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LAUNCHING OF THE ORIENTAL PLAZA : 6TH DECEMBER 1971.

COUNCILLOR PATRICK R.B. LEWIS.

Today is indeed a day which will be remembered as a milestone in Johannesburg's history. We are not merely marking the commencement of the building of a new shopping centre. We are by this practical step demonstrating that Justice must be done to enable Asian Traders who have been displaced as a result of Group area proclamations to re-establish their businesses in suitable areas. This Oriental Plaza, built on a grand scale was designed so that shoppers would be attracted to the area. The facilities provided will we believe be unique and will I am sure enable those displaced traders from Newclare, Mariedale and Pageview to re-establish their businesses under very favourable conditions.

The Architects, Rhodes-Harrison and Partners sent members of their staff to the East so that they could capture the atmosphere of the Orient and this they have incorporated into their design.

Meneer die Minister, ek will graag waardering betuig teenoor u en die personeel van u departement en ander departemente, wat almal saamgewerk het, om hierdie skema moontlik te maak. Dit was in 1963 dat 'n komitee benoem is, onder voorsitterskap van mnr. Niemand om die herbeplanning van Newclare, Western Township en Vrededorp/Pageview-Kompleks te koodineer. Die belangrikheid van daardie komitee het geblyk, uit die kaliber van die lede wat benoem is, om daarop te dien. Die Raad het op sy beurt, sy Bestuurskomitee benoem. Ek weet van geen ander komitee, waar daar soveel vrugbare samewerking was tussen die drie regereingsvlakke nie - die Staat, die Provinsie en die Plaaslike Owerhede.

I would like to thank you Mr. Minister because without your backing and encouragement this project could not have proceeded. Considerable financial backing was required at a time when capital expenditure is being curtailed. Yet it was felt that this Oriental Plaza was a must and a loan was made available to the Council on terms favourable by todays standards. The Council has also been advised that the price the Council will pay for the ground will be determined when the viability of the scheme is established.

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Mr. Minister it has been a great pleasure for me to serve on the State Committee since its inception. Working on that committee has evidenced the keen desire of all levels of Government to tackle Urban Renewal and provide decent housing for the various race groups.

I cannot mention the names of all who have helped us. I would like to pay particular tribute to Mr. J.H. Niemand the first Chairman and his successor Mr. Louis Fouche and Mr. P. Strydom and my colleagues on the Management Committee, who have shown keen interest at all times. It is with pleasure that I now call upon the Hon. Blaar Coetzee, Minister of Community Development and Public Works to address you.

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MENEER DIE MINISTER, EK WIL GRAAG WAARDERING BETUIG TEENOOR EN DIE PERSONEEL VAN U DEPARTEMENT EN ANDER DEPARTEMENTE, WAT ALMAL SAAMGEWERK HET, OM HIERDIE SKEMA MOONTLIK TE MAAK. DIT WAS IN 1963 DAT 'N KOMITEE BENOEM IS ONDER VOORSITTERSKAP VAN MNR. NIEMAND OM DIE HERBEPLANNING VAN NEWCLARE, WESTERN TOWNSHIP EN VREDEDORP/PAGE-VIEW-KOMPLEKS TE KOORDINEER. DIE BELANGRIKHEID VAN DAARDIE KOMITEE HET GEBLYK, UIT DIE KALIBER VAN DIE LEDE WAT BENOEM IS, OM DAAROP TE DIEN. DIE RAAD HET OP SY BEURT, SY BESTUURSKOMITEE BENOEM. EK WEET VAN GEEN ANDER KOMITEE, WAAR DAAR SOVEEL VRUGBARE SAMEWERKING WAS TUSSEN DIE DRIE REGEREINGSVLAKKE NIE - DIE STAAT, DIE PROVINSIE EN DIE PLAASLIKE OWERHEDE.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU MR. MINISTER BECAUSE WITHOUT YOUR BACKING AND ENCOURAGEMENT THIS PROJECT COULD NOT HAVE PROCEEDED. CONSIDERABLE FINANCIAL BACKING WAS REQUIRED AT A TIME WHEN CAPITAL EXPENDITURE IS BEING CURTAILED. YET IT WAS FELT THAT THIS ORIENTAL PLAZA WAS A MUST AND A LOAN WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE COUNCIL ON TERMS FAVOURABLE BY TODAYS STANDARDS. THE COUNCIL HAS ALSO BEEN ADVISED THAT THE PRICE THE COUNCIL WILL PAY FOR THE GROUND WILL BE DETERMINED WHEN THE VIABILITY OF THE SCHEME IS ESTABLISHED.

