

## SCOPE OF CONFERENCE

By

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Honourable Minister of Plantation Industries, Your Excellencies, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a source of great happiness to me to get up here today, after a lapse of 2 years and 9 months, almost to the day, after the last Conference, to thank the Hon. Minister for gracing this occasion and making the inaugural address. At the last Conference I promised you a Conference every two years, but I delayed this for nine months merely to be able to give you the pleasure of being the first audience to attend a Scientific Conference in this magnificent hall. I hope you agree that the delay was worth it.

Hon. Minister, I have given myself the unenviable task of thanking you, introducing the Conference and making a few points all in the space of 3 minutes. So let me thank you—far be it from me to dwell on what you said, you said that wonderfully well and the thanking; that Sir, comes from the heart and you have seen me so often in my so many moods, that you know better than anyone here; that I am grateful to you for your constant interest and support for the rubber industry.

As for introducing the Conference—it is so arranged and the Programme gives the details, it needs no introduction. If it did, we have failed with the arrangements, and we have not. I only want to make one point. In the papers that will be presented, there is a blend of pure and applied research, with the emphasis on the applied. So if you, the audience, find that in one or two cases, during these two days, there is a paper which is a bit heavy, please don't feel bad, because one or two of them are beyond me too, and you will know that I am suffering right along with you.

Now it is customary on occasions like this that you tell your Minister to take note of a few things. I will upkeep the tradition and make just two points. First we want just a little more cess money, just 1/2 cent more, we will show you results and we assure you that we will look after it. I am sure the planters here will agree to give it with one accord—please say "Yes".

The second is industrialisation. I assure you that within the next ten years we can develop the industry in such a way as to sell every pound of NR from this country as a finished product or at least a **semi-processed** article. I will personally pledge myself to this aim. However, it needs technical ability and someone must train the technicians. We have the men who can train them, we can get the foreign aid to get the equipment, we have a University team who is willing to give dedicated service to make this course a reality. We want your assistance to get the necessary push to start a M.Sc. course in Polymer Science and Technology at one of the University Campuses. One Campus is ready, willing and able and has gone to the extent of training some of its staff, and they are as keen as mustard, we only want to go ahead. The Permanent Secretary of Education and the Vice-Chancellor are willing, like Barkis. I don't know what is stopping them—if you pin point it and push it we will do the rest. Please, will you help?

Thank you sir, I know you will.