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Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY MR ONG PANG BOON, MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AT THE
OPENING OF THE EAST COAST PARKWAY (BETWEEN KEPPEL ROAD AND
SHEPTON WAY JUNCTION AND MARINA CENTRE) ON SATURDAY,
• 26 SEPTEMBER 1981 AT 11.00 AM

We gather here today for the opening of the East Coast Parkway from Marina Centre to Keppel Road. The main feature of this project is the 1.8 km long main viaduct which carries the Parkway from Tanjong Rhu to the reclaimed lands at Marina Centre and Marina South.

No one can drive over a viaduct, and not be filled with a sense of achievement. It is an achievement to cross a river, and a still greater achievement if you cross on an elevated bridge and look down at the river. You are on top of your problems.

I look at this viaduct and I say what started as a project to resolve a traffic problem has become a national symbol to us. To carry us over traffic jams and river obstacles, a viaduct must rise. It must rise on pillars founded in the river and the maze of congested roads. It is a standing reminder to us that we too must rise.

We must rise on the pillars of entrepreneurship, productivity, hard work and sound moral values. If a viaduct does not rise, it will never be free from the congestion of the old city. If we do not rise, our socio-economic development will stagnate. We will decay.

Each morning as you drive up this viaduct, so aptly named the Benjamin Sheares Bridge, I ask you not to forget this. Each time you look down at the river below, remember we can always remain on top of our problems if we plan, organise and work.

Very significantly, the river below is the Singapore River. It was the centre of trade in the early days. It was here that our forefathers displayed their determination to succeed; a determination we

must never lose. Today, you will drive over this river.

And yet the foundations of the viaduct must be laid in the river and amongst the congested roads. I say we must not forget the lessons of the past. As we change, as we upgrade, as we renew, we must retain the foundation of our experience, and the determination of the past generation.

With the completion of the viaduct, motorists will be able to drive from Changi down to Keppel Road and the west coast of Singapore. This viaduct, I am told, is part of an island-wide network of 10 expressways together with a network of major roads linking major activity areas. Next, Keppel Road and Telok Blangah Road will be widened. And so we plan and build.

The next decade will be as crucial as the past decade has been, if not more. This viaduct is a symbol of our confidence in the future. And now it gives me great pleasure to declare open this section of the viaduct from Marina Centre to Keppel Road.