MR. MINISTER IT HAS BEEN A GREAT PLEASURE FOR ME TO SERVE ON THE STATE COMMITTEE SINCE ITS INCEPTION. WORKING ON THAT COMMITTEE HAS EVIDENCED THE KEEN DESIRE OF ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT TO TACKLE URBAN RENEWAL AND PROVIDE DECENT HOUSING FOR THE VARIOUS RACE GROUPS.

I CANNOT MENTION THE NAMES OF ALL WHO HAVE HELPED US. I WOULD LIKE TO PAY PARTICULAR TRIBUTE TO MR. J.H. NIEMAND THE FIRST CHAIRMAN AND HIS SUCCESSOR MR. LOUIS FOUCHE AND MR. P. STRYDOM AND MY COLLEAGUES ON THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, WHO HAVE SHOWN KEEN INTEREST AT ALL TIMES. IT IS WITH PLEASURE THAT I NOW CALL UPON THE HON. BLAAR COETZEE, MINISTER OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS TO ADDRESS YOU.

Memorandum Speech

ORIENTAL PLAZA

This is certainly a notable historic occasion we are experiencing here today. The establishment of this centre with hundred percent Government and Municipal aid must be unique because elsewhere in the world men in commerce, regardless of the racial group they belong to, must fend for themselves. The Community Development Board's contribution in this project for instance amounts to no less than roughly R10 million or even more. But I don't want to go into financial detail with you. I am more tempted to wander right back to the second half of 1963 when I was still the Secretary for Housing i.e.

2/before

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before the reorganised Department of Community Development as we know it today, came into being, and to relate to you how the idea of this Plaza originated.

I was at that time appointed by the Government as Chairman of a State Committee which in consultation with the City Council of Johannesburg had to assist the Council with the replanning and development of, inter alia, the Page View area between here and Vrededorp. I was very happy and fortunate to have with me Mr. Louis Botha (now Government Law Adviser), Mr. Driessen (now

3/Secretary

Secretary for Transport), Professor Tobie Louw (the well-known Tobie of Borckenhagen & Louw and until this day vice Chairman of the National Housing Commission) and Mr. I.P. Strydom, also until this day the Chairman of the Community Development Board.

The City Council with great farsightedness nominated its full Management Committee as its representative to work in conjunction and in collaboration with the State Committee. At the very first meeting of the two Committees, I see from my file, were present the late Councillor Pieter Roos (Chairman), Mr. Patrick Lewis (he

4/did

did not yet have his well earned doctor's degree then but he had quite substantial status, as M.P.C.), Mr. I. Schlapoberski and Mr. A.B. Widman, also M.P.C. Other names on the Council's side which were prominent at our meetings from time to time during my tenure as Chairman of the State Committee were Mr. Dave Marais (now M.P.) and Mr. J.F. Oberholzer (M.P.C.).

Our minds were at that time occupied only with the replanning and redevelopment of the Page View area. We knew that those Asian traders who would have had to move from Page View would be given preferent treatment to resettle themselves in Fordsburg but the manner in which

5/resettlement

resettlement of the traders in Fordsburg should have taken place was not included in the terms of reference of the two committees. As far as we were concerned therefore traders who wished to resettle in Fordsburg, had to do so on their own initiative and with their own resources.

In private conversation during a lunch break one day Dr. Lewis and I, however, started to speculate about the exodus to Fordsburg and whether or not the Council could be persuaded to participate in a specially designed development project for that purpose. We were

6/then

then thinking of the possible establishment of an Indian market. We both sounded the bodies concerned on each side namely the Community Development Board and the City Council which agreed in principle. Specially selected consultants were then appointed to make the necessary surveys and to submit proposals. All these eventually led up to the actual establishment here of a sophisticated project which will carry the appropriate name of Oriental Plaza.

