

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
ON THE FORMATION OF DEPARTMENTAL
COMMITTEES TO SPEED UP ACTION ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF F.L.D.A. SCHEMES, AT
KUALA LUMPUR ON THE 15TH MAY, 1961

Most of you here today, were present on the twentieth of February, at a meeting in which I explained the part I expected Heads of Departments to play in the implementation of the F.L.D.A. schemes.

What I said at that meeting still applies, and I understand that you have a copy of the main points which I hope you will continue to remember.

However, today, I would like to emphasize and stress, even more strongly what I have already said to you.

Firstly, I am continually being asked whether or not I think that our National Rural Development Plan will be a success—I should like all of you here today, to get firmly fixed in your mind the fact that there is no doubt about the future success of rural development—we are going to make it a success—and I tell you quite clearly that the first foundation of success is a complete and one hundred per cent standard of co-operation, and co-ordination, between Heads of Departments concerned with rural development.

Secondly, more important than anything else, is that each Head of Department acquires the correct attitude of mind.

In my opinion the correct attitude of mind, irrespective of what department you belong to, is an attitude in which all of you can see clearly the aim which we as a Government, are trying to achieve.

Every Head of Department must remember that our main national aim is much more important than the individual and technical aspects of his own department. Our failure in the past, when there have been delays and inefficiency, can usually be traced to the individual and rather selfish attitude which has resulted in departmental arguments which have slowed up action.

I hope, therefore, that in all meetings, which you attend in connection with any aspect of rural development, you will remember our national aim, and always give this aim priority over any minor departmental aspects. In other words, if we are to achieve results, all of you must acquire an attitude of give and take in a spirit of compromise, putting the national aim first and departmental views second.

I regard the Development of Land by the F.L.D.A. as one of the most important parts of our Rural Development Plan, and, as I have said before, the success of each and every F.L.D.A. scheme lies in the hands, not only of the officers of the F.L.D.A., but also in the hands of each and every Federal Departmental Head who has a part to play in the implementation of such schemes.

I recently appointed a Committee to examine the structure of the Federal Land Development Authority and submit to me any recommendations which would help in the improvement of the methods by which F.L.D.A. schemes are implemented.

As a result of this review, it is clear that the phases and functions in the implementation of any given Federal Land Development scheme fall into the following categories:

- (i) The investigation phase to determine the suitability of the area (including negotiation with State Governments for the land).
- (ii) The planning and physical development of the settlement area within the scheme.
- (iii) The selection of settlers.
- (iv) Crop planting and agricultural after care.

I intend today to stress only the first two of these phases:

- (a) Investigation phase; and
- (b) The planning and physical development of the settlement area within an F.L.D.A. scheme.

The investigation phase is a complex process of consultation between such Departments as Geological Survey, Mines, Forest, Survey, Soil and other Surveys, Agriculture, Town and Country Planning, and others.

The development phase is also a phase which needs a combined effort on the part of the P.W.D. with regard to Roads and Water; on the part of Education, Health, Telecoms., Veterinary, Agriculture and other Ministries and Departments.

Although these phases are inter-related, I consider that there is merit in separating their functions and to achieve greater efficiency it appears to me necessary to divide and streamline these functions. Also, as these phases and functions necessitate considerable detailed consultation and correspondence with many Federal Departments, it is my opinion that it would be a great help towards efficiency to establish two Advisory Committees consisting of the departmental officers concerned, not only to advise,, but also to shoulder squarely the responsibility of their departmental functions relating to the implementation of Land schemes by the Federal Land Development Authority.

I therefore, intend to appoint two Committees within the structure of the F.L.D.A. consisting of the departments represented at this meeting here, today.

One Committee will be called the Technical Investigation Committee; the other Committee will be called the Technical Development Committee.

I do not propose to discuss with you today the individual details of schemes; such detailed discussion can take place after I have left this meeting.

But I do wish to stress that these two Committees will have very regular meetings, which will be held in the new Ministry Operations Room, and I expect all of you, who represent your various departments on these Committees, to turn them into meetings of positive action, co-ordination and co-operation, so that we can cut down delays in inter-departmental correspondence; cut out unnecessary discussion and arguments and really get down to speed up the launching of F.L.D.A. schemes and increasing the tempo of action in the implementation of Federal Land schemes throughout the country.

Once these two Committees have started their work and action is under way, I intend, personally, to maintain close contact with your deliberations and activities myself.

I hope in the days to come I shall never be in a position in which I have to censure any department for lack of co-operation, and I do sincerely hope that each one of you will resolve to make these Committees function with a sense of purpose to achieve positive results, thus putting me in the pleasant position of never having to offer you anything except praise.

Finally, let us remember that each one of us, no matter what are our professional qualifications, no matter what is our position within the structure of Government—all of us exist in our present appointments with one purpose, and one purpose alone, to give our best for the benefit of the people, particularly the rural people of Malaya.

I sincerely hope you will continually remember this in your work on these two Committees, because the rural people do not always understand the structure of Government and the many technical differences between Government departments, but what the rural people do understand and fully appreciate are results on the ground. Do please resolve here, today, that you will, by working together, achieve results on the ground, in every single F.L.D.A. scheme throughout Malaya.