

Speech by Political Secretary to the
Ministry of Defence, Mr. S. Ramaswamy,
at the National Language Night Show
sponsored by residents of Bukit Tunggul
and Thomson Road, on 27th November, 1965,
at 8.00 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

We now celebrate the National Language Month. It is the second time this year that National Language campaigns have been launched by Government, in our effort to spread the teaching and use of the language among our people.

The Government uses all four languages - Malay, Chinese, Tamil and English - as official languages because this is good for a multi-racial society as our Singapore society. The Government has also accepted and has made Malay as the National Language because this is a matter of principle, an important matter for a society such as ours. The Government hopes that the National Language can play its role as a common language, so that our multi-racial people can understand the way of life, customs, and culture of each other.

The National Language can easily be studied by people of all races. The National Language had been used by our people for the past several decades in their daily life. The use of the National Language is clearly widespread especially among the common people - in markets, in shops, in parks and gardens, in buses, at the railway station and everywhere. In fact, in meetings of trade unions it is the National Language which is usually used, although perhaps the level is only of the bazaar Malay standard. One fact that must be accepted is that people of all races can understand the National Language.

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For a multi-racial society, the role of the National Language is very important, not only because it can strengthen our solidarity as a united people, but it can also help to preserve the feeling of goodwill between races. The National Language can be looked upon as a bridge that can bring into contact the feelings of people of the various races.

The Minister for Finance, Mr. Lim Kim San, had requested me to convey his feeling of regret that he could not be present at this happy occasion, as he had important work that had to be attended to this evening. Nevertheless, he extends his congratulations to members of the Bukit Tunggul National Language Month Committee for their success in sponsoring these activities. Finally, with great pleasure I declare this function officially open. Thank you.

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27.11.65.