

ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF RURAL
DEVELOPMENT AT THE OPENING OF THE
CONFERENCE OF CHIEF SURVEYORS IN
KUALA LUMPUR ON 25TH SEPTEMBER,
1962

It is more than **two** and a half years since last I addressed you at your Conference. At that time, **this** Ministry of Rural Development was only very new and the machinery for giving effect to government's policy to improve the lot of Rural **dweller**s had not been properly set up. On that occasion the Surveyor-General of New Zealand was on a visit to the Federation to see for himself how his Government could help us in our Rural **Develop**ment drive and, as you all know, the result of this was the **splendid gesture** of making twelve Surveyors available to the Federation under the Colombo Plan. These twelve **Surveyors** have been here more than one and the half years now and have **been** employed on Rural Development **projects throughout** the Federation in co-operation with your own staff.

I am very well aware of your **staffing** problems. To meet the shortage of **Division I** officers arrangements **are being made** now to recruit five contract officers from Australia or New **Zealand**. Furthermore, it is hoped that **some** at least of the Colombo Plan Surveyors now serving **in** the Federation will stay on for an extended tour of duty.

Only now has the drive to recruit the 250 new Technicians whose recruitment was referred to at the last **Conference** been completed. The demands on you have **been** increasing all the **time** and I am grateful for the loyalty and the energy with which these demands have been met. As these new Technicians have been absorbed and trained your departmental potential has been increasing. The demands are going to increase still further and I hope that you will be able to **continue** to meet them as you have **done** hitherto.

I have stressed again and again my conviction that it is vitally important for all of us to get out on the ground and I have tried **to** set an example in this regard myself. It is essential that every Chief Surveyor should go out on the ground on every

major Rural Development project in his State so that he **may** know at first hand just what progress has been **made** and where delays are likely to arise **so that** they may be avoided. It is this personal interest by senior officers which will insure that momentum is not **lost**.

Coming as you **do** from all over the Federation you will have problems peculiar to your own individual spheres of activity. It would be idle to pretend that there have been no misunderstanding in the past and I know that your Department has **suffered** from time to time quite a deal of frustration and irritation in that there have been seeming changes of plan and inconsistency in policy from place to place. I know very well that it has **always** been your cry that every change of mind may well result in the abandonment of schemes already surveyed or their modification in a manner very costly in survey effort. I **assure** you that I have taken this up very strongly and I think I can assure you that you should have very little further complaint in this connection. Your co-operation on the spot with those who, **like** you are committed to the furtherance of policy is essential but if this seems to fail and you find yourself being asked to do what you feel professionally to be wrong or unnecessary, you must pass this information on without delay and, if necessary, it will be brought to my personal attention so that matters can be put right.

I have been grateful for your loyal support and when you return to your respective States I should appreciate it if it were made known to all those that I **do** not merely take for granted the efforts of your staff. Greater efforts have been demanded of all of you and there is no prospect of **less** being expected for a long time to come if our goals are to be reached.

I **do** not propose to take up any more of your time. I know you have a long Agenda to deal with at this Conference and I hope that these discussions of yours will result in further increases in your Department's efficiency on all fronts. I wish you a profitable **Conference**.