

19 APR 1982

Acc. No.

NARC

82 0068

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

Information Division, Ministry of Culture, City Hall, Singapore 0617 • tel: 3378191 ext. 352, 353, 354/3362207/3362271

12-2/82/04/14.

SPEECH BY DR WONG KWEI CHEONG, MINISTER OF STATE FOR LABOUR AND
CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL, AT THE LAUNCHING OF
THE PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH QUALITY AND RELIABILITY (QR) MOVEMENT
AT SISIR'S THEATRETTE ON WEDNESDAY, 14 APRIL 1982 AT 11.00 AM

Introduction

Since the beginning of last year, we have emphasised on the need to increase productivity in order to maintain our economic growth in the eighties. In view of rising wages, higher material costs and economic uncertainties, Singapore's hope of survival is to ensure that its goods and services are competitive in the international markets.

The only way out for Singapore is through all round productivity increases. Then only can Singapore be promoted as a centre of high quality and reliable products and services.

The Productivity Movement must therefore permeate all sectors of our economy.

Quality and Reliability (QR) Movement

To give greater impetus to the Productivity Movement, the National Productivity Council, together with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Trade and Industry, shall launch a nation-wide Productivity through Quality and Reliability (QR) Movement, involving especially the manufacturing sector. The Committee headed by Mr Eugene Yap, Parliamentary Secretary (Labour) and Chairman of Singapore Quality and Reliability Association, has been formed to plan programmes and to spearhead this QR Movement. This Committee also comprises representatives from the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), Singapore Institute of Standards and Industrial Research (SISIR), National Productivity Board (NPB), Singapore Manufacturers' Association (SMA), Consumers Association of Singapore (CASE), Singapore Federation of Chambers of Commerce

and Industry /2.

and Industry (SFECT), the American Business Council (ABC), the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) and the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF). SISIR shall provide the secretariat for the QR Committee.

As we embark towards a higher productivity drive, we should not forget that productivity in the manufacturing sector does not mean increased quantity of products. It means better and higher quality products as well as increased quantity. The first condition must however be Quality and Reliability. When we can attain the required Quality level, then only can we talk of increased productivity. Quality and reliability must therefore be regarded as the cornerstone or foundation for increased productivity. That is why the main objective of the QR Committee is to promote the concept of increased productivity in Singapore industries through adoption of the Total Quality Control (TQC) approach.

I think it is worth emphasising the point that today we are launching a QR Movement. Unlike a campaign, which has a definite time span, a movement has deeper implications. Firstly, it is longer term and secondly, it should embrace a wider section of the population. But more importantly, a movement implies that we are looking at a combined endeavour that will continue until all objectives are realised. That is why members of this QR Committee have been carefully selected for their experience and organisational talents. Among its many tasks, the Committee will be required to draw up a national programme to inform management and workers of the need to adopt Total Quality Control (TQC) and publicise the TQC concept nation-wide. More details of the programme will be released after the Committee has met.

The Human Aspects

Promoting productivity through the QR Movement will further enhance our emphasis on the human aspects of productivity increases. Better quality is not just the responsibility of the quality control (QC) department. Good quality products can only be produced if every member of the organisation is aware of the importance of quality and keeps strictly to the rules set up to maintain quality.

In Hong Kong, for example, many factories have gone bankrupt because of the shoddy products exported. Such companies may have very good quality control managers. However, they may also have production managers insisting on shipment of shoddy products just to satisfy its productivity norms.

Under such a working environment, the factory would always be faced with conflicts between its production and quality control managers.

This is a situation we must avoid in Singapore. Good human relationships must be established at all levels of the organisation. It is only under such an organisational climate that the TQC system can be implemented.

Conclusion

Ladies and Gentlemen, just as the manufacturing sector in Singapore was supposed to bear the brunt of employment creation in the 1960's, and economic modernisation in the 1970's, manufacturing is expected to take the lead in productivity improvements in the 1980's. If the past is an indication of what our manufacturing sector can do, then I have every cause to be optimistic. Let me end with these words from our Prime Minister, "Developing the economy, increasing productivity, increasing returns - these make sense only when fair play and fair shares make it worth everyone's while to put in his share of effort for group survival and group prosperity."