

A RETROSPECTION OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TAIPEI-YILAN FREEWAY—DR. CLEMENT CHANG' S ROLE IN THE COMPLETION OF THE FREEWAY:

1985/8/31—The Association for Yi-lan Folks and Affairs, Taipei Branch, held its second meeting of the 7th Annual Meeting, during which a Construction for the Taipei-Yilan Transport System Commission was inaugurated. The then Chair of the Association, Dr. Clement Chang appointed Jien Wen-hsiau to be the Secretary in Chief of the Commission, who would be responsible for planning and contacts.

1987/1/19—Dr. Clement Chang, as the Speaker of the Taipei City Council, proposed to folks from Yi-lan and those who were dedicated to Yi-lan' s affairs in the Council to set up a preparatory committee to see to the establishment of the Construction for the Taipei-Yilan Transport System Commission. After the motion, he auctioned off the tie he was wearing for NT\$ 50,000 to start off a fund-raising frenzy, that in the end accumulated over NT\$ 1,000,000.

1987/4/10—The Commission and Tomorrow' s World, Tamkang' s official journal co-organized a forum to discuss the Taipei and Yilan transport system at the House of Alumni Association of the National Taiwan University. Dr. Clement Chang, while being the host of the event, explained to the participants the aim of this forum. He wished to use this opportunity to inspire public support and some media exposure, which in turn would push the government into action. He said: “We need to act today, and we will not rest until we see workers drilling through the hills.”

1987/4/13—Dr. Chang requested Jien Wen-hsiau and other members of the Association to visit Wang Chang Ching, the Secretary in Chief of the Executive Yuan and Lien Zhan, the Minister of Transportation and Communications to plea for early action regarding the construction of the freeway. In response, Minister Lien promised to finish the planning of this transport system in eight months.

1989/1/28—It was the second time the Commission used one of the international conference halls at Tamkang University to discuss measures how to prompt the government to hasten the process of beginning constructing the freeway. In this meeting, which was presided by Dr. Clement Chang, a scientific evaluation conducted by an American Engineering Consulting firm was presented for the government to take into consideration. Based on the evaluation, the Commission urged the government to consider: 1) the exact time of inception, and the time to pass the budget for this operation, 2). after the completion of the freeway, the improved capacity of Suao Harbor and its economic value, 3). opening an international bidding process inviting foreign companies to participate in the construction so as to speed up the completion, 4). the following up measures of developing Yi-lan after the completion of the freeway. The Commission further suggested the government to 1). adopt an international standard of bidding process and set the inception date of the construction at the end of 1980, while the opening date to traffic at the end of 1994, 2). design, construct and manage the operation with the standard of a freeway system. 3) to extend the freeway to Suao Harbor, and design sufficient exits and interchanges to facilitate a better flow of traffic.

1989/6/1—Dr. Clement Chang became the Minister of Transportation and Communications and one of the first things he did was to split the then Freeway Engineering Bureau into two independent bureaus, with one of them, that is known as the Taiwan Area National Expressway Engineering Bureau

(TANEEB), to be in charge of Taipei-Yilan Freeway as well as the construction and extension of other free ways/expressways. According to Dr. Chang' s blueprint, when the Second Freeway (connecting Keelung all the way down to Pintung) , and the Northern Second Freeway (from Shijr to Hsinchu), which had been under construction then, were completed, they could connect smoothly with the existing Sun Yat-sen Freeway to create a convenient network. This network could be enhanced tremendously when Taipei-Yilan Freeway was to connect with it. This freeway would lead resources straight into the heart of Yi-lan Plain, and in reverse, Yi-lan' s resources could pour easily into other areas of Taiwan as well. In view of these apparent benefits, Dr. Clement Chang pushed successfully to upgrade this construction of an expressway to freeway.

1991/7/23—The inception of the construction of Hsuehshan Tunnel as well as the Taipei-Yi-lan Freeway finally took off. At the groundbreaking ceremony, Luo Kuo-hsiau, the then Speaker of the Yi-lan County Council mentioned specifically the contributions Dr. Clement Chang had made to make the operation possible. His words were the best testimony to Dr. Chang' s deeds: “In the preparation period of the Freeway, we have seen several Ministers of Transportation and Communications come and go, yet I must say that Dr. Clement Chang' s efforts were indispensable. He ensured that the project of the original expressway could be upgraded to that of a highway so that we could receive generous funding, without which the construction would not get started as we witness it today. I sincerely admire his dedication.” Ou Zhing-de, the Director of TANEEB then, supported this observation by adding that Dr. Chang' s dedication to this project during his term was deeply felt when he required an update of the progress of the planning every week. He ensured that all units involved in the Bureau stayed communicated.

1993, July—The main tunnel of Hsuehshan Tunnel began drilling.

2000, January—Nangang to Shiding section was opened to traffic

2003, May—The western section of the pilot tunnel was completed

2003, October—The complete pilot tunnel was finished.

2004, March—Westbound pathway was completed

2004, August—Eastbound pathway was completed, which also marked the completion of the Hsuehshan Tunnel.

2006, January— The section from Toucheng to Suao was open to traffic.

2006, June 16—The complete Taipei-Yilan Freeway was open to traffic.

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