

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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SPEECH BY THE FINANCE MINISTER, DR. GOH KENG SWEE, AT THE OPENING OF THE TOURIST PROMOTION BOARD OFFICE ON 20.5.64 AT 5.30 P.M.

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In establishing the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board the Singapore Government recognises the employment and income generating capacity of the tourist trade and the scope for increasing Singapore's share of that trade. I sincerely hope that the Board will be a source of guidance and help to private enterprise and that it will be regarded by private enterprise as its complement rather than its substitute; an inducement to re-double previous effort rather than a signal to relax.

There seems to be a popular belief that tourist promotion is a simple matter of providing as many tourist amenities as possible and of advertising those amenities abroad. I do not subscribe to that belief. Tourist promotion, as an economic proposition, should have the objective of maximising the inflow of tourists for any given quantum of expenditure. Without the condition on cost, any country which is prepared to go so far as to pay for the passages of tourists and provide them with a free holiday will naturally draw the greatest inflow of tourists. On the other hand, without expenditure on tourist promotion, even the best endowed country will lose some of its share of the tourist trade to its more competitive neighbours. Thus effective tourist promotion is an undertaking that calls for good judgement.

The Singapore Tourist Promotion Board will find that its tasks call for resourcefulness of ideas and willingness to experiment and to learn from the experience of other countries. Equally, if not more, important the Board should be exacting in the appraisal of the feasibility of its ideas. It should scrutinise and wherever possible test its ideas before adopting them because in tourist promotion, as in few other undertakings, the chances of miscalculation and consequent waste of resources are always great. There is always the danger of unnecessary extravagance in attempts to please tourists simply as a result of an incorrect assessment of the wishes of the tourists. At the same time a wrong assessment in the direction of timidity will lead to a failure to secure an expansion of the tourist market waiting for development. The Board will doubtless in the course of its work accumulate the expertise and experience which alone will enable it to work out the optimum strategy in the disposal of its resources.

Since its establishment in January this year the Board has recruited most of its staff. I am glad that the Board's new premises in Raffles Place are ready for occupation and that they can now swing into full operation. I wish the Board every success in carrying out the important and challenging duties with which it is charged.

MAY 20, 1964.

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