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SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
IN OPENING THE LADANG RINCHING CO-
OPERATIVE SOCIETY AT SEMENYIH, KAJANG,
SELANGOR ON 14TH APRIL, 1962

The Chairman, National Land Finance Co-operative Society Limited, Datuk Sambanthan, Members, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I have come here today on the invitation of your President, Datuk Sambanthan, not only to perform the opening ceremony for this new enterprise in ownership, but also to see for myself how the operations of the National Land Finance Co-operative Society Limited are working out on the ground. I may say I am very happy to have the opportunity to do so.

When this Society was launched less than two years ago, it naturally attracted considerable attention. As with all new ideas, there were some who were sceptical about its success. They did not believe it could work, they did not think there would be an adequate response.

The course of events turned out to be otherwise, and the faith of the original organisers was quickly justified. Within a year fifteen thousand members had joined up, and in November last I was glad to be able to send a message for the formal opening of Bukit Sidin Estate in Kedah, as a co-operative ownership venture by the society. Today, the Society has more than 23,000 members, and I am told they are enrolling by the hour. Now the Society is launching its second venture in co-operative ownership of a high-yielding rubber estate.

The formation of the Society, and its remarkable progress since, is an excellent example of the mutual benefit people can derive by getting together in a spirit of self-help. I am told that the Society intends to go on increasing membership, aiming at a total of 70,000 or more. There seems to be no reason to doubt, from experience so far, that this goal will be achieved, if not surpassed.

The most interesting aspect of the Society to me is that it is a development of private enterprise. The argument behind it is that if people can own land individually, or if companies can run

estates, then there is no reason why a number of people cannot combine together in a partnership for mutual benefit for that is exactly what a co-operative is. Their reasons for doing so in this case were quite personal; looking ahead they felt some alarm about the future of their livelihood if large rubber estates should be broken up into smaller ones. Here was a practical private answer to the problem, and so the Society is growing in both membership and activity.

There is no Government money in this Society, it is essentially a private venture. As such, it is novel and apparently successful contribution to the private sector of development in our Second Five-Year Plan. The all-round success of the Plan depends on development in both the public and the private sectors. There is no need for me to stress today the tremendous development efforts being undertaken by the Government in the public sector of the plan. Development in the private sector is proceeding very satisfactorily too, and as the Minister responsible for the overall execution of the Second Five-Year Plan, naturally I welcome most heartily each and every new development that increases the contribution of the private sector. That is why I am glad to be here, to let the rubber workers of Malaya know that I appreciate their efforts. They are demonstrating to Malaya at large that the small man can play his part (I say small in the economic sense) as well as a large business concern, in the private sector of our national development.

The Alliance Government in its National Development Programme and in particular in its Rural Development Programme is determined to do all it can to help the small men, the villagers, the estate workers, the small holders of all races in every part of the country to have a greater stake in the country, to have all the necessary amenities of a decent and civilised life and to have a means of livelihood that will be sufficient to enable him and his family to live a decent and comfortable life. For nearly two years since this National Rural Development Plan was launched, the Government has brought various amenities and facilities to the villages, has built roads, bridges, community halls, health clinics, schools, and has provided water supplies and electricity supplies to the various villages and rural areas throughout the country. We have also established thirty six land schemes under the auspices of the Federal Land Development Authority and in each of these

schemes, a family is given land of economic size i.e. ten acres each. The village is provided with all the necessary amenities, roads, schools, health centres etc., and each settler is assisted in the building of a house for him and his family and also in the development of his land. He is being given a subsistence allowance to enable him to carry on until he obtains income from his holdings. The Alliance Government has thus fulfilled his promise to give land to the people and every year more schemes will be started.

The Alliance Government believe in the principle of democracy and our aim is to establish a land owning democracy, to establish a society in which every citizen can claim to have a personal stake in the country. We believe in helping the poor, the landless, so that they can be levelled up to a standard of living which we consider compatible with a decent, civilised society in an independent and sovereign country. One of the ways in which we set about to do this is in the way you; are now doing or achieving this purpose in a co-operative way in a manner that should result in its members having a reasonable income of their own by sharing in the ownership of productive property while at the same time earning their daily livelihood. We have owner-farmers and we hope to have many more; we have owner-businessmen, both large and small; we have owner-members in co-operatives of many kinds. There is no reason at all, therefore, why we should not have owner-workers as well, and the more of them the better. The successful future development of this Society, with private enterprise and co-operative ownership progressing as one, may well result in the establishment of large groups of owner-workers in our country. I have no doubt at all that such a development is in complete harmony with the spirit of free enterprise and the needs of national progress.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay my personal tribute to your President, Datuk Sambanthan, who in addition to his many other duties and responsibilities has personally taken interest in the formation and establishment of this Society. I wish this Society and its Members every success in this new venture of rubber-estate ownership in Ladang Rinching. And in doing so I am happy to declare formally the launching of this splendid enterprise.