

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR FINANCE, DR. GOH KENG SWEE,  
AT THE OPENING OF NATIONAL GRAIN ELEVATOR, LTD., ON  
TUESDAY, 28TH APRIL, 1964 AT 5.00 P.M.

I'm very happy indeed to be able to be present here this evening to perform the foundation ceremony of what will be Singapore's as well as Malaysia's first terminal harbour silo.

This is another of the many industries which have been started during the last few weeks. It is an indicator that industrialisation in Singapore has got off to a good start, and is gathering momentum. We have given so much emphasis and rightly so, on the industrial aspect of Jurong. But as a result, the general impression has arisen that Jurong is purely an industrial Estate. This is not so.

For the first time in South East Asia, an attempt is made to build a new town with all its complexities. Jurong is not merely an industrial Estate, nor is it a dormitory suburb of Singapore. It is going to be a town to cater for all the requirements of a dynamic and prosperous community. It is to be a habitat in which the basic human requirements such as employment, housing, education, shopping and recreation will be catered for.

The exploding population and the advantages of the geographical position of Singapore have brought out the challenge in planning which we are attempting to meet by this experiment in Jurong. Population estimates indicate that by 1990 Singapore will have a population of four million. We have to think ahead at least one generation to ensure that this huge population is properly provided for within our limited area of 224 sq. miles. Otherwise we shall head for irredeemable chaos. This huge mass of humanity has to be reasonably housed, given employment, education and recreational facilities, and adequate means of transport. All these call for comprehensive, intelligent long term planning. I am glad to say that the Government has this planning well in hand.

Jurong is the first of our plans to create a series of Satellite Towns around Singapore. In each of these new towns we will try to provide in a self-contained form for all the amenities and facilities normally found in a city. These towns will be joined by a network of roads, mono-rails and other means of communication. The concept of a ring of cities around Singapore Island is to take advantage of the sea around us, so that it is possible for everyone to live not further than two miles from the coast so that they can enjoy the sea and the sea air.

It is most encouraging that our attempt to provide employment in Jurong is meeting with success. In fact as I had pointed out before, the pace of industrialisation has been going so fast that provision for the other social amenities has not caught up with it. To redress this imbalance in the growth of Jurong, the Government has decided to set up a Ministerial Committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Minister for National Development and myself. We will put into operation a short-term crash programme of three years to ensure the healthy balanced growth of Jurong as the first of the new ring of cities around the Island of Singapore.

The Singapore Government is establishing in the Jurong Industrial complex many important facilities - namely, harbour and railway. This silo is yet another service. When in operation it will serve the bulk-storage, loading and unloading needs of the State's flour and fodder mills.

With its initial storage capacity of 20,000 tons and up-to-date equipment for fully mechanised bulk-handling, National Grain Elevator can play a very important role to increase the volume of grain trade in this country and improve its efficiency.

Cheaper prices for grain and fodder will be possible with the use of the silo as we will then import in bulk and this will result in savings in handling and freight.

In the years ahead I hope because of its strategic position in relation to the road, rail and sea access available at Jurong, National Grain Elevator will make Singapore the most important grain distribution centre in South East Asia.

Whilst looking ahead I would like to mention here that although initially this silo would only be concentrating on the bulk-handling of three grains - wheat, maize and soyabeans - I'm happy to disclose that the Company has plans for it to expand and include the storage and handling of rice as well.

At present the peculiar storage problem of rice - it cannot be stored in the same way as other grain - is being studied and a pilot scheme to test a new storage method would soon be started.

I would like to congratulate the Economic Development Board and F.E. Zueiling.Ltd., present subscribers to this company as well as the other participants on their enterprise in starting this new industrial venture, and wish them success both in their initial scheme as well as their big plans for the company in the future.

It is now both my honour and pleasure to perform the laying of the foundation stone of the National Grain Elevator Ltd.

APRIL 28th, 1964

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