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Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY MR LEE YIOK SENG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT), AT THE PRODUCTIVITY MONTH CEREMONY AT DBS AUDITORIUM ON THURSDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 1982 AT 1.45 PM

It gives me great pleasure to be here today at PWD's Productivity Month Ceremony and to give away the prizes to participants of the various activities organised during the month. These activities are to remind PWD staff of the need to increase productivity, or to educate the staff of the various techniques productivity may be raised, or simply to inform them of the concern and interest Government has placed on work productivity and good job attitudes. Whatever the activities are, from the reports I have received, I am aware that many of you have taken a keen interest in them, either as participants in the activities, or more important, as organisers and promoters of them. The success of the various activities speaks well of the Department as a whole, and is reflective of the team spirit that is in every staff member of PWD.

While I do not wish to use this occasion to sermonise on productivity, I must remind you that today's ceremony is not and should not be taken as the end of your Department's productivity movement. Productivity is not a seven-day wonder to be resurrected at a given time each year. It is and should be a philosophy of life for every working man and woman of Singapore. Only by being productive, and continually being conscious of the need to do better at every turn, in every job, can we as a nation move forward. To stagnate in this ever competitive world is to move backwards. And we, not being lucky enough to be endowed with rich natural resources, have nothing to fall back on.

Many of you, I understand, are appreciative of your Department's work as the technical arm of the Government in implementing public projects, especially in roads and buildings. As your work touches the daily life of every person in Singapore, you can be

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sure that if you do your job well, everyone will stand to benefit. This being the case, the measurement of your productivity should not be restricted to normal indicators like output per manhour, but should include indicators of the degree of service such as the number of complaints you have been receiving, adverse or favourable press comments etc. Indeed, to do your job better, you must always cultivate rapport and generate support amongst the citizens you serve.

I was coming to work the other day, along Henderson Bridge, where some road works was going on. A whole row of road indicators put up by PWD was knocked down by some passing motor-cars. This caused a considerable traffic jam. While one could blame the errant motorist for being careless, or even mischievous, I could not help but wonder if this could have been avoided had there been more understanding from the motorist of what PWD is doing. I also began to wonder if the lost productivity and abortive work, arising from the accident, could have been anticipated had there been more care by the Department in placing the indicators.

This is but a small example to show that productivity is a two way street, dependent on the rapport between PWD departmental staff and the public interest they serve. There will be more productivity if there is greater support from members of the public for PWD's work. This support must be built on understanding and consideration. To promote this understanding, PWD must always be considerate of the public's demands that they be served well, and be caused the least inconvenience. Similarly, to enable PWD to do its service role better, the public must be aware that PWD's work is undertaken to promote the general physical well-being of Singapore. If in the course of project implementation, individual members of the public are affected in any way, they should understand that the work would not have been undertaken if it is not necessary to promote the general good. After all, productivity from PWD is a small input to the overall productivity of Singapore, and every citizen will one way or another be benefited, if Singapore, as a nation, can continually improve on its performance.

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