

EMBARGOED UNTIL 27TH FEBRUARY 77

SPEECH BY MR LIM KIM SAN, MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF PUB, AT THE OPENING OF UPPER PEIRCE RESERVOIR ON 27 FEB 77 AT 4.30 P.M.

The Upper Peirce Reservoir which you see before you is Singapore's largest impounding reservoir. It is also the last of the 4 reservoirs within the central protected catchment area. With its completion, we have fully exploited the sources of the so-called "sweet water" i.e. water which flows through unpopulated and therefore unpolluted catchment areas.

Two more reservoirs, one formed by bunding a swamp in Pandan and another by closing the mouth of the Kranji River have also been completed. The water in these estuarial reservoirs will have a high salinity as they also store water which flows through densely populated areas and highly polluted pig farms.

Among the many attributes of the Singaporean is the possession of **very** sensitive taste buds. Recently, we introduced 6 million gallons of water from the Pandan Reservoir into the distributing system. Of course, the water was treated by a very sophisticated and costly process, including ozonization which removes the colour and smell from the water. Immediately, the PUB was inundated with complaints about the strange taste of the water. The PUB hastened to assure consumers that the water is perfectly safe for domestic use and its quality is well within the WHO requirements for drinking water.

More estuarial reservoirs are being constructed on the western part of the island to meet the increasing demand for water. As demand increases, more and more of our water supply will be drawn from these estuarial reservoirs. But as I said, the water is potable



and fit for domestic use as it is within the standards required by WHO. We should therefore be prepared to accept the different taste of our water in the future.

It took almost a year to fill the Upper Peirce Reservoir. Fortunately, it was almost full of water before the onset of last year's drought. Those who have spent almost 5 years in the investigation, planning, design and the construction of the Upper Peirce Scheme have the satisfaction of knowing that its timely completion saved Singapore from water rationing in 1976.

The spectre of water shortage is always with us. We are already tapping lower quality raw water from the estuarial reservoirs to meet increasing demand. Keeping the streams clean will improve the quality of water collected in these reservoirs and help prevent major increase in treatment costs. As we exhaust all possible sites for surface water storage on the island, we will have to consider treating effluent water for use. We can defer resorting to unconventional and costly methods of increasing our water supply if we do not waste water. Keeping our streams clean and making water conservation a habit will ensure us a steady supply of water from conventional sources without greatly increasing costs.