

ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AT THE  
ARCHITECTS DINNER AT THE LAKE CLUB, KUALA  
LUMPUR ON 23RD JULY, 1965

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Hon'ble Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First let me express my very warm thanks to the Federation of Malaya Society of Architects for inviting me to be the Guest of Honour at this Annual Dinner. This is the first time I have had the pleasure of attending your Dinner, but it is not my first active association with you, as I recall opening your Architects Exhibition in 1959.

I understand that this Dinner holds a special sentimental interest for all members of your Society because it will be the last function of its kind under your present Constitution.

For fifteen years your Society has been the only official body of qualified architects in Malaya. Before the year is out this Society as at present constituted will be incorporated in a Pan-Malaysian group to be called the Malaysian Institute of Architects. I extend my warm warmest congratulations to you and to the Singapore Institute of Architects for your initiative in planning a new national body which will embrace architects throughout Malaysia, with Headquarters in Kuala Lumpur and branches in the Borneo States, Singapore, and North, Central and South Malaya. This is indeed a most progressive move and one which will surely benefit your profession as a whole and the nation as well.

When Malaysia was in process of evolution most people tended to think of the new nation only in constitutional and political terms. More farsighted people realised that the formation of Malaysia would entail a kind of social revolution affecting many organisations and groups in many fields of life, in business and commerce, in sport and culture, in voluntary and charitable service, all of which would have to think in the wider terms of nation organise themselves accordingly. For instance, the Red Cross is now nationwide, so is the Football Association of Malaysia. The fact that the architects of our country are preparing to think and act on a national basis is a typical example of the social changes that are taking place in the pattern of nationhood in Malaysia. Within the space of a few more years many more such adaptations will necessarily occur in the new Malaysia.

In my capacity as the Minister responsible for National Development few men know better than I or appreciate more the vital importance of the role which your profession plays in the development of the country. In a truly literal sense you are among the builders of the nation. Ever since Merdeka the architects of Malaya have contributed their skills and talents to construction in a wide variety of fields, setting high standards both in design and performance. Many distinguished visitors to Malaysia have been deeply impressed by the originality and quality of architecture in this country in public, commercial and domestic buildings. They have also expressed amazement at both the rate and the volume of the work achieved. The success of the Second Five-Year Plan, particularly in its visible and physical aspects, owes a very great deal to the energies and abilities of our architects and, of course, to your brothers in construction, the engineers and surveyors.

Great demands have been made to you, but even greater ones are in store, because the scope and range of the First Malaysian Five-Year Plan due to begin next is far more extensive and comprehensive. I can predict most surely that the architects of Malaysia are going to be among the busiest professional men in the nation for years to come. From your past performance I have every confidence that you can be counted upon to keep pace with the impetus and growth of the nation's progress.

I am afraid in our First Malaysian Five-Year Plan with expenditure on defence and security continues to amount, we shall be short of money. Therefore, in order to implement a bold and imaginative plan of which we have decided the level in the region of \$5,900 million, it is necessary for us to effect economy in the implementation of the project as well as in all Government expenditure. It will mean that we cannot afford any luxury in our buildings, and other projects and that we shall have to go wherever possible for standard plans. I know you all architects may find it hard to follow this policy as you would like to see buildings etc. are constructed in accordance with architectural taste. However, as our people want results, they want as many projects as possible. The Government have to satisfy their needs and aspirations within our limited means. I would, therefore, ask you to give the Government your wholehearted cooperation in carrying out this policy. It is clear that with present resources, we cannot afford to follow the standard of the developed country. We have to be content with our own standard that of a developing Asian country.

In our rapidly developing country, architects will be in great demand, and no one realises more than yourselves the importance

of establishing facilities for producing trained personnel. In this regard, I wish to pay a very high tribute indeed to the tireless, patient and hard-working efforts your Society has made in the interests both of your profession and the nation. I refer in particular to the elaborate report you have prepared on the setting up of a School of Architecture for the University of Malaya as well as the Report on Architectural Education you have sent to the Higher Education Planning Committee. Both these Reports are of the greatest value, and the Government and all Authorities concerned are most grateful for the earnest thought and fruitful ideas they contain.

I am quite astonished that the members of your Society who are going flat out in planning and building should be able to find time to produce such Reports. The fact that you do disclose a high sense of civic and national responsibility. At present you are engaged on another important task at the request of the Minister of Work, Post and Telecommunications. This is to help to draft a new Building Ordinance for the whole country with appropriate Bye-Laws and Regulations. At the moment different Municipalities and Town Councils have their own Bye-Laws, and it is obviously important and of great value that these Bye-Laws should be uniform throughout Malaysia.

I also understand that your Society is working actively together with your professional brothers in engineering and surveying to put forward to Government a Joint Architect, Engineer and Surveyor Bill, which you consider essential to regularise and maintain the standard of practice in these three professions in Malaysia. I can assure you that the Government will give your proposals very sound consideration.

It is quite plain to me that in its fifteenth and last year of its existence as an autonomous body, the Federation of Malaya Society of Architects has been tremendously active and you are to be congratulated on your many achievements. It therefore gives me very great pleasure now to ask all present to rise and drink with me a toast to the Federation of Malaya Society of Architects and to wish all members of the profession every success in the newly-planned Malaysia Institute of Architects which I am sure will render equally great service to the nation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you the toast "The Federation of Malaya Society of Architects".