

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE
PARLIAMENTARY LUNCHEON AT PARLIA-
MENT HOUSE, CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA ON
16TH OCTOBER, 1975

Honourable Prime Minister¹, Honourable Leader of the Opposi-
tion, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister and Mr. Opposition Leader, for your kind remarks and generous words of welcome. It is a great honour for me and members of my party to share this Luncheon here with so many friends in this splendid House of Parliament.

It is also a genuine pleasure to be able once again to meet with you, Mr. Prime Minister, this time in your own country in this extraordinary beautiful city of Canberra, to talk freely and frankly with you and your colleagues as well as with the Opposition Leader on matters of common concern and interest to our two countries.

Australia and Malaysia are indeed no strangers to each other. Our long established relations have always been characterized by unaffected cordiality and goodwill as well as close involvement and co-operation in so many practical fields—economic, diplomatic, defence and so on.

To a fledging country on the threshold of independence, you sent us a distinguished son of Australia, Sir William McKell, to help us frame our Constitution. In our hour of independence, Australia brought Malaysia to the international community in sponsoring our membership to the United Nations. To help a young nation maintain and uphold her territorial integrity, you despatched us your armed forces. In fostering and sustaining Malaysia's development and growth, Australia has generously developed her capital and technical know-how. Is it any wonder, then, that Malaysians are deeply appreciative of the hand of friendship and co-operation

¹ Mr Wallace Rowling.

which has been so willingly extended by Australia over these many years. Ours is a bond build upon old associations and ceaselessly nurtured to reach new dimensions.

Now as we advance into the seventies and beyond, Australia's continued assistance and constructive co-operation in Malaysia's development is greatly welcomed. Next year, Malaysia would embark on her Third Development Plan which will place even more vigorous emphasis on creating better economic and social opportunities for the low income group in the rural as well as urban areas and thereby create a more just and stable Malaysian society. I invite Australian participation both governmental and private in this exciting enterprise.

Mr. Prime Minister, it is axiomatic that the continuing development of a nation's manpower resources is vital to foster its further growth. This is all the more urgent for developing countries which have to telescope the development process as rapidly as possible. It is therefore gratifying to know that more than six thousand students from Malaysia are today pursuing a wide range of courses in institutions of higher learning all over this vast continent. Many thousands more have passed through these institutions and have made their contributions to a very aspect of Malaysia's national life. This is surely Australia's immeasurable and most lasting legacy to us. Our students have come to learn from you and in so doing they have also learned something about you. When they return, they carry with them an enriched experience and better understanding of Australia and things Australian—from your science and technology, your history, arts and culture to an appreciation of your beers—and your wines—your meat pies and marsupials.

It is my sincere hope that at the same time our own young men and women would in their turn also impart to their Australian friends in this country a better, broader and truer knowledge of Malaysia, of the special problems we have to grapple with, of our efforts and dreams for a more just and more equal society. This continuing exchange of ideas and information in an open-minded atmosphere without preconception or prejudice will buttress our good and proven relations and bring our two countries and peoples even closer together.

Since our last brief meeting at Bali, Mr. Prime Minister, much has happened in our region. In Indochina, peace has at last returned. We cannot allow ourselves to forget, however, that this is but a beginning. For us in Southeast Asia, the moment has arrived, which may never come our way again in the life-time of most of us, to usher and build new edifice of peace, prosperity and security, based in mutual respect and goodwill and on a willingness to eschew past fears and suspicions. Old habits die hard—this everyone, on both sides, must appreciate. But we must dare to dream new dreams. We must dare to brave new challenges. It is only in this way that we can leave behind us the politics of conflict and containment, which have bedevilled Southeast Asia for so long and bring about a new order of co-existence and co-operation.

Malaysia, for her part, is totally committed to the cause of regional co-operation. We have not only made our full efforts to continually infuse strength in ASEAN but we have also endeavoured in association with other ASEAN countries to work out and realise the neutralization of Southeast Asia. There already exists a draft Treaty of Amity and Co-operation which the Foreign Ministers of the countries of ASEAN considered at their recent meeting in Kuala Lumpur. It is my hope that this Treaty, when accepted by the Governments of the region, would be the first step in the establishment of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, which would usher an era in which the countries of Southeast Asia would walk together to achieve their common destiny unhindered by the conflicts and interests of the external powers.

Malaysia and Australia have walked in step in dealing with various international issues and particularly regional issues. Though Australia is not geographically part of the region of Southeast Asia, you belong in a wider sense to the concerns and aspirations of the region. And indeed you have indentified with, and you are accepted by, the region. We share many common aspirations and strive for the same great goals.

I am confident that in the future as in the past, we will continue to walk together as partners in the search for progress and stability. For ours are ties based not on any transient concern but

on deepseated and abiding in interests. We have shared a little common history together. I have no doubt that we will share more than a little common future in the years ahead.

I thank you once more, Mr. Prime Minister and Mr. Opposition Leader, for the honour you have done me at this luncheon here today. May I now invite all present to drink a toast to the prosperity and progress of Australia and her peoples and to ever close ties between our two countries.