

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AT THE CONFERENCE OF STATE ENGINEERS
AT THE NATIONAL OPERATIONS ROOM,
KUALA LUMPUR ON 19TH JULY, 1963

Mr. Owen¹, Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to have the opportunity of meeting all of you Senior Officers of the Public Works Department throughout the country.

As you said Mr. Owen during the last few months I have been pre-occupied with matters of national and international commitments and have not devoted as much time as I wanted to Rural Development and, as a result, some people think that there has been a lull and a slowing up of development progress but, as you explained just now and I am sure you all agree, facts and figures disprove this. What in fact has happened is like the launching of our present Five Year Plan reminds me of the take off an aeroplane. Starting off the ground the engine of an aeroplane roars at a very high pitch but once it is in the air and travelling at speed the engine then settles down to a much quieter pitch. Our National Development Plan was rather like that.

The first two years there was a tremendous lot of publicity and a lot of talking and we got up to a high speed of implementation which has not only been maintained but is now taken as normal routine in our lives. Facts and figures can prove this and can also prove that your Department has developed a tempo and a capacity which is several hundred percent higher than any achievement reached during previous years. For example, I have recently compared the figures on road-making.

¹ **The Chairman of the Conference of State Engineers**

During the years 1956-1960 the Public Works Department increased the total road mileage of 6,538 miles by an addition of 546 miles of road during these five years whereas during the years 1961-1963 your Department will have increased the road mileage by approximately 1,600 miles. That, in my opinion, is a record of which you as Engineers may well be proud. To take another example-water supplies.

During the years 1956-1960 the increase of water supplied totalled sixteen million gallons whereas the increase during 1960-1965 will be no less than fifty two million gallons. Your Department will have increased output by 200 per cent at least. Similarly, with regard to buildings. Your output of work in such Government sectors as Health, Education, Police, Labour Lines, Armed Forces, is much too complex a record for me to quote facts and figures but I know, from my own visits throughout the Country, that your achievement has been comparable.

Therefore, Gentlemen, it is not a matter of idle flattery that I offer you my congratulations but my words of praise to you are based on the record of positive action and achievement which is proved by tangible results on the ground. There has been a considerable amount of rumour that this year funds for development were cut back. I do not know who started this rumour but it is quite untrue because when we launched the Second National Five Year Development Plan the total expenditure planned for the five years was \$2,100 million. This means that our annual ration of expenditure for development according to plan is approximately \$450-5500 million per year and if you look at the Development Estimates for 1963 you will see that the total expenditure for the year was approximately \$493 million which means that the Government is providing money according to the plan and that any rumour about cutting back on expenditure for development is quite unfounded. As I said the implementation of our Development Plan has been a great success and I think the reasons for this success is that all Government Officers in each and every Ministry and Department have learnt to work together as a team and have applied the dictum that "It doesn't matter who we are, it doesn't matter what we are, it doesn't matter where we are" within the structure of Government, "what

really does matter is the job that we are doing and that we do it with all our heart putting service before self" in making our contribution to the development of our country.

And you, Gentlemen, as Engineers of the Public Works Department have shown, throughout the last three years in the implementation of our plan that you can work hard and efficiently and unselfishly. I thank you all very much indeed. And now, Gentlemen, having praised and thanked you, I should like to ask you to renew your energies and efforts on development for the future. We have many tasks ahead and we are beginning to enter a bigger and better phase in the implementation of our National Five Year Development Plan. At the end of this month we expect the arrival of a team of World Bank Experts to examine a major project on Land Development which is the Temerloh/Maran/Jerantut Triangle with a potential of some 150,000-200,000 acres which will become one of the greatest adventures in Land Development, for smallholders, not only in Malaya but perhaps will be judged on world standards.

A Canadian Survey Team has recently completed groundwork on a reconnaissance survey for a 120-mile road stretching from roughly Sungei Siput on the West to Kuala Berang on the East. It is hoped that their findings and their report will be available by October this year and the implementation of this East-West Highway will be a project of true and ambitious development opening up considerable economic, agricultural, and timber resources of our Country. In just about a months' time three new States will be added to the Federation namely, Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah. Singapore perhaps may present no problem as far as Rural Development is concerned but the people of Sarawak and Sabah expect progress and development and also obtain the amenities of life that people in this country have enjoyed. Therefore it is our duty to do all we can to help them to obtain these amenities.

This will mean added responsibilities and more work to you. So, therefore, Gentlemen, in the immediate years which lie ahead there is more and more to be done. And one of the greatest ingredients of our future success in development is to ensure that you, all Government Officers, not only those who are present here but

also those who are still at their various tasks throughout the Country, give of your best as you have already proved by action that you can give.

I wish you all success not only in the deliberations of your Conference to-day but also in your work when you return to your various stations throughout Malaya.