PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

PRIME MINISTER'S BROADCAST SPEECH

OVER RADIO SARAWAK.

I have always enjoyed my visits to Sarawak. And I was happy to be able to come to Sarawak again this time. For me, Sarawak, particularly Kuching, was a charming town where I got respite for a few days from the hurly-burly of the intense city life of Singapore.

But I was very interested to read of the recent political events and developments in Sarawak. Sarawak is moving with the times and there is no place in this world, be it in Asia or South East Asia, or even in darkest Africa, which is immune or exempt from the tumultuous political changes which have characterised the postwar period throughout the whole world.

National Archives of Singapore

Most of you who live in Kuching or Sibu or the other big towns in Borneo are familiar with political developments in the Federation of Malaya and in Singapore. The same national daily newspapers that we read in Singapore go to all your main towns in the Borneo territories. Therefore, our newspapers carry to Sarawak news of what is happening, and of the changes that are to come in

Malaya. They also carry for us news of what has been happening and the changes that are to come in the Borneo territories. The same political changes that have taken place in the Federation of Malaya (now independent) and in Singapore (now internally self-governing) are likely to take place in the Borneo territories with variations to suit your local conditions. But you have the advantage of having seen what has happened in the Federation of Malaya and in Singapore. If you take time to study closely the political events in Malaya since 1945, you will find many useful lessons from which you can profit. In this way you can avoid some of the problems which troubled our political development.

The Borneo territories and Malaya have certain political features in common. Both of us were governed through the same British Colonial Office and we have developed along the same constitutional and administrative lines. But even more important than the superstructure of government which we have taken over from the British, and which undoubtedly in the course of time you will also do, is the fact that you will face some of the same basic political problems which we faced in Malaya and Singapore. First, your population of 650,000 are divided racially, culturally and linguistically in equal numbers between Dyaks, Malays and Chinese, all with different cultural and political backgrounds. In Malaya fortunately the problem is not so complicated because the indigenous tribes do not constitute a sizeable significant portion of the population and the

National Archives of Singapore

main racial components are the Malays and the Chinese. But the problems regarding common language, national consciousness and the evolution of a common national culture are basically the same. And here again perhaps, from the experience of Malaya, you might be able to profit and avoid mistakes.

One needs to be a prophet to be able to say what the political division lines in South East Asia would be by the turn of this century. But one thing we can influence is the immediate future. One of the common features of political development is the fragmentisation of economic units. Trade and commerce followed the flag, and because it was the same British flag, trade and commerce in Malaya and the Borneo territories were closely inter-related. With political developments, as each territory emerges as an entity of its own with its own flag, there is a tendency for trade and commerce and the economic unit to follow the different flags and also become fragmentised to every one's disadvantage. It is my hope that as you progress along parallel lines towards self-government, we will be able to maintain for our mutual benefit the close trading and commercial ties which have existed between us for so long. Slightly over one quarter of your trade is through Singapore. We have served you in the past, we hope to continue to do so in the future.

National Archives of Singapore

But more important are the close ties that bind us because a good number of your people from Sarawak have been to school, or have received training in Singapore. We in Singapore will be happy to give any assistance and technical training and experience in any field that we can provide, and we hope to maintain the close and friendly ties which have always existed between the people of Sarawak and the people of Singapore.

20TH SEPTEMBER, 1960.

National Archives of Singapore