

PM: Strive for greater efficiency

IN my view, WORK should be enjoyed in the same way that we enjoy playing.

When a player plays, very often he ends up exhausted. But he will insist he enjoyed playing despite the energy he expended, money and even the resultant exhaustion.

This is because he gets a thrill in facing challenges to his skills and stamina.

Similarly everyone should get satisfaction if not thrills from the challenges to his skills and speed imposed by his work.

There is a price in terms of time and energy but as in games these are accepted for the satisfaction or thrills derived.

Work can therefore be enjoyable as games are enjoyed if our attitude towards work is correct.

However, if work is regarded as a chore, to be got through for the purpose of earning an income, then boredom results.

A bored worker is as bad as a bored player. He does not win. A bored worker does not produce.

that savings from innovations be given to them.

In any case they will resist the introduction of machines that may reduce their own roles.

In other words even if all the mechanical and systematic improvements are applied, productivity in other countries would not be as good as in Japan.

If we in Malaysia want to achieve our goals we must emulate the Japanese. I do not suggest for one moment that we should slavishly copy everything they do.

I am fully aware that our climate is different, our environment is different, our culture is different. I do suggest, though, that we could learn a lot from the Japanese, particularly the work ethic that contributes to high prod-

great danger simply to serve their fellow man.

They subordinate their own personal interests to the interests of others.

When disaster strikes — flash floods, fires, air crashes, etc. — everybody bands together to give their time, effort and often their personal possessions in order to help the unfortunate victims.

Why cannot we introduce a bit more of this spirit into our daily working lives?

If we can improve our attitudes and regard waste in all its forms as an unforgivable crime directed against ourselves, then we will achieve that high level of productivity so essential to our national development.

The workers' earning capacity can be increased through educa-

The profit-sharing can be based on the criteria of output, quality of work, co-operation and productivity-improving ideas.

But central to all these is the need for the company to grow and to be prepared for the challenges it must inevitably face in the market.

Productivity improvement is not the sole responsibility of any one section of the community, government or industry, management or workers.

Everybody must be involved. It is for this reason that a wide cross-section of our national leadership has been invited to be here today.

Costs

We have senior representatives from the government, from industry — both public and private sectors — and from the trade unions.

A little while ago, I brought up the question of the costs of national development.

Apart from the social and economic costs we pay for development, as can be seen in pollution and wastage of all kinds, it is important for us to

He merely marks time. He is a wage slave.

Everybody the world over is impressed by the economic miracles that have been performed by Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Both of these nations have emerged from the ashes of disastrous wars to develop economies that are the envy of the rest of the world.

Japan in particular has developed new sophisticated technologies both in the production of consumer goods and in the technique of production itself.

Both nations have consequently captured markets which were once regarded as the sole monopoly of the developed countries of the west.

How has all this been brought about? I believe that this miracle has been achieved not so much by scientific developments but more by the attitude of the working population.

Pride

The Japanese first decided on their objectives and then with a singleness of purpose devoted their lives to the achievement of these objectives.

The average Japanese worker is not simply a wage slave concerned only with his own personal interests.

By not thinking too much of self, he now enjoys a high living standard and unprecedented job security in the form of life-long employment.

Japanese productivity, at both the individual and the national levels, is very high. For many years the Japanese growth rate was 12 per cent per annum, well above the average annual world growth rate of 2.6 per cent.

The success of the Japanese is due to a host of factors, but high above everything is their work ethic and a social system that extends the extended family concept to the place of employment.

Hence the seniority system and life-long employment that characterises Japanese businesses.

Simply put, Japan's greatest asset is human resource in the form of disciplined, hard-working people.

What the effect of this resource is can be gauged by the motorcar industry.

Toyota can produce up to 49 cars per man-year of labour, double that of the European car workers.

Of course automation, robotics and systems of working play a big role but in the final analysis it is the Japanese worker who enables all these to work efficiently.

The European workers would probably demand

activity.

Some people believe there are two possible ways of grappling with our problems.

One is to attempt compulsion.

We can introduce new laws, new regulations and new controls and then punish everybody who refuses to conform.

We are very fond of doing this in Malaysia. But I don't think it will work.

Attitudes

A far better approach — and I am sure you must agree with me — is for us all to change our attitudes and to unite as a nation dedicated to the achievement of its aspirations.

Everyone should be gainfully employed. Everyone should enjoy his work and take pride in it. Everyone should instil in himself a sense of responsibility both to himself and to his country.

