

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER IN
SECONDING THE MOTION BY THE MINISTER
OF FINANCE AT THE DEWAN RAKYAT ON
6TH FEBRUARY, 1961

Mr Speaker², Sir,

I beg to second the Motion and, in doing so, I am attracted by the closing words of my colleague, the Hon'ble Minister of Finance, who reminded us that since the last Session of this House, when our Second Five-Year Plan was launched, mankind has entered the Space Age; but, nevertheless, in order to implement our Plan, we in Malaya must keep our feet firmly planted on the ground.

We should have no difficulty in following the advice of my Hon'ble Colleague.

The Alliance Government has always had a firm foothold on the path of progress; and, throughout the length and breadth of the nation, the many development projects under construction proudly proclaim this fact.

Projects in the nearest towns; projects in the farthest kampongs; speak for themselves more eloquently than any words; projects which are positive proof that the Government have not only got its feet firmly in the right place, but also, its shoulders to the wheel of progress and its heart in the task of nation-building.

It can also be said that our Five-Year Development Plan, the first year of which the Estimates are now before the House, is in fact a Plan very much in keeping with the modren spirit of the "Space Age".

I understand that the great thing about space travel is that, after Man has gone sufficient distance to be freed from the forces of gravity of this earth he goes on into space and experiences a wonderful feeling of weightlessness.

¹ Penggal Kedua Dewan Rakyat Yang Pertama.

² Y.B. Datuk Haji Mohamed Noah bin Omar.

So is our National Development Policy¹ designed to take our people on a journey towards prosperity in which they will also experience a feeling of weightlessness from the burden of poverty; and in these Estimates before the House are projects which will stand out as pillars of progress in the first part of this journey. Also like man in space, free from the gravity of the earth so have our people being recently freed from the gravity of the forces of communist terrorism which delayed the development of our country for so many years.

There is yet another similarity between our Estimates and the Space Age.

I understand that the very first obstacle which has to be overcome in "Space launching" is the necessity to break through the "sound barrier".

In launching our Estimates, we too will no doubt have to break through the "sound barrier" raised by our hon'ble friends who sit on the other side of this House.

In some countries the makers of such Parliamentary sound barriers are in fact called "the Members of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition"; I am not suggesting that we adopt this title, but, if we consider it for a moment, we will realise that each word in the title is significant; because, although there may be Hon'ble Members of this House, who will rightly argue on minor details of the method used in implementing our National Development Plan, there cannot be any of us, who, as really true Malayans, are not completely loyal to our national aim—our aim to develop Malaya, with all our strength, so that it may take its rightful place in the forefront, alongside the other progressive Nations of the World.

So therefore, Mr Speaker, we can start this debate in the pleasant atmosphere of all of us having at least one ideal in common.

In order that Malaya may develop to the fullest extent of its natural resources and economic potential, we must forcibly follow, with determination, a double-based Development Programme:

- (a) the development of our trade, commerce and industry;
- (b) the development of our rural areas.

¹ Rancangan Lima Tahun Yang Kedua 1961-1965.

I shall leave it to my colleague, the Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Industry, to deal with our National Industrial Programme, but, nevertheless, I would like to make it clear to this House that although it is possible for these two Development Programmes to be separated on the pages of the Estimates before you now, the two cannot in fact be separated in practice, because, in order to maintain and also to increase our present standard of living, both in the urban and rural areas, we must remember, in all seriousness, that our national prosperity, to a great extent, depends on world trade.

No nation, in this Space Age, can hope to achieve a high degree of prosperity unless it is prepared to open its doors to the commerce and industry of other nations.

All nations of the Free World are, by necessity, inter-dependent on the great interchange of international trade.

This House will remember that the underlying purpose of our National Rural Development Programme is to ensure that the people of our rural areas get a fair return for their labour. Let us therefore consider seriously what return for their labour would our rural people receive if other countries did not trade freely with us and buy our National product, such as rubber and other raw materials. Let us never forget therefore that even the prosperity of our rural areas is directly dependent on international enterprise and endeavour.

So it is essential that all of us, by our daily words and our daily actions, not only in this House but wherever we may be, take thought so that we can constantly give proof to the rest of the world, by our good sense, our sincerity and our political stability, that we are in fact a nation in which investment, expenditure and endeavour on the part of international enterprise, is secure.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the untapped potential resources of our country are large enough to afford opportunity, not only to our own National Private Enterprise but also to International Enterprise. Let us ensure that the "Door of Welcome" is continually kept open to those of other nations who have faith in the stable and democratic way in which we govern our country, and, as a result, have also the trust to establish industrial enterprise within our shores; the wider this "Door of Welcome" is kept open, the greater will be the possibilities of our National Economic Prosperity.

And now I would like to turn to our National Rural Development Programme.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if we look at a map of Malaya, and on it compare the distance separating the Federal Capital from the more remote kampungs in our rural areas, we remember that many kampungs are far away and that a journey to them by road, by rail or by river would take many, many hours. ,

However, in keeping with the tempo of travel in the Space Age, the Alliance Government has made it possible to make a journey into the heart and soul of any kampung in record time; this journey takes less than one minute: it is a mental journey made possible by the use of "Red Book".

The "Red Book" was conceived, designed and put to use by the Alliance Government, for the purpose of ensuring that, no matter how far away any kampong may be, nevertheless, the hopes and needs of its people are forever near to the heart of Government.

The "Red Book" is in fact, therefore, tangible proof of the fulfilment of that trust the people of the rural areas placed in the present Government when, two years ago, they themselves choose it to take charge of the affairs of their country.

This House will remember that when the Government launched its Rural Development Programme, it stated quite clearly that it had no intention of setting up a large and costly organisation to implement its aims for the benefit of the rural people; but that instead, it would make the fullest use of our existing Government Machinery, and that all policies at all levels—Ministerial, Federal, State and District—would be framed with a priority focus ensuring that all the resources of Government, and the entire energies of its executive effort, would be harnessed and directed, to the development of the rural areas. This has in fact been done. The Ministry of Rural Development remains a small, but very active Ministry performing the vital function of co-ordination.

So therefore in the Estimates before you, Hon'ble Members will not find funds for all rural projects under the Heading of the Ministry of Rural Development, but you will find, under the Head of each Ministry and Department which has a service to give, or a responsibility to shoulder in the rural areas, plenty of provision for projects designed to ensure the progress of our rural people.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to second the Motion.