be short of funds, but this does not mean we are a bankrupt nation; this does not mean that the end of development, and the end of progress. The very fact that I can stand here and introduce these ambitious Development Estimates, supported by an equally ambitious Development Plan, shows that 1967, for our country Malaysia, is not the beginning of the end, but the beginning of the beginning!

¹ Dato' C.M. Yusuf bin Sheikh Abdul Rahman, S.P.M.P., J.P.

² Tun Tan Siew Sin, J.P., S.S.M.

Admittedly we can do much more with more money, and I can assure you, Sir, that the extra money raised by taxation, and that which we hope to receive from friendly donor countries, will be put to the utmost use for the utmost benefit of our future development.

We have a lot to be thankful for, 1967 stands before us as a year in which our country can develop even further, unshackled by the human and financial drain we suffered as a result of Confrontation.

Although, the withdrawal of Commonwealth Forces from East Malaysia has taken place, we are still left with our own loyal and efficient Army, Navy, Air and Police Forces, which although young, we, as a nation, are extremely proud, and I would like to take this opportunity, Sir, in my capacity of Minister of Defence, to call upon this House to pay tribute to the unselfish and loyal service which all officers and men of our Armed Forces gave to Malaysia when our sovereignty was so severely threatened during the last three years of Confrontation.

I am sure that no Member of this House would deny that we in this country owe gratitude to those who gave their lives and to those who suffered the stresses, strains and perils of the jungle in order that the rest of us could live safely and unhampered and apply ourselves with a feeling of security to the task of achieving further progress of our country.

However, Mr. Speaker, Sir, although Confrontation is over, this is no time for complacency on matters affecting both Defence and Internal Security, and because of the continuing internal threat of Communist subversion we still have to maintain a fairly large security force, and this means, maintaining considerable expenditure on Defence and Security.

Nevertheless, I as Minister of Defence give this House every assurance that no more funds will be spent than are absolutely necessary, and I know for a fact that the Minister of Development will not allow the Minister of Defence to waste unnecessary funds for Military purposes.

Let us now turn to the question of development.

In presenting the First Malaysia Development Plan to this House, we in the Government visualized that the full implementation of the Plan would require the raising of funds both from internal and external sources.

So, there is nothing depressing or despairing about a tough budget.

We are merely putting our plans into force. So let us not be despondent; let us look towards 1967 with hope and determination that our Plan will succeed.

Past performance over the last 5 years has shown that we have got the means both mental and physical and the know-how to implement a Plan and achieve results. The Estimates which I now move are the 1967 element of the five years of the First Malaysia Plan.

I do not want to analyse these Estimates item by item, but you will find that many of the major projects are the continuation of those which were started in the previous year. Also out of this sum of \$836 million, are allocations for the implementation of new high priority projects which will contribute in a major way to the provision of an infra-structure facilities and the needs for further economic and social development.

The allocation of this total sum among different Ministries and Departments of the Government conforms to the priorities of the First Malaysia Plan.

Every effort has been made to eliminate any project which is not economical and which will not bring in definite benefits. Also, strict measures will be taken, as the Minister of Finance had explained when he introduced the Supply Bill for 1967, to cut out frills and to reduce cost. We shall have to reduce our standard, go for functional buildings and, wherever possible adopt standard type. As I have said before, as a developing Asian nation we cannot follow the standard of a developed Western nation. We have to be contented with our own standards so that as many of our people as possible will be able to reap the benefits of our Development Programme.

In accelerating economic and social development throughout Malaysia, we have at the same time to be especially mindful of the needs of Sabah and Sarawak. These needs are vast and very urgent indeed, since massive and co-ordinated efforts to promote development in these States began only after Malaysia was formed. We are determined to accelerate the pace of development in East Malaysia. While this involves substantial resources that the more fortunate West Malaysians are willing to offer quickly, I ask also that those in East Malaysia be prepared to do their bit so that there will be unity of purpose in nation-building.

It must be appreciated, however, that the development of these States will be time-consuming and expensive in view of their relatively under-developed nature. A first requirement is to lay a firm foundation for growth. While this process is rapidly changing the face of these States, its impact on the standard of living of the people will not be significantly felt immediately - the next pay day or the next harvest.

We appreciate the desire of our brothers in Sabah and Sarawak for quick and significant improvements to their living standards. A fundamental improvement in the economic conditions of East

Malaysia, as well as West Malaysia can only be assured when the proper basis for doing so has first been established. There is no other way out. This we are attempting to do as quickly as possible. This is amply evidenced by the fact that we are allocating to East Malaysia financial provisions far in excess of the amounts agreed upon in the Inter-Governmental Committee.