.Dames en here, hiervandaan loop nog n lang geskiedenis van navorsing, ontwerp en beplanning, verkryging van die nodige grond, want u kan sien dat die projek

7/n kolossale

n kolossale gebied beslaan, en die reëling van finansies. Ekself moes naderhand uit die Staatskomitee tree weens ander verantwoordelikhede maar ek het steeds tred gehou met die vordering van die projek en dit verskaf vir my en Dr. Lewis seker die meeste plesier van almal vandag hier teenwoordig dat die projek nou inderdaad van stapel gestuur kan word. En tog was dit vir altwee van ons deurgaans verrassend om te ondervind hoe vlot die voorbereiding en beplanning inderdaad verloop het. Daar was later ter aanvang van die konstruksie bietjie teenspoed met grondwerke maar andersins is dit n gewel-

8/dige manifestasie ..

dige manifestasie van wat die Regering en n groot plaaslike bestuur deur hartlike en doelgerigte samewerking en koördinerings kan vermag. Indirek het ons hier inderdaad n grandieuse skema van stadsvernuwing wat ons selfs op internasionale vlak nog beny sal word. Ek hoop dus dat ons almal wat met die geboorte van die projek te doen gehad het die voorreg mag hê om ook die voltooiing daarvan te belewe want ons kan nou maar net droom hoe dit dan gaan wees en ek kan u verseker dit gaan, wat Suid-Afrika betref, werklik uniek wees.

9/Ek wil

Ek wil graag afsluit met n woordjie van opregte en groot dank teenoor al die amptenare van die Stadsraad en die Departement vir die wonderlike belangstelling en ywer wat hulle deurgaans met die kristallisering en ontwerp van die projek aan die dag gelê het. En eweveel so aan al die lede van die Stadsraad se Bestuurskomitee en die Staatskomitee wat dit moontlik gemaak het dat hierdie grootse projek vandag van stapel gestuur kan word. En laastens baie geluk ook aan die groot groep Asiër sake-manne vir wie dit beskore gaan wees om hierdie unieke Suid-Afrikaanse Oosterse Plaza te betrek.

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But final success in all this must in the end depend in large measure on the ability and adaptability of these traders to diversify and to specialise according to the demands of the Oriental Plaza's economic viability and the type of custom likely to be attracted to it.

I am personally most confident of their success in this regard.

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An important aspect of this project to me is the fact that the Council and the State have, on a basis of close co-operation, been at pains to ensure that displaced Indian traders will not be deprived of their livelihood. On the contrary we look forward to increased prosperity and contentment for them.

8/... On behalf ...

On behalf of the city of Johannesburg I wish to extend to the Minister, the Secretary for Community Development, relevant officials of his department and other State departments who may have been directly or indirectly concerned with this project, the city's appreciation for their cordial co-operation and help. I wish also to thank the Council's own heads of departments and officials for what they have done to bring this project to its present state. To my colleagues on the Council and in particular to the Chairman and members of the Management Committee I extend a special word of appreciation. I wish also to convey to our architectural consultants, Messrs. Rhodes-Harrison, Louw, Hoffe and Partners, as well as to all other consultants called in by them to share in the preparation and planning of this monumental amenity, our sincerest thanks.

9/... Finally, ...

Finally, our best wishes go to the contractors already undertaking the first phase of this extensive contract, a consortium of Messrs. Tiber Bonvec Construction and Trescon Construction Limited; and the incoming contractors about to commence the second phase of erecting the main building, Messrs. Trescon Construction Ltd.

We sincerely hope that each and every individual member of all the race groups who will pass through the portals of the buildings of this project will enjoy unhindered fulfilment of all that they may earnestly desire and cherish.

DR. E.J. JAMMINE,
CHIEF OFFICER.

EJJ/TG. 1st December 1971.

Parl. 4/1/12.

LAUNCHING OF THE ORIENTAL PLAZA PROJECT AT 10 A.M.
ON MONDAY, 6TH DECEMBER, 1971.

THE HONOURABLE THE MINISTER OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

Your Private Secretary's letter NG 6/1 dated 5th November, 1971, addressed to the Secretary of His Worship the Mayor of Johannesburg, refers.

