

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT MC.AP. 12/65(CUL).

Statement by Inche Ghazali bin Ismail,
Political Secretary to the Minister
for Culture.

I accompanied the Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, throughout his tour of New Zealand and Australia and was present at all the numerous interviews and meetings he addressed. Everything he said was recorded on tape and is available for checking.

Today's newspaper reports that Dr. Lim Swee Aun in Canberra criticised Mr. Lee for statements he had made particularly about special rights for Malays. It is a pity that no reference was made to what Mr. Lee actually said in regard to special Malay rights. All we have are vague allegations based on what Dr. Lim thought Mr. Lee had said.

An example of what Mr. Lee actually said as against what he is alleged to have said can be seen from this verbatim transcript of Mr. Lee's answer to a question on Malay rights put to him at Adelaide by a Malaysian student.

Question: "Sir, would you say that the clause written in the Constitution for special privileges for Malays is a device to subordinate other races, if carried further?"

P.M.: "No, I don't think that the issue at the moment is the clause providing for special rights for the Malays. That is not the issue.

You see, the problem arises first, out of economic imbalance in development between the immigrant races and the indigenous peoples and the Malays. You see, the immigrant races came in because when the British wanted to exploit and develop the country, they found that the

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Malays were not prepared to work in plantations or mines as disciplined labour; 7 o'clock, you start work, 1 o'clock you knock off and have your lunch, 2 o'clock you resume, 5 o'clock you go home, and here is your wage. They saw no reason why they should stop planting padi and go fishing, and they carried on what was a quite satisfying pastoral existence.

Hence they brought in Indians and Chinese in large numbers, people who came from a different climate, who went through different experiences, who were highly competitive, responded to the profit motives, who understood the mechanics of a money economy.

In 100 years, it has brought about a situation in which the Malays, by and large, are still in the countryside, the Chinese and the Indians are now running the banks, the shops, the insurance, the professions, the universities. And if the immigrant communities or people of immigrant stock do not see the problems, if I can't feel what it is like to be a poor Malay, and I don't feel for him, then I say very soon he will manifest his disaffection in a very decisive way, and the whole country will be thrown into turmoil.

My charge is not that there are these special rights but that these special rights will not solve the problem. How does giving bus licences or licences to run bus companies to one or two hundred Malay families solve the problem of Malay poverty? The Malays are farmers. You know.

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in Australia and New Zealand, all the farmers are wealthy people. How is that in Malaysia all the farmers are poor people? Because, there is no agricultural research, seed selection, fertilization, improvement in double-cropping techniques, discovering what are the cash crops which you can grow in between the year you plant your rubber and the seventh year when you begin to tap it and so on. None of that is going on, and the Malays are beginning to drift from the kampongs into the towns looking for jobs, looking at the bright lights, seeking excitement and a good life, and all this creates problems.

And I am saying that they cannot be resolved by giving licences and special rights and special jobs. That's not going to solve it. You've got to solve it on the basis of giving them education, raising their standards, their earning capacity. Just giving a chap a gold coin doesn't solve his problem. You give him a gold coin today, he then learns how to live at a higher standard; tomorrow, he will be looking for two gold coins from you, and you are in big trouble. You better teach him how to earn a silver coin for himself, and make quite sure that he understands what he has got to do and you will give him the opportunities to do it.

And that is the distinction between the policies of Kuala Lumpur, the Federal Government, and the Singapore Government. There are no special rights for Malays in Singapore. But without it being written in the Constitution, we give free education to every Malay who can get any place in any school, in any college, in any university, we pay for it. The non-Malays

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compete for scholarships on the basis of performance. We pay not only his fees but also a bursary to keep him going. Because we believe that way, eventually, he will begin to earn more; he will make a better partner in this great enterprise which we must carry on with because there is no other way."

And as Mr. Lee stated at his press conference on Saturday, 3rd April, he stands by every word he has stated publicly abroad and at home.



Ghazali bin Ismail

Singapore, 6th April, 1965.