

MALAYSIAN ANGLING SEMINAR 1999  
BUKIT MERAH LAKE TOWN RESORT  
13 & 14 NOVEMBER 1999

CLOSING SPEECH

Fellow anglers, ladies and gentlemen,

Those of you who think in terms of numbers, like what politicians are doing now , may not realize the significance of this seminar, held at this point of time at this place.

First, this is the first Malaysian Angling Seminar ever held in this country, at national level.

Secondly, this is the first and last Malaysian angling seminar ever held this millennium in this country.

Thirdly, this place – Gunung Semanggol. After the Second World War (off hand I cannot remember the exact year) a National Malay Congress was held at the Ihya Usy-Syarif Arabic School, a few kilometers away from where we are sitting now. That was the first gathering of Malay leaders nation-wide in their quest for independence. It was at that gathering that first shout of “Merdeka” was first heard publicly. “Merdeka” was chosen as the slogan of their struggle in place of “Hidup Melayu”

That Congress has gone down in history as a major step in the nation’s quest for independence. Of course, the principal of the Arabic, Ustaz Abu Bakar Bakir, was later arrested by the British and detained under the Internal Security Ordinance (now Act).

Our Seminar may look insignificant today. But I believe that it will go down in history of angling in this country in the same way as that Malay National Congress held here (in Gunung Semanggol) about 50 years ago.

Therefore, we should be proud to be participants. The sponsors should be proud to be sponsors. Bukit Merah Lake Town Resort should be proud to be the venue. And, Mr. Lawrence Tan, you should be proud to be the organizer. Don’t worry. I do not think that you will be arrested and detained under the Internal Security Act for organizing this seminar.

I hope that the suggestions and ideas given at this seminar and the issues discussed will be documented and published, for future reference. I am sure that the significance of this seminar will enhance as years go by.

Surely, we will not see the results in a month or a year. Even participants of the Malay National Congress did not expect Malaya to obtain her independence in 1957, then. But “merdeka” we did in 1957, only about 10 years after the Congress.

So, we must continue to pursue what we have started to do.

Looking back, even now, I begin to changes. When I was a boy I used o follow my aunty to catch “anak-anak” (haruan fries) using a “sepiung” (you don’t see it anymore nowadays.) And that was for food. Now my own children release “small” haruans that they catch. I only heard the term “catch and release” when I was about forty years old. My children practiced catch and release in their early teens. That is the difference, even at my personal level.

All that we have to do is to persevere. Judging from the spirit and the commitment of the participants I have no doubt that we will. And persevere we will.

Until we meet again in the next millennium, happy fishing. Thank you.

Dato’ Abdul Hamid bin Haji Mohamad.