Hon'ble Members will note that the Development Estimates now presented make no provision for meeting the cost of repairing and rehabilitating roads and bridges and other projects damaged or destroyed during the recent floods in West Malaysia particularly in Kelantan, Terengganu and Perak. This is because we do not have yet firm estimates of the damage done and what it will cost us to put them back to a workable and operating state. Although this disaster adds to our already difficult financial position, the Alliance Government will not shirk its responsibilities to assist those most in need of help.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, many have helped in providing assistance to the flood victims and their response has been most gratifying. I would like to publicly acknowledge our gratitude to all who have contributed to the National Disaster Relief Fund and to those many government officers, police and the Malaysian military personnel as well as the British Royal Air Force who have assisted in the work of flood relief and rehabilitation. I would like also to express the sincere appreciation of our Government for the timely assistance provided by our neighbours and friendly governments.

In the important area of transportation, I am happy to say that a major overall transport study will be undertaken this year and will cover all media of transport and all States in Malaysia. A request has already been made to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for assistance in carrying out the study. It is hoped that the project will be implemented not later than six months from now. Several discussions have been held with officials of the United Nations and the World Bank to facilitate the early implementation of this project. The study will take a year or so to complete. It will deal with measures for improving transport operations and planning. It will also include the preparation of several detailed feasibility studies for individual transportation projects in the Plan.

I am also glad to say that in regard to another major sector of our Plan, namely Education, the report of the Higher Education Planning Committee on the long-term needs for higher education in this country is almost ready now. The Government hopes to carry out similar studies soon on agricultural research and development, forest development, and land capability in Sabah and Sarawak. Hon'ble Members are already aware that a land capability study is in progress

in West Malaysia. In this important undertaking, we are receiving substantial assistance from Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would now like to touch upon a problem which has been of great concern to us in recent years. This is the rising cost of administration which in part is a concomitant of the development process itself. The Government has undertaken a number of measures to examine these problems and to seek solutions. We cannot expect dramatic results overnight. But I ask, and in part the answer may well lie here, that every civil servant from the office boy and the clerk to the top Ministry official should continue to cultivate maximum dedication to service and a sense of pride in their work; they should perhaps examine their conscience each day to see what they have done for the good of the country. They should also ask whether they would have done more. I would also ask every Head of Department to be planning conscious, to strive for maximum co-ordination in individual Departments as well as between Departments. It is also important for them to assist their staff in planning their work not only from day to day but also over the long-term.

Sir, although as I have stated I do not wish to discuss specific items in the Development Estimates, I do however, want to stress our sound assets.

The Minister of Finance in his budget speech took stock of our financial liabilities. Let me take stock of our *national assets*.

First, our ever increasing political stability and our growing political maturity. Political stability is one of the first ingredients which a developing country must have if it is to attract the necessary investment for Development. We are politically stable and we are proud of it!

Our second asset is our capacity to plan widely together with our administrative ability to implement these Plans. The proof of this is the success and the tangible results which we achieved in our last 5-Year Plan.

During that period, as this House well knows but which the Opposition are reluctant to admit, we succeeded beyond all our expectations.

The achievement of that last 5-Year Plan laid a very sound framework without which modern development cannot take place. We have definitely established this firm base for development. This is our third asset.

Let me now, Mr. Speaker Sir, turn to our fourth and most important asset, and that is, our human resources - our own people.

These resources fall into two categories: the harnessed human resources and the as yet unharnessed human resources.

Let us take stock of our harnessed human resources.

The investment which the Alliance Government, since Merdeka, put into an ambitious Education Programme, is now beginning to repay with results.

The flow of professionally qualified Malaysians is gaining impetus. These young, qualified, modern Malaysians are taking their place in ever greater numbers, and playing their part in this great task of National Development -

with new ideas - new skills - new abilities - new drive - new enthusiasm - new energy and new aspirations.

All these, Mr. Speaker Sir, are as important if not more so than money in the development process. Without these, no amount of money would lead us to the goal of progress we have set ourselves.

Let us turn now, Sir, to the unharnessed human resources which we also have in even greater abundance.

As I have said before, comparing our country, Malaysia, to the rest of the World, I am convinced, and I know this for a fact, that there is no difference in the latent human potential which exists in other countries and the great potential that exists amongst our own people.

If in such times of national crisis the potentials and capabilities of our people can be really wakened up by Floods, Disasters and Confrontation, why cannot the same spirit be aroused and channelled into something much more important - the task of developing our country towards greater progress?

This is what I mean by the unharnessed human resources which we have in abundance throughout the country. And Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is my main message that in moving these Development Estimates - a message not only for this House but for the whole nation. In the heart, mind and body of every single Malaysian lies an asset worth a thousand time more than the \$836 million we are going to debate.

What is most needed at this stage of our development is not so much the amount of funds but the *will to work*. This *will to work* cannot be legislated, cannot be voted by Parliament, cannot be allocated by a Minister. It cannot be borrowed from another country. We must mobilise this asset to the full. We must galvanise our people to play a greater individual part in the implementation of our Development Plan. We must galvanise them to cultivate to the full every single acre of arable land, that has been given to them and to do a full day's work in return for a decent and dignified wage.

In other words, the year 1967 must be a year of greater application of effort on the part of every one of us.

Sir, I beg to move.