

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AT THE OPENING OF NEW GOVERNMENT
OFFICE BLOCK, GURNEY ROAD, KUALA
LUMPUR ON 25TH SEPTEMBER, 1962

I am very glad indeed to be here this morning to declare open this very excellent building which has been erected at a cost of approximately \$4 million—this \$4 million is part of a \$100 million Government Building Programme for 1962 and I am glad to say that already this year, up to to-day's date, \$78 million of this year's programme, which is in fact equal to 78% of the target has been successfully completed; an achievement for which I should like to congratulate my Ministerial colleague, the Minister of Works, and the Department of Public Works.

This new building is now the new home of several departments which can be listed amongst what we call the spearhead departments of our National Development Programme, such as the Survey Department, the Federal Land Development Authority and the Commissioner of Lands Office.

In declaring open this, their new home, I should like to congratulate the Surveyor General and his officers for the great contribution that they have made in the implementation and realization of our National Rural Development Programme.

To those surveyors who are here with us to-day and to those surveyors who probably at this very moment are plodding through the jungle working hard and laying the foundation of some new land scheme, I should like to offer, as Minister of Rural Development, my thanks and appreciation for what they are doing.

This building is also the home of the Federal Land Development Authority which has, since the launching of our National Rural Development Plan, made great strides and achieved considerable success in establishing throughout the length and breadth of our country, a considerable number of first class land development schemes.

To-day the Headquarters of the F.L.D.A. have been given a new home but they too are to be congratulated for giving new

homes to over 4,000 families in a total of thirty seven new land schemes throughout the country comprising of a total of 137,000 acres of new agricultural land.

I should like to congratulate the Chairman of F.L.D.A. and his officers for the good work that they are doing towards the implementation of our National Development Plan.

Similarly, credit goes to the staff of the Commissioner of Lands Office, the Department of Mines and the sub-office of the Geological Survey who have made, and are making considerable contribution to the implementation of our National Land Policy.

As for the building itself, I should like to congratulate the Architects Division of the Public Works Department and in particular the Architect who designed this building, Mr Howard Ashley, who has virtually watched its growth from the very beginning and has nursed it through to completion.

There is however one thing that I should like to say to the Architect that each time to come back to see the building he should not be alarmed at the fact that he cannot find the Heads of Department or its officers sitting all day and every day in this fine office.

If they are absent he must not take that as a reflection of his ability as an Architect and he must not think that these officers are not here because they do not like the building.

It has become a practice and it must remain the practice of the officers of our Government, particularly those Heads of Departments in Kuala Lumpur not to sit in their offices but to get out and around as often as possible and make sure that our National Five Year Plan is in fact being implemented with the utmost energy and the utmost speed.

Officers from Federal Headquarters need have no fear nowadays of not being able to get access to the Rural Areas to do their works: thanks to the success of our National Rural Road Programme so far.

In 1961 a programme of over 400 miles of Rural Road was completed and in 1962 so far a programme of over 800 miles of Rural Road are well under way to completion.

Again credit is due to the many Engineers, Technicians, and all staff of the Public Works Department throughout the entire Country for the great way that they have responded in spirit and in action to our National call for Development.

However, with regard to the National Second Five Year Plan as a whole, in the light of recent developments, such as the concept of Malaysia and the changing world market prices for natural rubber and other produce, it is essential for Government from time to time to take stock of Development progress and to review our National Plan in the light of changing needs.

The National Development Planning Committee has already initiated action for the review of our Development Plan and a great deal of valuable preparatory work for the assessment of our Development Programmes has already been carried out over the past few months in consultation with each Ministry as well as State Governments.

In addition to this a team of World Bank Experts arrived in the Country last week and they will work with our National Development Planning Committee to complete the final stages of this exercise of Review.

In this Review particular attention will be paid to the programmes for agricultural diversification and the need to speed up industrialization.

The Government is fully aware that agricultural diversification programmes which include greater rice production and other crops, oil palm development, the rehabilitation of coconut areas and the planting of alternative crops to rubber—these programmes will take a relatively long period to mature.

Deliberate and positive measures to further diversification have been initiated and a Survey Team of three experts provided by the Ford Foundation will arrive in Malaya early next month to examine the problems involved in accelerating our programme of agricultural diversification.

There are many aspects to our National Development Plan and it cannot be said that one aspect is greater than another.

What is required, and will always be required, is complete co-operation and co-ordination between every Department of Government and with the people themselves.

I hope that this new building which I am now about to declare open will, within its walls, always have an atmosphere and a feeling of unselfish service and a spirit of co-operation, a feeling which will become an established tradition not only within the structure of this new building but within the structure of the whole of our Government.