

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE 8TH
ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE PACIFIC AREA
TRAVEL ASSOCIATION IN THE VICTORIA
MEMORIAL HALL, SINGAPORE,
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The opportunity to address this distinguished audience is one I welcome, as I feel we have much in common in both the pursuit and the desire to fulfil to the utmost the great destiny that lies ahead of the nations of this vast Pacific Basin.

I have been asked to make the "keynote" address for this Eighth Annual Conference. A keynote is already apparent in this assembly of twenty-two nations and countries of the Pacific, and that keynote is "unity".

It is no easy task to bring together men of many different nations, of many diverse cultures, of different outlooks, whose aims and national aspirations so often guide them on the paths of individual effort, to sit together and pursue earnestly the development of one cause for the good of all. The unity of purpose shown here between the many nations of the Pacific, great and small, is an example to the whole world.

We are not gathered here to discuss ways to perpetuate the horrors of war, nor means to restrict individual liberty. No, we are gathered here to find how the ways of peace and liberty in one particular aspect of life can be developed and enlarged and more widely spread. That aspect is "travel", — for travel broadens the mind, improves one's outlook in life, promotes human understanding and our knowledge of the world.

It has been said that "misunderstanding" causes most of the troubles in the world today. Misunderstanding is bred of ignorance, and how ignorant many of us are of the other man's life in his part of the world. Today our frontiers are brought very much closer. It is no longer a problem to travel and to see for oneself how other peoples live. That is the great benefit of travel. It gives you the opportunity of meeting the other fellow, of getting to know him and, usually, of getting to like him.

The evolution of international relations in this personal way is not by any means complete, as we all know; but it is developing gradually and will continue to do so through the medium of travel. In effect, our efforts to bring the peoples of the world to this great Pacific area will surely result in improved world relations. If we can achieve this admirable aim, then what we are trying to do will be worthwhile.

An Example to the World.

Nothing can be achieved without effort, so in combining to meet and work together, as we are in this fine Pacific Area Travel Association, we are setting an example to the rest of the world. Here we can sink our personal objectives in a united front to develop such a fundamental desire of man as the wish to travel, and in so doing we can contribute to the cause of world peace.

Here in the Pacific area, despite the progress that has been made already in easing the path of travel, much has yet to be done. Not all of us can open our doors wide to everyone. Many of us in the past have had to consider problems of internal security, and on occasion such problems have had to take priority over the more pleasant duty of welcoming visitors with open arms.

I am confident that the day is not far distant when all countries will have "open sesame" inscribed on their gates. In the meantime, I think that as many countries as possible should do their utmost to ease the path of the traveller.

The irksome requirements of visas, passports, landing declarations, Customs' forms, health certificates, currency restrictions, and the like can make travel a chore. If these can be eased, bearing in mind each country's requirements, then we can add much to the pleasure of visiting the other fellow.

The Federation of Malaya is the name given to the amalgamation of eleven States on the great peninsula of Malaya. We are one of the youngest nations and one of the newest members of the United Nations, and already we have taken an active part in the deliberations of that great body.

We are, too, the youngest member of the Pacific Area Travel Association, and we hope also to take our place here with the other member-nations in presenting a united front in the development of the tourist industry.

Two Great Industries.

My country relies on two great industries for the base of its economy. These are rubber and tin. Both are subject to market conditions and variable world prices. If the world is in a state of general financial stability, prosperous and balanced, then good prices can be got for our great industrial products. A recession in any particular industry or a lessening of demand for one particular product does not necessarily affect the overall world pattern of solvency. But it can and does have a devastating effect on the economy of the country concerned. When a country's economy is tied to only two main industries, both liable to fluctuation at the whim of the markets, it is time to look for additional ways of diversifying the economy.

That we are doing so in Malaya is evident from our policy of development for many types of secondary industries. The broad aim of our policy is to encourage an increase in the rate of industrial development and to create the necessary stable conditions under which private enterprise can be encouraged to establish new industries, particularly in fields where local capital and technical knowledge are at present sufficient. As a result of our activities already more than forty new industries will be set up in the Federation this year.

There is one very important industry that we are determined to develop, and that is the tourist industry. We have the essential ingredients of success: a beautiful country, fine roads, excellent rail and air services, clean towns, tin mines, with their great dredging system, rubber with its colourful agricultural pattern, picturesque villages, and, above all, friendly and warm-hearted people. There is a diversity of entertainment which ranges from watching sepak raga to hula hoop and scenic attractions from the grand King George V Nature Reserve to the glorious sands of the East Coast.

There is much of appeal to the traveller in my country and with proper and systematic development the tourist industry can and will become of major importance to Malaya.

No "Emergency" Risk.

Many potential visitors to the Federation of Malaya may have been discouraged from coming to the country because of the state of "Emergency" — our ten-year-old struggle against communist terrorists.

I, therefore, want to make it clear that no visitor to Malaya today runs the slightest risk in coming here.

The situation today is that the communist terrorists are almost everywhere completely defeated. Those who still remain are almost entirely confined to jungle fastnesses in the extreme North-West corner of the country.

Visitors to the Federation may travel on all roads and railways in complete safety. Apart from the sight of an occasional Military or Police patrol moving along the roads, or food checks on the way, the visitor will see nothing to suggest that a state of emergency still exists.

In Penang, one of the loveliest places in Malaya, there are still a few terrorists hiding in the hilly jungles in the centre of the island. Life for the quarter million people of Penang, however, is completely undisturbed by these few misguided men. Their presence on the island has not marred the beauty of this "Pearl of the Orient".

Every Country in the world has its small element of undesirables, and Malaya is no exception. But today these undesirables are only a nuisance to the government of our country, not to our visitors.

I stress the tourist attractions of my country, not with the ulterior motive of "stealing the show" when the opportunity presents itself, as it does on this occasion, but to show that a new member brings into your fold a tangible asset to increase the capital of PATA. With more to sell, the association becomes stronger, and presents an even more attractive picture of the Pacific to the rest of the world.

Unity the Keynote.

So I come back to the keynote of this address — unity. I do not anticipate that this conference will proceed on a tame course, nor that all the deliberations will be resolved to the satisfaction of everyone. I am sure that some of you will hold divergent views and express them forcibly, but I know that in the end a unified front will be presented to the world, because we are all aiming at the same target, the projection of the vast Pacific area as the world's greatest attraction.

Mr. President, I thank you for this opportunity to address the conference, and I wish you all success in your discussions. I have one final word to say and that is something to do with a tourist slogan. I

find that all those interested in tourism also like to have "selling" slogans.

The newly-formed Department of Tourism in my country works very closely in its development projects with the Division of Tourism in Singapore. In fact, the same Director guides the efforts of the two Departments. He has coined a slogan. "See you in Singapore", and I believe it is quite effective. However, I would like to offer my own slogan and that is "Meet you in Malaya". And that is precisely what I mean.

Mr. President, I hope that in this session you may consider meeting in the Federation of Malaya for your next conference, of as soon as it is possible for the Pacific Area Travel Association to do so. If you should decide to meet in Malaya I can assure you that we shall not be lacking in our welcome nor in our hospitality as hosts to your Association.