A draft speech is attached for your consideration, please.

F. C. Strauss

SECRETARY FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

PRETORIA.

DATE:

24 -11- 1971

Draft speech approved/~~rejected~~.

MINISTER OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

PRETORIA.

DATE:

FCS/mg

ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE B. COETZEE, M.P., MINISTER OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND OF PUBLIC WORKS, ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCHING OF THE ORIENTAL PLAZA PROJECT, FORDSBURG, JOHANNESBURG, AT 10 A.M. ON MONDAY, 6TH DECEMBER, 1971.

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INTRODUCTION : According to Minister's personal choice.

The development of communities is nothing new. The process is as old as the creation of man. What is of immediate interest is that the man in the street has now become conscious of the term. All over the world nations and countries are concentrating more and more on the subject. The reasons are not hard to find. With the alarming increase in the world population, the accelerated demand for living accommodation and the attendant problems of providing in many cases even the basic amenities, these nations and countries find themselves faced with the challenge of establishing, or of re-establishing communities at an ever increasing tempo.

Since 1964 the Department of Community Development has entered the new field of urban renewal. For a diversity of reasons, cities are generally subject to decay. This decay can often be restored by normal redevelopment as a process of evolution, but in many cases the extent of the decay necessitates purposeful and drastic measures for complete replanning and renewal. In such cases the area concerned is designated by the Minister of Community

Development as an area for redevelopment by or with the aid of the Community Development Board. Thereafter a State Committee consisting of administrative and professional officers of the Department of Community Development, the provincial administration concerned and other interested State Departments is usually appointed by the Minister to investigate the possibilities of replanning and redevelopment in close collaboration with a committee of the local authority concerned and to make the required recommendations.

Today, ladies and gentlemen, we are in the fortunate position to see the commencement of one of the most gigantic shopping centres, very appropriately named The Oriental Plaza, catering entirely for Indian traders, ever erected in South Africa. The efforts and hard work put into this scheme by the Government State Committee and the Council's Management Committee, ably assisted by the Consultant Architects, Messrs. Rhodes-Harrison over the past four years may not be known to all of you present, but if we consider that when completed this shopping centre will not only cost in the vicinity of R12 million, but will accommodate approximately 340 traders, then you can well imagine what a difficult task the planning of this project really was. The gentlemen intimately associated with the project - I mention, inter alia, Mr. Niemand, the Secretary for Community Development, who may justly be regarded as the architect of the urban renewal concept in the Republic, as the initial Chairman of State Committees, his successor as Chairman, Mr. Louis Fouché, Councillor Lewis and his

Management Committee - may not want to give away their secrets, but I can well imagine that to arrive at the final planning proposals many a hard nut had to be cracked and many difficulties had to be overcome. For those of you who had not yet seen the model of this complex, I can only say that one and all that have seen the model and plans, were pleasantly surprised with the final product.

Before looking at a few details, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to give you a brief outline of the background of the project. In the first instance, the need for this shopping centre arises from the necessity to relocate the Indian traders within the proclaimed White Group Areas at present scattered all over the city. Although the Indian Area of Lenasia with its more than 40 000 inhabitants has developed on a tremendous scale during the past 10 years, the Government is well aware of the fact that it will be impossible for the hundreds of traders to be brought together in this area alone. After extensive studies were carried out, it was decided that an area within the Fordsburg township would be the most suitable area to accommodate a large number of displaced traders. This area is not only situated near the centre of the city, but the studies also revealed that it has a very good business potential. By floodlighting the shopping centre by night, it will be readily visible from the elevated North-South freeway and other prominent city buildings such as the top of the President Hotel and the new Carlton Centre and it is anticipated that this shopping centre will eventually be a fine tourist attraction.

The irregular shaped site, consists of 14 city blocks just west of the north-south Johannesburg motorway and the site constitutes approximately 21 acres. As can be seen from the work already being done on the site, it has been found necessary to lower Avenue Road which could unfortunately not be closed or re-routed.

