

TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MR.
YONG NYUK LIN, AT THE SILVER JUBILEE BANQUET OF
THE MALAYAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION AT THE CATHAY
RESTAURANT ON SATURDAY, MARCH 28, AT 10.20 P.M.

On me has fallen the privilege of replying on behalf of the guests and it is with great pleasure that I do so.

Tonight is indeed an occasion of great significance for the dental profession in Malaysia. I gather from the President's address that we are here to celebrate three important events, firstly, the Silver Jubilee of the Malayan Dental Association; secondly, the founding of Malaysia and lastly, the grand finale to the Fourth Asian Pacific Dental Congress.

Mr. President, may I begin by saying how much I enjoyed listening to your speech as the spokesman of a Malaysian organisation. Many who are present at this sumptuous banquet are perhaps unaware that you have taken "time-out" from the political hustings in Penang, some 400 miles north, in order to fulfil your onerous duties as President for tonight. I do hope that your absence from Penang will not prejudice your chances in the State elections and wish you well in your encounter against my Party colleague for the constituency. I can assure you that you will be given a good run for your money.

I am glad to hear that with the founding of Malaysia your Association had already suitably amended its Constitution to include members from Sabah and Sarawak and you further expressed the hope Mr. President "that the dental profession in Sabah and Sarawak will accept your Association as representing their interests." Should any member have the temerity to suggest that your Association should first hold a referendum amongst the dental profession in Sabah and Sarawak before admitting them into your Association, I am confident that you will deal with them promptly and summarily.

Now, there are two things about dentists which strike me as extraordinary. Firstly, not only are they prosperous looking but they appear to have found the elixir of life. We cannot find a better specimen than Professor Tratman, father of the Malaysian Dental School. Just look at him. He has hardly changed for the last 30 years. He was as blonde then as he is now. Time stood still for him. What is his secret formula? I am sure all of us, dentists or no dentists, would like to share his secret. Did he walk the straight and narrow path? That I am sure would be a very difficult road to follow for most of us, but we can at least try. He may be fortunate to possess a good set of teeth, perhaps, coupled with good dental care ... ?

Secondly, the thing which puzzles me is this. How come that so few dentists dabble with politics and when they do, they become extremists, whether of right or left? Can it be that the daily use of the dentist's drill has perhaps undermined the foundations of some part of the nervous system, thus warping their judgement on political issues? Perhaps this subject is worthy of serious study and research by the young and vigorous Dental School of our University.

In conclusion, Mr. President, on behalf of all the guests present tonight, may I thank you and your members for granting us the privilege to join you in your happy celebrations. And now, may I call on all of you to join me in a toast:

"That our Malaysian Dental Association may grow from strength to strength and may their dedicated efforts bring about better dental health and happiness throughout Malaysia!"

MARCH 29, 1964.

(Time issued: 1720 hours)