

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE MERDEKA
BANQUET GIVEN BY THE PRESIDENT, MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS OF THE INDIAN
ASSOCIATION, PENANG, AT THE E & O HOTEL ON
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I feel highly honoured that the Indian Community of Penang should be entertaining me this evening. I would like to take this opportunity to also thank you for the support and co-operation you have given me since I took over the onerous duty of Prime Minister. Onerous in more sense than one as the first Prime Minister I was naturally new to the job and unaccustomed to the work of administering this country.

But with the support which I get from your community and from other communities I gained the necessary confidence to do my work. Any beneficial gains I must say is due in large measure to this help and co-operation. A country like Malaya is not easy to administer. With the plurality of races and creeds so used under the British administration to think in term of their own community there was no common loyalty for this country. Each community has been thinking only of his own interest and the loyalty of each in large measure has been to the country of his origin.

The only good thing about the people of Malaya was that they bear no ill-will towards one another. Each one goes his own way without interfering with the customs or trade of the other, at the same time they join one another in most of the activities common to their own particular race or creed. Thus during the Hari Raya festival, people of other races enter into the spirit of festivity and so it follows with Taipusam, Christmas and Chinese New Year.

Happily with this characteristic forming the background, we can easily pursue the policy that "in diversity we find unity" and it is on this understanding that Malaya entered the threshold of independence. We have found with independence our attitude towards this country and towards one another have changed. Whereas in the old days we used to think in terms of each community, today we are beginning to think of ourselves as Malaysians; of people whose loyalty is to Malaya and Malaya alone. Malaya's well-being happiness and prosperity

depends entirely on us; on how we think and on what we are prepared to do for her.

With independence we have already shown to the world that the people of different races can live together and work together with goodwill and in peace and harmony. We have today been quoted all over as one of the few countries in Asia that practises and can uphold democracy. We are one country that has been cited as one whose finance and economy is sound and the standard of living well above average.

We have paved the way for political well-being of this country. We have been accused of being over enterprising. We are not here to create sensation. We are here to do an honest job. Luckily too we have been chosen for the next five years to lead this country. I am sure with peace and harmony among the people of this country we can look ahead to a prosperous and happy Malaya. There is much work to be done and much preparations to be made to ensure economic and financial stability and increased revenue for this country.

You have heard that there is a big jump in the Malayan currency circulation. For the first time in our history there is a circulation of well over 1,000 million dollars. This figure is of course meant to include five other territories as well, but you can say for the greater part of it, say 90% is in Malaya and that includes Singapore. This is an indication that not only the people in this country that has faith in Malaya but that foreign capitals are pouring in this country as the confidence in this government increases.

On the other side there is political thoughts abound in this country that one particular community is favoured in preference to the others, e.g. the others think that the Malays are favoured and enjoy all the amenities and privileges that are denied to others, and that such amenities and privileges should be shared equally.

I would like everybody to look at things at its real perspective. Where is the advantage that the Malays have over the others. You can satisfy yourself by looking around you, and see the big buildings, big business firms, banks, insurance companies, etc., etc. are in the hands of non-Malays. How many of these are owned by the Malays.

Next look at the places of learning. What are the percentage of the Malays there. In the University of Malaya there is only 11% Malays out of the total undergraduates. In England 20%. In Australia about 5%,

and elsewhere about 1%. Therefore how can any one begrudge the Malays for this little help from the government.

On the other hand the Malays must realise that although they are on the disadvantage in these fields, they hold the political power of this country whereas before it was in the hands of the British. Unfortunately the Malays rather than try to better themselves have started to play on the issues of the advantage the others have over us. And so Malay political parties grow up, purposely to fight for the right of the Malays.

Unfortunately however they just don't end there. PMIP went further to say that Malays who work with non-Malays are working against the Malays and Muslim religion. This is the danger which must inevitably spell ruin and trouble for this nation. When communal and religious issues are used in political campaign there are bound to create suspicion and hatred in the minds of the people for one another. There are on the other hand certain political leaders who claim that they are fighting for non-Malays.

What will be the result of these; I hate to predict. Finally I ask the right thinking men to help me in fighting these elements. Let us work together with thoughts for Malaya and not individual or communal advantage or disadvantage. This is a good country to live in. There are plenty of roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, food, clothings, entertainments, sports, etc. etc. for one to enjoy himself to his heart content. Let us take the good things offered to us here; after all life is short. Let's be happy. There is no man who does not want to be happy. If there is then I am sorry that he ever come to live in this country. Let us create an atmosphere of a happy and contented Malaya. A Malaya in which not only for us to live in peace and happiness but also for those who come after us. We can work now to ensure the same happiness for them as well.

There are three main communities in this country and these three main communities are now working together under the banner of the Alliance towards this end. The main object of having the Alliance party is for each community to understand one another; to like one another; and in years to come to think of one another to look upon one another as compatriots.

I realise it too well that it is not possible for us to form a non-communal party where for 100 years and more we had been divided under the policy "divide and rule", and so we think the best policy

would be for these three major races to put their heads together and work together in order to pull down this barrier, and let us hope that those who come after us will continue with this good work and we can look forward that in time the nationals of this country would only have one thought and that is for Malaya.

There are so many difficult problems for us to tackle at the same time. The main one and also the one which is the most difficult to tackle is the question of education. While there are schools which educate the Malayan boys to think of their country of origin as their object of loyalty it will be very difficult indeed to form a non-communal party. We got to try and make the present government policy a success; for this policy is to give opportunities to study his own language and at the same time orientate his out-look towards Malaya. Even this has met with strong opposition and in the elections it was brought out as an issue. It was done the last time by the rebel members of the MCA. Fortunately, however, the Malayan Chinese were loyal enough to appreciate the motive in time and voted for the Alliance.

It is the duty of everyone of the leaders with the present material at his disposal, to try his best for the sake of Malaya, to make the people here live in peace with one another, and in this diversity of thoughts on race, religion and culture, to build a united Malayan nation.

I must say the Indian community in this country have contributed your share towards making Malaya a prosperous country as she is now. They are peace-loving, intelligent, and hard-working. They have also taken a very leading part in most of the voluntary organisations. We find Indians taking a leading part in trade union, social, cultural, games and sports activities. The man who is dedicated to peace and happiness among those who live in this country and to the glory of this new nation. I would like to say how grateful I am to the Indian community.

I appreciate most gratefully your kind hospitality to me this evening, and may I say thank you.

I thoroughly enjoy myself not only with the meal served but also with the warmth of your welcome.