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SPEECH BY MR. S. RAMASWAMY, M.P. FOR CRAWFORD
AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTRY OF
FINANCE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF
THE CRAWFORD CITIZENS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE AT
THE BEACH ROAD COMMUNITY CENTRE ON S.TURDAY,
23RD JULY, 1966 AT 7.30 P.M.

We are assembled here tonight to celebrate the Victory of the PAP in recent by-election and the appointment of members to the Crawford Constituency Citizens Consultative Committee and the 6th anniversary of the Beach Road Community Centre. We have with us our beloved Prime Minister to present the identification cards to the members of the Consultative Committee.

At this function, I think it is only appropriate to talk about the Citizens Consultative Committee, the Management Committee of the Community Centre and their functions. In democratic countries, elections are held periodically and representatives of the people are elected. Whichever party gets the majority seats forms the Government and runs the country.

In some of the newly emerging countries, their democratic system did not work and democracy failed. If you ponder over the reasons for the failure of democracy in these countries, you will notice that democratic system of government had failed because there is no proper co-ordination between the peoples' representatives and those who elected them. Therefore, we have found it necessary that the public, who elect the peoples' representatives, must participate in the running of the country in between, elections, must understand the reason why new legislation is passed, why certain administrative actions are taken, why certain policies are made in running the country, and at the same time criticise and recommend to Government what should be done to improve the welfare of the community as in their area. It is also important that members of Parliament, after having been elected, establish close relationship with the people. In some countries, we can find the members of Parliament, after having been elected, gradually forget why they were elected and sometimes even forget that they were elected. That is why we must make the people feel that the problems of the Government, the problems of the State are not just the problems of the Ministers and members of the Government, but they are also the problems of the people. The Citizens Consultative Committee can help to have a close relationship between the government and the people. The Management Committees of the

community centres can also help in this respect.

Consultative Committees, therefore, have a very important task. Members of the Consultative Committees have been appointed not only because they have the respect and trust of the people of their constituencies, but they are also the leaders where they live and they are able to reflect public opinion.

It is the responsibility of every consultative Committee to see that it succeeds in this task of establishing close relationship between the Government and the people. It is the duty of the Citizens Consultative Committees to examine the general conditions of the Constituency and where necessary to discuss and later submit to the Government proposals on the repair of roads, building of bridges, removal of dirt and also to bring about general improvement of the living conditions of the people. It is the consultative committees which should draw the attention of the government to these problems. It is not always possible for the government administration to tour around the constituencies often and find out these things. It is up to the Consultative committees of their areas to draw the government's attention to any specific problem of their areas.

The responsibilities of the consultative committees do not end just by getting the problem of the people in their constituencies solved. They have also to discuss, government's action and reflect the opinion of the public to the government towards any legislation or administrative action proposed by the Government. You cannot sit back and say now that we have already elected a government, let them look after the country for five years. If you adopt that attitude, you have to suffer if the government does not govern properly. It is in your interest to know the measures taken by the government everyday and protest if it is not in the interests of the public. Then only you can safeguard the country and the welfare of the people.

I am confident that the members of the Consultative Committee and Community Centre Management Committee will discharge their responsibilities and make concrete contribution to the building of this young nation.

JULY 23, 1966.

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