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Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY MR TEH CHEANG WAN, MINISTER FOR NATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT AT THE FOUNDATION STONE LAYING CEREMONY FOR  
COLEMAN BRIDGE ON SATURDAY, 4 OCTOBER 1986 AT 10.30 AM

Coleman Bridge is one of the many older generation bridges spanning across the Singapore River. It was built in 1883. The Public Works Department is replacing it with a dual four-lane wide bridge to carry modern day traffic. This new bridge will continue to provide a vital link across the river and form part of the overall widening scheme for New Bridge Road, Hill Street and Victoria Street.

When completed in October next year, this new bridge will retain as much of the decorative features of the old bridge as practicable. The PWD will retain the characteristic ornate columns, lamp posts, arched support and the iron railings of Coleman Bridge.

Two pedestrian tunnels will be constructed, one at each end of the bridge, in order to ensure safe pedestrian crossing under New Bridge Road and Hill Street. This pair of tunnels will also provide continuous pedestrian linkage of the riverside walkways along Boat Quay and North Boat Quay of Singapore River.

Besides Coleman Bridge, the PWD also has plans to upgrade or reconstruct other older generation bridges across Singapore River. Anderson Bridge, Cavenagh Bridge and Elgin Bridge will be upgraded at a cost of about \$2 million. This is the first part of PWD's programme to upgrade the older generation bridges. Upgrading these bridges is no easy task. Detailed surveys, careful planning, technical skills and special techniques are required. Contractors, sub-contractors and consultants involved in these highly

specialised projects will be able to benefit from sharing and acquiring the technical know-how.

The other bridges across Singapore River which will be reconstructed at an estimated cost of \$8.4 million are Ord Bridge, Read Bridge and Clemenceau Bridge. The reconstruction of these three bridges will be carried out in the next two to three years' time.

These upgraded or reconstructed bridges will not only be able to carry heavier traffic loads, but will also cut down on future maintenance cost. In addition, the PWD will also make special efforts to ensure that the overall architectural appearance of the bridges is retained or restored. This will help to preserve the historical link of these old and beautiful bridges. In future, when our people have the opportunity to cruise along Singapore River, they will be able to recognise and enjoy the pleasant views of these distinctive bridges.

These PWD's efforts will also form part of the Government's total redevelopment plan of the Singapore River. The Singapore River will be given a unique identity and character to play a useful economic role in generating recreational activities for both tourists and Singaporeans. Warehouses and shophouses of good architectural value will be renovated for recreational, commercial and entertainment uses. At present, the construction of the riverside walkways along Boat Quay and North Boat Quay has already started. Different types of paving slabs are being used to blend harmoniously with the surrounding landscape. The Primary Production Department is planning to release fish fry into the river to bring back the rich aquatic life so that people will be able to fish from the river banks. The redevelopment of the Singapore River will not only help to build up a potentially significant tourist attraction, it will also help to generate work for the construction industry.

In line with Government's efforts to create more job opportunities for our contractors, the PWD stepped up its 5-year road construction programme in late 1985. To date, the PWD has awarded a total of 47 road construction contracts worth about \$264 million. All except five contracts have been awarded to local firms, the remaining five went to joint-venture firms. None was awarded to foreign firms. In dollar terms, 69 per cent has been secured by local firms with 31 per cent to joint-ventures. This shows that local firms have benefitted from the Government's effort to revive the economy by speeding up the PWD's 5-year road construction programme. It also shows that the Government has helped the local firms to compete more effectively in their tenders by reducing the size of these contracts.

I am happy to note that the reconstruction of Coleman Bridge is another local effort. A local firm has been awarded the contract for this \$5.7 million project.

With more and more local firms participating in road and bridge construction works, they will have more opportunities to gradually accumulate their expertise and experience. I am confident that, before long, more and more local firms can venture into overseas markets to participate in competitive tendering of road and bridge construction works outside Singapore.

I now have the pleasure to lay the foundation stone for Coleman Bridge.

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