

**SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AT THE END OF BRIEFING ON GOVERNMENT
SERVICE AT THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT
OPERATION ROOM, JOHOR BAHRU,
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Our task, whether we be Ministers, Elected Members of the Government, or Government Officers, is to strive, from day to day, to give the public and the people we serve the best Government and the best Service within our ability.

However, as we progress and advance in Development the aspects of Government become more varied, more technical, and more complex and it would be impossible for each one of us to become experts in every single function of Government.

In fact one could compare the science of Government nowadays to the science of medicine. The science of medicine has advanced so much in recent years that no Doctor can be a specialist in every disease and an expert in every cure but the Doctor's efficiency is dependent to a great extent in his basic and sound knowledge of the overall functioning of the human body. And it is because of his basic knowledge of anatomy and how the whole body works that he is able when we as patients go to a surgery to make a correct diagnosis of whatever our pain or disease may be.

And so it is with the duties of a District Officer, a Technical Officer or an Elected Member of the State or Federal Government. The more you know about every aspect of Government and Government Policy, the more general and basic knowledge you have of the overall system, machinery and policy of Government then the more easy it will be for you to carry out your duties efficiently and well.

You will remember when the National Development Programme was launched in Directive No. 1 we said:

"The complete machinery of Government will be geared into a singularity of purpose and action to achieve our aims."

This was no idle promise or a mere platitude on paper and in order to achieve this, in order to achieve complete co-ordination of every Government function, we set up a National Development Planning Committee, State Development Committees and District Development Committees.

This administrative machinery for Development throughout the country has worked very well and we must ensure that it continues to work efficiently and well. But like any other machine it needs constant overhaul and constant maintenance.

What we meant by this was that each and every Technical Officer, each and every Elected Member of the Government and each and every Administrative Officer must, in fact, work together and know what each other's Department and function is so that we do not waste time and energy on misunderstandings on departmental differences and on unnecessary paper arguments; so that at District level, at State level and at Federal level, we can from day to day, advance forward as a well co-ordinated Development Team, ensuring in our day-to-day task that the people in every Kampung and every village are getting our very best possible service and the best Development that we within our resources can in fact give them.

I have said it before and I repeat it again that the attitude that we must establish throughout every Government Department in the whole Country is the attitude that it does not matter who we are, it does not matter what we are, it does not matter where we are but, as part of this Government, the only thing that matters to the people of this Country is what we are doing and that we are doing it correctly and efficiently for the greatest benefit of the Rakyat.

From time to time, our National Development Programme has been criticised. It has been criticised in Parliament, criticised in the Press, criticised in the Campus of our University and criticised by those who are jealous of its success. We all know that there are always many paths leading to the same destination and there are many ways of achieving any aim.

In 1960 we have laid down our Policy and our Programme; set out Air and the way we would achieve it. We welcome criticism; and we are strong enough to take it but one thing for which I would appeal is that those who wish to be critical might attempt to be constructive and not make vague theoretical statements without the backing of fact and constructive suggestions.

Let me take a specific example. Rural Roads. For twelve years during the Emergency little or no Development took place in the rural areas and no roads were made except a few Emergency roads which were built specifically for the use of the Armed Forces.

Therefore, when our Rural Development Programme started, the greatest demand in every single District in every single Kampung was the demand for the construction of the roads which had been denied the people during the period we were fighting active communism. A Rural Road Plan was then worked out and the Public Works Department, with tremendous energy and devotion to duty went ahead and constructed these roads transforming the dreams of the people of many, many remote Kampung into actual realities.

And now, throughout the Country, in Kampung where before Merdeka, it was impossible for the essential government services such as Doctors, midwives, veterinary officers, agriculture officers, information services, etc., etc. to reach these inaccessible Kampung without considerable difficulty and delay, now thanks to the success of our Rural Development Programme many, many Kampung have now been given suitable access and are enjoying the services of a modern Government.

Our critics say that all these roads had done is to open up the way for the middleman to come in and rob the Kampung of its economic gains and thus make it poorer. I strongly refute such criticism because I am firmly convinced that Rural Roads are in fact the bloodstream of the Rural Economy. Again to give you an analogy from medical science. If in fact the blood cannot flow to any particular part of the body then that part of the body ceases to function and eventually becomes diseased, decayed and dead. So it is with Kampung, in this modern world, which are completely cut off and have no access to and from the economic bloodstream

of our Nation. Admittedly, that when the blood flows to any part of the body there is every chance of the bloodstream being polluted by a virus but the danger of such virus does not deny the fact that a bloodstream is essential to health.

So it is with Roads. We make roads and plenty of them. We make them with our eyes open knowing that they may be polluted, from time to time, by the virus of the middlemen but the cure is not to stop making roads. The cure is to devise ways and means to eliminate the virus so that the economy of the Kampung is strong enough to stand on its own and to resist exploitation by the middlemen. If an Economist looks at our Development Programme purely from the economic point of view, he may be critical and says that such projects as community centres, mosques, suraus and electric and other social projects are not economic.

The point in fact is that our Programme is a combined economic and social programme designed not only to increase the standard of living in the rural areas but also to ensure that life in rural villages and Kampung is worthwhile and that our traditional way of life in these Kampung can be strengthened so that life in the rural areas is as equally enjoyable as life in the urban areas.

I understand that in Communist China in order to stop the rush to the towns legislation has been produced and no one from the rural areas can enter a town without filling in forms and approving by paper certificates that he has a job or work to go to. The reason for such drastic legislation, I understand, is to stop the unplanned development of towns and prevent the excessive growing up of slum areas.

Our Policy is designed to give the rural people a worthwhile way of life in the rural areas with a combination of economic, social and other amenities.