

**SPEECH BY MR. J.D.H. NEILL  
AT THE F & N CENTENNIAL DINNER  
CELEBRATION, SINGAPORE, 23.7.1983**

“Honourable Minister, Your Excellency, Distinguished Guests and Friends:

When a man reaches the age of 5 score years or a cricket batsman scores a century, or a corporate body exists for 100 years it is an occasion to celebrate, and the manner of tonight’s celebration with your old friends on our sports field is, I hope, a new idea which you will find acceptable.

It is the first time that we have held a dinner in this manner and indeed there are a lot of firsts when it comes to Fraser & Neave.

Fraser & Neave is the first manufacturing company in Singapore to have been established for 100 years; Fraser & Neave was the first manufacturer to set up a joint venture with an overseas international company with Heinekens at Malayan Breweries.

It was the first public company to provide playing fields, a badminton pavilion for staff welfare and, talking of firsts, you may have heard the story of the little boy in his Bible Class when asked: “Who were the first people in the world” replied: “Fraser & Neave”, but you may not have heard that when he said that on a second occasion, another little boy said: “Don’t be silly, it was Adam and Neave – Fraser came later.[“]

Well, at Fraser & Neave, this centennial year has been a source of new inspiration as we look back, turning the pages of history, to become more conscious of our corporate roots. It has instilled in us a new sense of our destiny being firmly entrenched in the past history and future development of those countries where we have been operating for the past century – especially Singapore, where it all started with two enterprising entrepreneurs starting a Soda Water bottling plant, and in turning over the pages in the F&N history book, one one’s name stands out with clear prominence. For the past 33 years he has been a Director of the Company and, for the past 26 years, its Chairman. In fact, tomorrow will be the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary date of his chairmanship, and I believe the era of this unbroken chairmanship of a public listed company can qualify for the Guinness Book of Records. If it does not qualify at global level, at least it is another first in the Singapore context.

I am of course referring to Tan Sri Tan Chin Tuan who, but for the persuasion of his fellow directors, would already have retired, but I am glad to say was persuaded to lead us through our centennial year.

He has indicated that he will, in fact, shortly stand down and, when he does, he will be leaving a company which, since his arrival on the Board, has increased its shareholders’ funds some 30 times without ever having recourse to shareholders for more money, and which has seen a dramatic transformation of its activities into many different products and territories.

Not only shareholders, but management owe a deep debt of gratitude to him for his wisdom and sharp financial acumen, his perception and understanding and his strong

Chairmanship which has led us through easy and difficult times alike, and before I call on him to make his welcoming address to you, our honoured guests, I would like to present from Directors, Management and Staff a small token, a Red Lion now clothed with gilded mantle, in appreciation of his unstinting support and leadership.

Ladies and gentlemen, T.C.T.”