

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AT PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT ENGINEERS
CONFERENCE AT DEWAN TUNKU ABDUL
RAHMAN, KUALA LUMPUR ON 6TH APRIL,
1962

Mr Jewkes¹, Gentlemen,

I am very happy indeed to have this opportunity to meet senior officers of the PWD and State Engineers and of talking to you all. I had no idea that your officers regarded me as a man "with the big stick". If I have given the impression of using, so to speak the "big stick" I can assure you that I only use the "stick" when the pace of progress "sticks" and need pushing.

When I hear that you were to have this conference this morning I have asked that I be given an opportunity to say a few words to you, because on the previous occasions I have only met you either in the National Development Operations Room where I called you for briefing or on the ground, during my many tours around the country when I have inspected development projects on the spot and seen you at work.

On these occasions both in the National Development Room and on my tours, what I have to say to you in most cases has been fairly firm and strong words. Therefore, I thought that it would be a pleasant change today, instead of you coming to, that I take the opportunity of coming to your conference to express my sincere appreciation and praise of the great efforts that you have contributed to the success of the first two years of our Second Five Year National Development Plan.

Normally, Gentlemen, when I make a speech on development, the press would quote me but today for a change I will quote the Press. I remember at the beginning of this year there was an editorial in one of our leading newspapers entitled "the big task" and this is what the newspaper said:

"The Public Works Department has been given a Herculean task in the Second Five Year Development Plan and it has

¹ The Director of Public Works.

been estimated that about 90% of the total Development Construction Projects require the attention of the P.W.D. in part or in full. The whole plan virtually evolves round this one department. If it fails to achieve the many targets which have been laid down then the Development Plan suffers."

I am glad to say that in the implementation of the Five Year Development Plan so far you have all done extremely well in achieving our targets to date.

If my figures for 1961 achievements are correct you deserve the highest praise—for example, roads 340 miles completed by December, 1961, with another 200 miles under active construction, access roads to fourteen FLDA schemes, forty-six midwives clinics and 119 under construction, three Rural Health Centres completed with thirty-eight under construction, 560 labour lines completed, six office blocks completed and three under construction.

At the same time as these projects were completed at the end of the year, action on implementation of the 1962 programme was well under way with very tangible results on the ground. Many of the 1962 projects have either gone to tender or actually started on the ground.

Also, the Waterworks Branch of your Department are well ahead on the implementation of a considerable number of new water supplies in each State.

I realise that your Department started our present Development Programme handicapped by a shortage of plant and this deficiency, up to a point, was rectified by the delivery of 145 tractors, fifty-nine graders, forty-six scrapers, 129 rollers and 324 lorries.

What you have achieved so far has, I realise, been carried out at a time when you were also experiencing difficulties of staffing.

I realise that you all have had to work extremely long hours at a very high pressure and what I am worried about is how long you can now maintain this high pressure.

Before there are any serious repercussions I hope that it will be possible to recruit additional staff to ease your present burden.

I should like to express my personal thanks and appreciation to Mr Jewkes for the excellent work done during the three years he

has been Director of Public Works and to pay tribute to his achievements throughout his twenty-one years of service as an Engineer, Architect, Designer and Administrator in our Country.

There is no fear that his memory will not remain with us, because every time we watch a football match in the Merdeka Stadium, or we hope, in the near future, watch badminton in the Stadium Negara, we shall remember him even in **fourty** years time when we have to walk there with "big sticks" to support us in our old age.