If we look at the layout of the scheme, we find that provision will be made for just about every possible trade - it will include, only to mention a few, a supermarket, outfitters, hardware stores, druggists, jewelers, toy shops, curio shops, restaurants, cafés, flower and fruit markets, kiosks and barrows (stalls). In addition to these shops, offices and a crèche as well as a curry house for whites will also be provided.

You may well ask me whether such a large shopping centre could be a payable concern and whether the Indian traders will be able to afford the rentals. Personally I am optimistic that the scheme can be successful because of the fact that the Indian traders have proved that they are able and capable businessmen. As far as the rentals are concerned all efforts have been made to keep rentals as low as possible but it must also be borne in mind that the rentals at present being paid are mostly for old and poorly maintained buildings and that the new centre will provide all the necessary facilities. I can, however, give the traders the assurance that to achieve the rentals necessary for their economic existence, costly finishes, mechanical equipment and

fittings generally, have been reduced to a minimum. The overall concept however remains one of effectiveness and of a magnet scheme.

As already pointed out, the Plaza will stretch over Avenue Road to connect and unify the two main blocks with the ~~Grand~~^{GRAND} Bazaar as the main magnet. All shopping, with the exception of the top floor of the Great Bazaar, will occur on only two levels. Pedestrian entrances, bus stops and parking areas have been sited in such a manner that shops will enjoy the full benefit of the shoppers entering the complex - all efforts to make the scheme as viable as possible.

A further aspect which I would like to mention, is the retention of an existing Mosque, situated east of the shopping centre. Since the majority of Indian traders are Muslims, it was decided that this Mosque could form an integral part of the Plaza. A Peacock Fountain and Clock Tower will also assist to make the centre more attractive.

It is not my intention to burden you with full particulars of this scheme or the numerous other shopping centres erected in other cities, but I only wish to add that I am of the opinion that this centre will not only provide a livelihood for more than 300 traders, but it also has the potential to become a tourist attraction in the true sense of the word. Just as the Indian Market and the Grey Street Complex in Durban, the Grand Parade in Cape Town and other exclusive centres, have something special to offer to the

tourist, I feel that in years to come, the Oriental Plaza will develop into one of the main attractions of Johannesburg.

To the future tenants of this huge complex, I can only say that I hope you will be happy with the concept of the new shops and that the success of this scheme will largely depend on yourselves and your ability to have the will and determination to make a success of this new venture.

Dames en here, ons sien vandag die begin van 'n skema wat deur die gesamentlike poging van die Staat en 'n plaaslike bestuur daargestel is en alhoewel die skema bedoel is om 'n groot groep Indiërhandelaars van Johannesburg te akkommodeer, is die skema in die eerste plek 'n stadsvernuwingskema om 'n gebied wat deur die jare verval het, op te ruim en nie slegs agteruitgang te stuit nie maar weer nuwe lewenskrag in die gebied in te pomp.

By 'n ander geleentheid vroeër vanjaar het ek daarop gewys dat die Staat reeds in die afgelope 5 jaar meer as R100 miljoen dwarsdeur die land aan stadsvernuwingskemas bestee het. Die Staat sal om begryplike redes nie teen hierdie tempo kan voortgaan nie en indien ons nie alle moontlike wêreldwye ondersoek om op die stewige fondamente wat gelê is, voort te bou nie, mag ons onself dalk ook in die posisie wat in verskeie oorsese lande heers, bevind. Ek lees onlangs dat Engeland in sy poging om vervalle gebiede op te ruim nou voor die probleem te staan gekom het dat indien daar teen die huidige tempo voortgegaan word om stadsvernuwing-

skemas uit te voer, dit beraam word dat die taak nie binne die volgende 240 jaar afgehandel sal kan word nie.

Ek vra myself af of ons dieselfde probleme, alhoewel op 'n veel kleiner skaal, in die gesig staar en of daar nie miskien betyds iets daaraan gedoen kan word om toestande onder beheer te kry nie. Myns insiens is daar twee effektiewe maniere waarop ons die toestande kan bekamp. In die eerste plek moet alles moontlik gedoen word om verval te voorkom en hierin kan ons slaag as ons die ondersteuning van elke eienaar van 'n gebou van watter aard ookal, of dit nou 'n ou woning, sakegebou of selfs die eenvoudigste ou geboutjie is, kan verkry om alle geboue in 'n redelike toestand te hou. Pogings om hierin te slaag het tot dusver bitter min vrugte afgewerp en die tyd het nou aangebreek dat ons drastiese stappe moet doen om verval in die beginstadium te bekamp.