Work should not be regarded as a burden or simply as a means of getting pay cheques.

In other words we should improve our work ethic. We can do it if we try!

Look at the example set by such people as our security forces, the police, the fire services and the medical services.

They work long hours often in conditions of

tion, training and retraining.

We should build up a work force that is skilled, knowledgeable and has better work attitudes.

In this context, the National Productivity Centre, the organiser of this Seminar, is readily available to assist trade and industry in the upgrading of supervisory and management skills through courses, seminars and productivity programmes.

While we cannot imitate the Japanese life-long employment system, it is prudent for companies to adopt a responsible attitude towards their employees. More effort should be made to increase the employee's involvement with the company.

Management must therefore strive not only for efficiency but also a sense of participation among the work force.

Employees must be able to see how they have contributed to the company's overall productivity not only in terms of profits gained but also the general soundness of the company, its capacity to expand and its standing in the business world.

Management should then respond to this by reasonable profit-sharing and by caring for the welfare of their employees.

consider the spiritual aspects linked with the development.

In our endeavour to satisfy needs, people have become more and more materialistic in their mental outlook and conduct of daily affairs.

The ringgit assumes undue importance and everyday considerations are linked to how to get more ringgit.

If this goes on it is likely that the individual will forget or lose the human values of affection, kindness, consideration and love for God.

Before the "ugly and money-minded Malaysian" image comes to us, our schools, colleges and religious institutions must play a decisive role in moulding Malaysians to be disciplined morally and spiritually.

National development must have as its parallel, spiritual and moral development.

I would like to say a few special words to the Trade Unions.

You are the accredited representatives of the workers and your main responsibility is to promote the well-being and look after the interests of your members.

I suggest to you that one of the best ways of doing this is to collaborate with the government and with managements in promoting

all-round development.

I am quite sure that you will receive a warm welcome if you can bring constructive suggestions that will help us all in our task.

In the end you will gain much more than that obtained from the narrow confines of your trade. A prosperous stable nation has more to offer than one that is racked by worker-management dissension.

To management I would say this "Why not take a good look at your relationships with your workers?"

Partners

To many people, good industrial relations simply means the avoidance of disputes and strikes. This is nothing like enough.

I would like to see a true partnership between managements and workers — where managements appreciate the workers' point of view — where the workers understand the problems faced by managements.

I would like to appeal to everybody present today to help in this all-important effort to increase productivity.

I hope that from your deliberations here you will be able to develop policies and strategies upon which we can base the work that lies ahead of us.

You may rest assured that the government is ready to play its part and will carefully consider each and every recommendation or suggestion that you may care to make.

I would like you to feel free to discuss any proposal that you may consider relevant and approach the problem with an entirely open mind, without fear or favour.

Purely as a suggestion you might like to consider such things as:

- Inclusion of productivity training at all levels of our education system.

- Provision of incentives for both managements and workers based on productivity levels.

- Creation of quality control circles in factories.

- Special training courses for managements and supervisors.

- Special awards for outstanding productivity achievements.

Perhaps, I could also suggest we take a look at the working days and working hours.

On an average, we enjoy 17 days of public holidays and coupled with the average annual leave of 21 days, plus 78 days of weekends, the average Malaysian enjoys 116 off-days and works only 249 days per year!

It is worthwhile to consider how effective the 249 working days are.

The government attaches so much importance to productivity improvement that we have decided to mount a long-term campaign aimed at achieving that improvement.

This Seminar marks the launching of that campaign.

We aim to do three things.

- First we want everybody of all ages and in all walks of life to be made aware of the importance of high productivity and of the part they must play in achieving it.

- Secondly, we hope to unite the nation into one team dedicated to the achievement of higher productivity.

- Thirdly, we hope to see an early improvement in our national productivity which will steadily contribute to a highly efficient economy.

I believe that our national productivity level could be raised by as much as 15 per cent or even 20 per cent.

During the year 1980 our Gross Domestic Product amounted to \$26,118,000,000.

Our manufacturing, mining, quarrying and agricultural industries alone produced \$12,419,000,000.

I leave you with this sobering thought. If we could increase our productivity by only five per cent, we would inject an additional \$621,000,000 into the economy at no

cost to ourselves.

Just think what we could do with this sort of money.

With that thought, I have the greatest of pleasure to officially launch this National Seminar on Productivity and with it the **PRODUCTIVITY CAMPAIGN**.