

4 SEP 1982

PRESS RELEASE

Information Division, Ministry of Culture, City Hall, Singapore 0617 · TEL: 3378191 ext 352, 353, 354 / 3362207 / 3362271

15-4/80/08/30

SPEECH BY MR TEO CHONG TEE, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(SOCIAL AFFAIRS), AT THE OPENING OF "PRODUCTIVITY
THROUGH QUALITY AND RELIABILITY" CAMPAIGN AT METAL
BOX SINGAPORE LTD ON MONDAY, 30 AUGUST 1982 AT 10 AM

Singapore is a small country. Without a big enough domestic market, we have to export to survive. Under such circumstances, awareness of what the world wants is critical to success. We cannot expect to export and compete successfully in the world markets if we do not produce goods that fit the requirements of consumers overseas.

Correct understanding of the ultimate consumers' needs is therefore an important first step for local manufacturers. However, this by itself is not enough. The ability to translate this understanding to actual final products through effective design, manufacturing and marketing, is equally important.

In broad terms, buyers all over the world want quality and reliability in a product. The price must also be right. To be successful in international markets, our manufacturers must produce higher quality products at lower prices than our competitors.

Productivity summarises this situation that our manufacturers find themselves in. Producing higher quality products at lower costs is productivity.

The fish is often used to illustrate this relationship. The head of the fish represents quality, and the tail productivity. Quality must come first, productivity is the end result. If our concepts are wrong and we start at productivity without regard to quality, we will find that producing more and more does not lead us anywhere when what we produce are poor quality goods.

The importance of quality can never be over-emphasized. The Japanese have done very well in this area. I recall, with amusement, a film called "The Great Dictator". In one of the episodes, a bomb fell into a crowded place, much to the horror

of everyone ...2/-

of everyone present. Fortunately, the bomb failed to explode. When they proceeded to check the bomb, they discovered a mark on the fuse. The mark was "Made in Japan". The implication was clear - no wonder the bomb did not explode. Those were the days when Japanese products suffered from poor quality image.

Today, the picture has changed radically. Perhaps the early experience of the Japanese in the quality area taught them to appreciate the value of quality better than the rest of the world. Japan's success has often been attributed to business strategies that are focussed on quality.

Again, concentrating on quality is also not enough. The approach to quality must also be right. Quality should not be the concern only of the quality control department. Quality should be the active concern of everyone, from top management to the production worker. Everyone should not only understand the importance of having quality but also the implications of not having it. This "all inclusive" approach is known as Total Quality Control (TQC).

Coming back to the example of the fish, I think the ingredients of the TQC approach are equivalent to the bones of the fish, that link the head - 'Quality' to the tail - 'Productivity'. The bones are activities and systems such as QC Circles, QC Systems that lead to higher productivity through better quality and reliability.

Interdependence is a very important part of the whole concept of TQC. If you are in the engineering department, the manufacturing department depends on you for quality. The manufacturing department is, in turn, responsible to the sales department for quality. All departments are interlinked and should be mobilized together.

It is in this spirit that the National Productivity Council has launched the quality and reliability (QR) movement. SISIR will actively promote QC systems and train personnel from industry in this area. Companies are encouraged to set up TQC systems according to their needs to improve quality and reliability of their products. Adequate Quality Control systems form an

important basis for assessment of the quality of local products by overseas buyers.

I have said earlier that, to be successful, both quality and price must be right. This is a challenge to management and workers alike. It is by no means a simple task, but is something that we in Singapore should try very hard to do in the coming years. Unless we can do this, we will not achieve the goals of the Productivity Movement.

Metal Box has put a lot of effort to providing quality products for Singapore and the region. Metal Box has expanded significantly from a staff of less than 30 in 1947. Despite being a leader in the packaging field, Metal Box is organising this three-month campaign with accent on quality. Management must be commended for taking the initiative to organise such activities. Staff must also be commended for their willingness to participate in these activities. This teamwork is essential to bring about increased productivity in the company.

May I wish you success in your campaign. If everyone of us play our part, then Singapore can continue to prosper.

On this note, it is my pleasure to declare open Metal Box's Productivity through Quality and Reliability Campaign.