

SPEECH BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD, MR. G.E.N. OEFLEERS, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF SULTAN ISMAIL WATERWORKS, SCUDAI, ON SATURDAY 3rd APRIL, 1965.

Your Highness, The Honourable the Mentri Besar of Johore, Mr. Minister, Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen -

It is my privilege and my pleasure, personally, and on behalf of the Public Utilities Board of Singapore, to associate myself with the words of welcome expressed by the General Manager.

It is with added pleasure that I wish to express a further word of sincere thanks to His Highness the Sultan of Johore, not only for having so kindly consented to these waterworks being named after him, but also for having found the time to grace this function with his presence and to declare these waterworks officially opened.

The association of His Highness with these waterworks is emblematic of the association of his State with the water supply of Singapore.

It was apparent, more than 40 years ago, that sources of water supply in Singapore, even if fully harnessed, would not meet the anticipated demand, and it was 1920 that permission was obtained from the Johore Government to investigate Johore sources. And so it came about that Singapore obtained her first supply from Johore from the Gunong Pulai/Pontian complex in 1932, and further supplies from the Tebrau River in 1952.

Now we have these newly completed waterworks here in Scudai, giving Singapore a third source of supply from Johore.

We have, by this project, augmented our potential output of portable water by between 30 and 45 million gallons per day. Allowing for the present capacity of the pipelines and for some 5 million gallons per day going to consumers in Johore Bahru, the position is that the total number of gallons which could now be taken over the causeway into Singapore from Gunong Pulai, Tebrau and Scudai is between 60 and 75 million gallons per day.

These figures, added to the total of some 24 million gallons per day which we are now able to produce from our sources in Singapore, would appear to be more than enough to meet the present demand of some 75 to 80 million gallons per day in Singapore, but with the growth of population and so of demand, and with the ever present possibility of drought especially of the nature we had to face in 1963, it is imperative that there must be provision for expansion to meet the future needs of the people.

The remaining potential sources of water supply in Singapore are negligible. We are therefore dependent on Johore for further sources of water supply and, as is well known, we have now embarked on a scheme to extract water from the Johore River, upstream from Kota Tinggi. This should give us a further 30 to 45 m.g.d. in 1967 and progressively by agreement with the Johore Government, we may obtain as much as 250 m.g.d. from that source.

There is no doubt that the link which was forged between Singapore and Johore in Gunong Pulai in the early twenties of this century and which has endured for more than four decades, would need to endure for many more decades to come. The presence of Your Highness at this function and the inscription of Your Highness's name, with your Highness's gracious consent, on the commemorative plaque which Your Highness will be unveiling, is assurance that that will be so.

Before ending, I would like to pay a public tribute to the Board's staff, the Electrical Consultants and the Constructors for their services in the rapid construction of these Waterworks. I have, elsewhere, recorded the Board's appreciation for these services. I am sure that they deserve the highest praise for their zeal, their devotion to their respective duties and the manner in which they completed their task within the relatively short period of twenty months.

By reason of their accomplishment, the Board was in the position to discharge its immediate statutory, and the Singapore Government its political, responsibilities to the public of Singapore.

I am very pleased that the Singapore Minister for Law, whose portfolio calls for an oversight of the Public Utilities Board, has been able to be here with us this afternoon. He is a comparative newcomer to the scene - the successor to the Prime Minister of Singapore in these matters - but a newcomer who has, if I may say so, made a very rapid impact on the workings of the Board, an impact which is no less effective than the impact made by his predecessor. I thank the Minister for having found the time to come to this function and hasten to invite him to say a few words on this very auspicious occasion.

APRIL 3, 1965

Time issued: 1230 hours