

ST 17 Jan 1969, Kuala

**Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamed**  
(All-Kota Star Selatan)  
touched on the statement by  
the Minister of Finance, Tun  
Tan Siew Sin, on the rise of  
GNP and per capita income  
of the people.

He said he did not question  
the figures mentioned by the  
Minister in his speech.

But the people in his con-  
stituency were waiting for  
the completion of the Sungai  
Muda irrigation scheme to  
receive the benefits from the  
rising GNP and per capita  
income.

At present those who re-  
ceive the benefits were people  
working on the project.

This was because the peo-  
ple in his constituency who  
applied for jobs at the pro-  
ject were told that one of the  
conditions laid down by the  
World Bank was the employ-  
ment of outsiders.

He also did not question  
the unemployment figures  
mentioned by the Minister  
which is 6.8 per cent (for  
West Malaysia and 5.4 per  
cent for the rural areas.

However, he felt that the  
officers from the Statistics  
Department who went to the  
kampongs to take a sample  
survey on the unemployment  
situation in the rural areas  
were misled.

Youths in his constituency  
often replied that they were  
farm workers when asked  
what jobs they were doing.

The truth was they helped  
their parents to plant padi  
during the padi season and  
were paid pocket money.

He invited the Statistics  
Department to make a sample  
survey in his constituency to  
find out the truth.

## Paradox

Dr. Mahathir warned the  
Government against amend-  
ing constitutional provisions  
regarding Malay and native  
land reserves.

He said the Minister in his  
budget speech had remarked  
about the paradox of land  
hunger in the midst of  
plenty.

He was worried whether  
the remarks would be the  
first of a series of steps

which might lead to amend-  
ing the constitutional provi-  
sions regarding native land  
reserves in Sarawak and  
Malay land reserves in West  
Malaysia.

He knew of certain groups  
of people who wanted the  
provisions relaxed, he said.

The Government, he added,  
wanted to acquire land for in-  
dustrial purpose at a cheap  
price.

There were many plots own-  
ed by private enterprise like  
rubber estates which could be  
acquired.

Furthermore a more rapid

economic growth could be  
achieved if Government offi-  
cers could learn from their  
Singapore counterparts how  
to make quick decisions.

Decision-making in Malay-  
sia entailed a longer period,  
sometimes years, he said.