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SPEECH BY DR WONG KWEI CHEONG, MINISTER OF STATE (LABOUR) AND
CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY BOARD, AT THE OPENING OF THE
SEMINAR ON "PRODUCTIVITY AND THE ROLE OF PRODUCTION ENGINEER"
AT HOTEL EQUATORIAL ON FRIDAY, 11 DECEMBER 1981 AT 9.00 AM

It gives me great pleasure to officiate at the opening of today's seminar on "Productivity and the Role of the Production Engineer." This seminar is the first of its kind organised by the Institute of Production Engineers in Singapore. I would like to congratulate the Institute for its initiative and efforts in providing, through this seminar, the opportunity for interaction and exchange of ideas among our production engineers.

Productivity And Quality

Productivity should be the concern of every member of a company. It is the responsibility of management to help disseminate the importance of productivity to their workers. However, the term 'productivity' does not refer mainly to quantity. It also refers to quality. Let me give you an illustration.

A company which works only towards meeting its production targets is heading for trouble. Poor quality products would be produced. When such products are exported overseas, they will not meet the satisfaction of customers. The result is that the products will be forced out of the international markets. Sales will be lost.

Total Quality Control (TQC)

Management must realise that productivity follows good quality control. Quality is not just the responsibility of the Quality Control Department. It is everybody's responsibility.

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Management must constantly remind their employees the importance of good quality products. Workers must be quality conscious and be proud of the products they make. Total quality control should be practised.

Once the company has established quality as a basic company policy, production engineers can play a more useful role in increasing productivity.

For example, in the assembly of electronic products, production engineers have to set up the production line through a series of time and motion studies, process charts and so on.

However, if the company is not quality conscious, the production line will suffer frequent stoppages as a result of delays in the supply of components, bad component parts and shoddy workmanship. Production engineers will find it almost impossible to balance the production line. Productivity is a non-starter.

Quality Control Circles (QCC)

One way to introduce quality concepts to workers is through quality control circles (QCC). Its basic objective is to provide an opportunity for constructive participation by workers. Workers will be taught basic problem solving techniques. They will be encouraged to seek solutions and to help improve the quality and productivity of their operations.

Companies that are unable to set up training facilities can always send their workers to attend the relevant National Productivity Board (NPB) QCC courses.

This year, 59 companies have sent their employees to attend NPB's QCC Facilitators courses. Many of these companies have already implemented QCC programmes.

Production engineers can contribute to the formation of QC circles by helping to train more QCC facilitators. The consequent increase in productivity as a result of the implementation of QC circles is described in one of your seminar papers. I will not elaborate.

There are other areas where production engineers can contribute towards the increase of productivity. These areas are very well presented in the various papers.

I wish you well in your deliberations.