

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR,
 MR. JEK YEUN THONG, AT THE INAUGURAL DELE-
 GATES' CONFERENCE OF THE PIONEER INDUSTRIES
 EMPLOYEES' UNION, AT THE CULTURAL CENTRE,
 ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1964, AT 10.30 A.M.

It gives me great pleasure to be with you and say a few words on the occasion of the inaugural meeting of your Union.

The Pioneer Industries Employees' Union has been in existence for only 10 months. It is only natural that in this initial stage of development of the union, you have had to tackle a host of administrative and organisational difficulties. Despite the teething troubles, you have up to date managed to organise fifteen hundred workers from 19 establishments in your Union. This is indeed a creditable achievement.

As you are aware, your Union, being an organisation catering for workers engaged in the pioneer industries, occupies a very special position in our trade union movement, in that its policies, programmes and actions directly affect the industrialisation efforts of Singapore. Your responsible actions will greatly help build up investors' confidence, thereby accelerating the flow of capital, both local and foreign, into industrial undertakings. The stabilisation of industrial relations in the pioneer industries also depends a lot on the healthy growth of your Union. This is indeed a great challenge. I am happy to note that you have faced up to this challenge and you have made voluntary efforts to ensure that pioneer industries in the first crucial years of growth will not be killed by unreasonable industrial action.

Of course, the employers also have to play an equally important part in the maintenance of industrial peace in pioneer industries. They have an obligation to see that the workers enjoy just and reasonable wages and conditions of service. It is also their duties to see that just grievances of workers are promptly and satisfactorily dealt with.

There is no doubt that your Union has got off to a good start, this is clearly shown by your record of the last 10 months. Now that you have survived the crucial initial stage of a new born union, you will next embark on the task of consolidation and expansion. In this second phase of union building, I am sure that you will always be on the alert to the constant danger of subversion and infiltration posed by the pro-Communist anti-national elements and Soekarno's agents. As you know our enemy not only engages in military aggression against us, but also goes all out to disrupt our economy and sabotage our industrialisation programme. As workers in the pioneer industries you are in the front line of our nation's economic defence. And you would be doing our country - Malaysia - a great service if, by your constant vigilance and determined effort, the Pioneer Industries Employees' Union could continue to flourish as a patriotic and democratic organisation and play its vital role in establishing industrial relations in the pioneer and new industries.

OCTOBER 10, 1964..

(Time issued: 1500 hours)