Soos ek tydens vanjaar se Parlementsitting aangekondig het, sal wetgewing aanstaande jaar ingedien word om fisiese verval in dorpe en stede te voorkom en sal die nodige masjinerie daargestel word om nie slegs teen eienaars van geboue wat tot verval neig op te tree nie, maar om in verdienstelike gevalle finansiële hulp in die vorm van lenings te verleen en ook om ander hulpmiddels daar te stel om toestande te verbeter. Ek wil dan ook die hoop uitspreek dat ons met die stappe wat beoog word, die samewerking van elke eienaar van 'n gebou of eiendom in Suid-Afrika sal verkry om sodoende te verseker dat dit in die afsienbare toekoms heeltemal onnodig sal wees om algehele stadsvernuwing in ons dorpe en stede te doen.

Ten tweede wil ek graag verwys na die rol wat private inisiatief kan speel in die opruiming van reeds bestaande vervalle gebiede en ook die herbeplanning en herontwikkeling van sodanige gebiede. Tot dusver kon private ontwikkelaars met die beperkte magte tot hulle beskikking, nie veel in die rigting bydra nie en moes hulle noodgedwonge op klein gebiede waar alle eiendomme geredelik verkry kon word, konsentreer. Ondervinding oral oor die wêreld het reeds bewys dat stadsvernuwing nie effektief aangepak kan word indien alle eiendomme in 'n vernuwingsgebied nie in hande van een liggaam of instansie kom nie. So 'n stap is noodsaaklik ten einde nuwe beplanningsvoorstelle wat die konsolidasie en onderverdeling van persele, die sluiting van strate, skepping van oopruimtes en bowenal die rojering van 'n bestaande algemene plan inhou, te implementeer.

Tot dusver kon private ontwikkelaars selfs met al die nodige finansies en die beplanningsmasjinerie tot hulle beskikking net nie daarin slaag om alle eiendomme binne 'n vernuwingsgebied te verkry nie en was die Staat die enigste instansie wat stadsvernuwing op 'n groot skaal kon aanpak.

Die Hegering besef watter belangrike bydrae private ontwikkelaars tot hierdie veld kan maak en daar is gevolglik besluit om aanstaande jaar wetgewing in te dien om private ontwikkelaars wat op enkele uitsonderings na, alle eiendomme in 'n gebied wat deur die plaaslike bestuur, die Provinsiale Administrasie, die Gemeenskapsontwikkelingsraad en die Minister van Gemeenskapsbou as 'n stadsvernuwingsgebied

aanvaar word, in staat te stel om die oorblywende eiendomme te verkry. Die beoogde wetgewing sal egter bepaalings bevat wat streng toegepas sal word en eienaars van eiendomme binne sodanige stadsvernuwingsgebiede kan gerus voel dat indien hulle eiendomme verkry moet word, die stadsvernuwingskema eerstens in die openbare belang moet wees en tweedens dat hulle op 'n billike grondslag vir hulle eiendomme vergoed sal word. Die vergoedingsaspekte sal ook volgens wetsvoorskrif hanteer word en voorsiening sal ook vir 'n arbitrasiehof gemaak word in gevalle waar daar nie 'n ooreenkoms oor die vergoeding bereik kan word nie.

Ek vertrou dat hierdie nuwe veld wat ons betree veel vrugte sal afwerp en dat bestaande vervalte toestande in ons land spoedig opgeruim sal word.

In conclusion, Mr. Mayer, I should like to give you the assurance that it is always a stimulating experience ^{FOR ME} to visit your golden city. I should also like to express my thanks for the warm welcome extended to me and my wife today and for the opportunity of participating in this important occasion in the history of your city.

Johannesburg first came into prominence through the discovery of gold. My faith in a great future for Johannesburg is unshakable and it is my firm belief that the Oriental Plaza will make a substantial contribution towards the material prosperity of the traders and I wish them a happy and prosperous future.

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