

REMARKS BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT NUPW SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS AT PLANTATION HOUSE, KUALA LUMPUR ON 28TH JANUARY, 1973

Sdr P. P. Narayanan,¹ Dif-dif yang mulia, Saudara-saudara sekalian,

Anniversaries like this are always a delightful and even sometimes boisterous occasion and I am particularly happy to be here this evening to share with members of the NUPW in this moment of joy and happiness. I am also delighted to see with us a larger representation of fraternal organisations from Overseas who have come specially to enjoin in this celebration, some of whom I shall have the pleasure of meeting again at the ICFTU-MTUC Seminar.

As we all know, NUPW can be regarded as the pioneer among democratically organized workers in this country. In fact it was the first union to emerge during the dark days of the emergency when the then colonial regime saw the wisdom of permitting legitimate trade union activities as a counter to communist insurgency.

The history of the NUPW speaks for itself and in this regard the monumental work by Dr Charles Gamba is in itself the highest tribute to the NUPW and the gallant stalwarts who founded it. On this happy and auspicious occasion, I would like to convey personally the warm appreciation of the government to PP and this tireless colleagues and to all members of the NUPW for their immeasurable contribution to the overall national effort, particularly since independence.

Without doubt, over the years the rubber industry in this country—i.e. the plantation sector—owe a great debt of obligation to the NUPW and plantation workers in general for helping to maintain the present healthy and buoyant state of the industry. Admittedly, there had been occasions of stress and strains but in the final analysis goodwill and reason always prevailed. I think plantation workers, whether within the NUPW or outside it, have been able to enjoy reasonable wages and better working conditions as a result of skilful—and oftentime tenacious—negotiation by

¹ Setiausaha Agung NUPW.

the union in defending their legitimate rights. I would like to assure the members of NUPW the Government will continue to look after their interest and in line with our Economic Policy as our country prospers. They will have their rightful share of that prosperity and a rightful place in the country.

Today NUPW has grown immensely in stature and influence. There is no better testimony to the success of the Union than the fact that your Secretary-General is President of the ICFTU—MTUC and since recently a Banker in the making. Not long ago the Union launched a Company the Great Alioniers Trading Corporation—GATC which among other things runs a Supermarket here in P.J. Another matter of significant interest is that the Union will soon be participating in the national industrial programme through the multi-million dollar Lakshmi Textiles Corporation in Seremban. I believe this is one unique aspect of NUPW's progress which even Dr Gamba could not anticipate when he wrote his book some years ago.

It is a truism that maturity brings along with it a compelling demand for responsibility. The NUPW has been an excellent example in this which I would expect other unions to emulate.

I am confident the NUPW will continue to grow from strength to strength and continue to play its role in the economic and social development of the nation.