

TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS
& WORKS, THE HON. MR. FRANCIS THOMAS, AT THE
OPENING OF THE BUKIT TIMAH BY-PASS AT 4 P.M. ON
FRIDAY, MAY 16, 1958.

I was happy to accept the Rural Board's invitation to open this By-pass and still more happy to hear just now that the Rural Board gets good work and value for public money spent from the Rural Branch of the Public Works Department.

My Ministry has a great deal to do with what we call 'Communications'. In a great trading city like Singapore, good communications are absolutely necessary for prosperity. People have to be able to talk to each other and to write to each other; and these needs are met by the Telecommunications Department, by the Postal Services and by the Telephone Board. They also have to get about and see each other and move goods from one place to another; and this need is met by roads and by water communications and by railways.

Within Singapore, roads are of by far the greatest importance. Our external trade comes to us by sea but the internal flow is along our roads.

This new By-pass is essential for the future development of trade and of industry. Instead of vehicles passing inconveniently and dangerously through Bukit Timah Village, they can now pass quickly and safely round the village along this By-pass.

Other works designed to carry heavy traffic of the same sort are along Upper Thomson Road, at Yio Chu Kang and across the road at Jurong. As this Western side of Singapore Island develops and fills up and the new towns at Bulim, at Yio Chu Kang and Woodlands take shape, the need for good major roads will continuously increase. We have to foresee future needs and provide for them.

Mr. Meadows spoke about the additional \$750,000 which we have provided for improving rural roads. As you know, during the last two or three years, our farmers have enormously increased their output of wealth - the basic wealth on which we live, the food which is sold and bought in our public markets. Singapore's farmers could, perhaps, once have been called "forgotten men"; indeed I called them that when I opened the Bukit Panjang Post Office in 1956. Today they are, most certainly, not forgotten.

In 1954, the Rural Board had only a little more than \$5-millions for its whole spending including all development work. Today it has \$5-millions for development alone, and its total spending will be about \$13-millions. You can see how public investment in the rural areas goes hand in hand with increased rural production and prosperity and with better standards of living for all on the Island.

As the rural areas take their place in the pattern of Singapore's prosperity, so their need for better communications increases. Our accelerated road programme recognises this, and with it go other programmes for expanded agricultural and veterinary services, for better drainage and so on.

Quite soon....2/-

Quite soon there will be elections for three Rural District Councils which will take the place of the Rural Board. The people of the rural areas will be more closely in touch with the machine provided to serve their needs. It is very important that these new District Councils should be wise and practical in their work.

They will have large sums of the peoples' money to spend, and if they make mistakes, the money will be wasted and the people will not benefit. When election time comes, it will be necessary for the voters to consider carefully who to choose to be responsible for the spending of their money.

I have spoken for rather a long time, but I wanted you to see this new By-pass as part of the same picture that I see; the picture of the public and private sectors co-operating usefully for the prosperity of the people.

As for the By-pass itself, you have heard from the Chairman of the Rural Board about the large **scale** of the work done, and I am sure you will agree that it is a very valuable and excellent piece of work.

I most cordially congratulate the Rural Branch of the P.W.D., its head and its engineers and its other staff of all grades for the quick, economic and skilled workmanship which they have put into this project.

I now formally declare the Bukit Timah By-pass open.

MAY 16, 1958.

(Time issued 1400 hours)
