

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER  
AT THE INAUGURAL DINNER OF  
THE AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE OF MALAYSIA  
ON 18TH NOVEMBER, 1966.

Mr. President<sup>1</sup>, Hon'ble Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to be here to dine with you tonight and to witness the establishment of this new Agricultural Institute of Malaysia.

Agricultural science is unlike most other types of science which may be regarded as *single sciences* or single academic disciplines, whereas your science of Agriculture is very much a multi-disciplinary, science, and an Institute, of the type which you have established today, has a very important part to play, bringing together agricultural scientists of widely differing professional background such as botanists, soil-scientists, pathologists, agronomists, agricultural economists, field officers, agricultural administrators, agricultural engineers, food technologists and chemists.

This trend towards establishing representative institutions is, I understand, relatively new to agricultural science, although it has long been established as a practice in the medical, engineering and other professions. I am pleased to see that Malaysia is taking a lead in this new direction.

This coming together in one Institute, of you professional people, all with very varied professional backgrounds, and yet all working within the overall science of agriculture will do much to bring about the cross fertilisation of ideas and stimulate progress in this very wide and highly complex field, and, at the same time, afford a forum which should lead to new discoveries.

This establishment of your Institute is extremely timely in view of the increasing emphasis the Alliance Government is giving to agriculture improvement in our First Malaysia Development Plan,

and our determined effort to diversify the agricultural sector of our National economy.

Your Institute can be a tremendous instrument for furthering the objectives set out in our present Development Plan; when it has settled down to carry out the activities as set out in your Constitution, I, as the Minister of National Development, and I am sure my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture and Co-operatives, will eagerly await the forthcoming of new ideas and suggestions to assist us to make even further progress in our National Agricultural Programme.

However, in one aspect, I sympathize with all you agriculturists in measuring your achievements, and in convincing others of the benefits which derive from your research and field experimentation.

How much easier it is for an engineer to build a fine bridge, for all to see and use, and after its completion he can stand by its side puffing out his chest and be photographed with a beam of "self-admiration" on his face; and yet, how much more difficult for you, as Agriculturists, to convince others, and the public, of the benefits which can come from, say, a relatively small percentage increase in crop production such as paddy, but which in aggregate, can far surpass the benefits in National terms from a *million dollar fly-over* bridge on the main road.

This problem of recognition is, to my mind, directly linked with your concern for the *status of your* profession and the recognition of your professional, technical and agricultural talents.

It is my view that to achieve our aims for the future in the field of agriculture something must be done, not only to raise the status and standing of the professional Agricultural, but also, to convince our young people, at present in school, that the profession of an Agriculturist is as equally satisfying, rewarding and as the perhaps more glamorous profession law and kindred professions.

Your Institute can do much to make our National programme of expanding training facilities at all levels of agricultural education a success — because in the future we will need more and more people trained in agriculture professional skill, and the best way to obtain this is by attracting the best type of students to adopt agricultural science as a professional career.

This, in turn, can only be done if your profession becomes recognized throughout the Nation as being a highly honoured and rewarding profession. Your Institute has made a great step in the right direction to achieve this.

Agriculture is Malaysia's most important industry, and Malaysia's contribution to tropical agriculture has been outstanding, but the problems which must be solved in the future will undoubtedly exceed those of the past.

These problems will tax your intelligence and ingenuity to the utmost, but I have confidence in your ability to show us the way, and I trust that your members will always strive to attain the highest levels of scholarship in this very important field.

I wish you the very best of luck in this *endeavor*, and I wish your Institute every success in the future.