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SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF RURAL
DEVELOPMENT AT THE FIRST CONFERENCE
OF F.L.D.A. MANAGERS IN KUALA LUMPUR
ON 7TH MARCH, 1961

Gentlemen,

According to your programme I should have met and addressed you yesterday but it was a matter of regret for me that because of prior engagement elsewhere I was not able to address you as originally fixed. I am very glad, however, to be able to do so today. And I am equally glad to have this opportunity of meeting you.

I am told that this Conference of Scheme Managers is the first to be arranged by the F.L.D.A. I am certain that this Conference has been conceived and planned after considerable thought; as a result I am certain that the Conference will not only be of considerable benefit to all of you who are attending it and participating in the various groups for discussion but to the work of the F.L.D.A. as a whole as well.

As you know, the Alliance Government has embarked on a gigantic Rural Development Programme designed to improve the economic, cultural and social conditions of the rural dwellers; and perhaps the highest priority among these three aims is the first of the three i.e. the improvement of the economic position of the people. One of the steps taken to achieve this priority aim—perhaps the most important, is to provide people in the rural areas with land. By this I mean people who are without land. In this particular respect the F.L.D.A. has a very major part to play since its work is to provide land for the benefit of the landless.

It can never be over-emphasised that the success of land development schemes depends very much on the officers managing them. By officers I mean you as Managers and Assistant Managers. You have a great responsibility on your shoulders. The success or failure of these F.L.D.A.—sponsored land development schemes depends on how well you discharge that responsibility. Your task

in creating these land development schemes out of jungle land has a touch of the pioneer spirit in it and as such it calls for a high sense of sacrifice and hard work to carry out and complete it successfully. Your reward for the task is not the salaries which you are paid, but the good results you produce.

Our work of helping the landless rural population with land is as important as it is urgent and, because of this, I must urge you to work hard and with a sense of real dedication. Perhaps you are already aware that the target of the F.L.D.A. is to open 50,000 acres of land for 4,500 to 5,000 families in the next five years. It is a formidable task but it is not a task that is impossible of achievement. If we all work very hard the target will be achieved.

Many of you, I understand, had no previous experience in the F.L.D.A. type of work when you joined but you have been specially picked because the Authority believes that you possess the qualities so necessary in this type of work.

Settlers with whom you are dealing, it is perhaps correct to say, are people who are complete strangers to you. It is needless for me to advise that you require a lot of patience to deal with them. They need your guidance and your sympathy and if you treat them well you will earn their goodwill and willing co-operation which will help you a long way in your work.

I hope to be able, in the near future, to visit F.L.D.A. schemes not only to see for myself the measure of progress achieved but also to discuss with you any problems which you may have concerning schemes under your charge.

Finally, it is my sincere hope that by the time your Conference comes to an end you will have achieved a great deal of knowledge and understanding of your work which should help you in carrying out your job with greater speed and greater success.

I wish you all good luck.