

SPEECH BY THE HON'BLE MR. F. THOMAS, MINISTER FOR
COMMUNICATIONS AND WORKS AT THE OPENING OF THE
NEW JALAN KAYU POST OFFICE ON SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 1957.

I am glad to see that we have with us today a good number of people who live and work in this Yio Chu Kang/Jalan Kayu district, because this is a happy occasion. As you know, one important aim of your Labour Front Coalition Government is to bring the Government services to the people. This Post Office will serve the population of about 14,000 people and I am sure it will serve you well. This area here contains quite a mixed population and, in particular, it has a great many farmers. Now farming is a thing that interests me very much because it is from the farmers that we get the food the people eat. During the two years that our Government has been in office the farmers have achieved an enormous expansion in food supplies. Two years ago in 1954 the total number of chickens and ducks sold for food was about five million. In 1956 it was about 15 million and of course chickens and ducks produce eggs, and sales of eggs have increased by 100 million since 1954. Pig production for the market has also made a very big increase; from just under 400,000 pigs in 1954 to nearly 550,000 in 1956. Now those increases are really something worth talking about. An increase of 10 million chickens for food and of 100 million eggs means that everybody can get better meals. My colleague, Mr. Jumabhoy in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has taken a very great interest in the work of his officers who are trying to help farmers to increase food production, and they have certainly shown results. I say to the farmers "Thank you. Thank you very much. You are doing a fine job."

At the same time that food production has been increasing we have also raised the average wage of the worker from \$143 a month in 1954 to \$161 in 1956: that means that he has a bit more money to spend on buying the eggs and the chickens and the pork which the farmers produce.

There are a lot more facts of this kind which I could quote to you but the point I want to make is just this. We have today in Singapore an increase of real wealth and that increased wealth is being distributed through the workers of the population. The result is increased activity all round. Sales of all kinds of goods are expanding - milk or bicycles or motor cars or clothing. In short, the people of Singapore are all sharing in a well maintained state of prosperity.

Now, as we get more prosperous new activities develop and they call for new services. We are trying to see that rural areas get their full share of these services and, in particular, means of communicating. This Post Office will, I hope, make it easier for you to get in touch with the rest of Singapore and with the people outside Singapore so that you can write letters and receive letters and keep in touch whether with the people who buy the farmers' products or with the Government officers whose job it is to help the farmers or with your friends and relations. You have a public call-box with this office and the Telephone Board will in two or three weeks complete the installation of a call-box in Kampong Cheng San and over the next few years we shall be able to continue to expand and improve services of this sort for the people in the rural areas. We are living in a modern age and we must have up-to-date means of communication.

There is one other point I should like to make. I told you that we have at present a real expansion of wealth; but we also have a tremendous expansion of population. That means that there are more mouths to feed and if the population expands faster than the wealth of Singapore then there will be less for everybody. A rice bowl that feeds 10 people must be made bigger if it is going to feed 15.

The only way you can expand wealth is by investment so that you can create new means of wealth whether by better equipment or by improved methods. But you cannot invest if you do not save. It is very important for Singapore that everybody should keep in mind the need for putting aside savings month by month whether it is small savings that school students put together, or whether it is the bigger savings of the farmer or industrialist who has his own large plans for expansion. Added together the savings of the people of Singapore can and will serve to expand the wealth of Singapore. Without saving, wealth cannot expand.

The Post Office Savings Bank keeps money safely for you until you need it. If you keep your savings in a small tin under your bed or some other hiding place, it is not really secure as thieves may rob you of it, or white ants or fire destroy it.

When I have opened this Post Office in a minute or two, the counter will be open not only for the sale of stamps but also for savings bank business and I hope that you will all remember that and whenever you can you will open a savings bank account if you have not got one and put into it money regularly so that you can build up savings which will be a security for yourself and which will help in the great task of expanding Singapore's wealth and making this a still richer and more prosperous country for us all. And now I have great pleasure in declaring this Post Office open.

JUNE 9, 1957.

(Time issued - 1600 hours.)

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