

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
TO THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, MR. HO  
CHENG CHOON, AT THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS  
OF THE GEYLANG EAST SIMS AVENUE COMMUNITY CENTRE  
ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, AT 8 P.M.

As we all know, Singapore has since August 9, 1965, ceased to be a State of Malaysia and there upon became an independent and sovereign State. The sudden proclamation and declaration have shocked us amidst sorrow and happiness. Our sorrow was that we have to separate with our fellowmen in Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak who have been working hand-in-hand with us for a multi-racial nation and society. On the other hand we should be happy because there will be less troubles created by the extreme racialists. Nevertheless, we should always bear in mind that Singapore is now a nation of our own and therefore as citizens of a newly emerged country, we must help the Government to bring the nation towards a more equal, just and prosperous society, and to upkeep our leadership in economic development.

"In the course of nation building, there are difficulty which we have to encounter with in order to survive. For example, we want to trade with our neighbouring country under a fair and "mutual-benefit" terms, but they have in turn intentionally made things difficult for us, thinking that we will give way under such conditions. In fact, they will suffer more if they refuse to do business with us. It is our will to trade with other country to achieve our goal for survival. There are problems and difficulty, no doubt. But with determination, we have confidence in solving these problems facing us.

Unlike other countries with many natural resources, Singapore is an island-nation with limitation in land. Nevertheless, the principles that guided the prosperity of the nations are not solely decided by the abundant resources in storage, but in how they are being made use of. Though the resources are scarce, but if they could be utilized to the maximum, the nation could also be prosperous. The resources in our country are that of excellent geographical conditions and the diligent people. Our forefathers with these resources, had already established this once barren island into a modern city. With our confidence and control of these resources, we have no reasons why we could not establish a nation more prosperous.

Many months have elapsed since the independence. Superficially, it seems that it has not much changes in our livelihood, but in reality, our responsibilities have become heavier. Everybody in this country should put their shoulders to the wheels in nation-building. For example, the army is now in the hands of the Federal Battalions and the British Regiments. The annual expenditure for maintaining a company of 1,000 strong would amount to \$10 million. As we do not possess rubber and tin as others do, our economy is thereby limited. As such, we have to organise volunteers service, calling our youths of all races to spend their leisure hours for training to become an excellent life-blood company for national defence.

The community ....2/-

The community centre is now faced with the responsibilities in making the people known whatever duties they should perform under different circumstances. They also lead the people in all developments.

In this 5th anniversary celebrations of the centre, leaders of this constituency have shown enthusiasm in the organisation. Such self-forsaking spirit should deserve our praise. And, it is certainly, under their leadership, the future of this community centre would be brighter than ever. And, with these people, the future of our nation would be unmeasurable.

NOVEMBER 7, 1965.

(Time issued: 1600 hours)

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