

PRESS RELEASE

SPEECH OF MR. TANG SEE CHIM, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR CHUA CHU KANG AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER FOR FINANCE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE MASS X-RAY CAMPAIGN IN THE CHUA CHU KANG CONSTITUENCY AT LAM SOON COMMUNITY CENTRE, 13 M.S. CHUA CHU KANG ROAD ON WEDNESDAY, 16TH OCTOBER, 1968 AT 7.30 P.M.

Twenty years ago, tuberculosis was the No. 1 killer in Singapore. In 1948, 1,682 persons died of tuberculosis (T.B.) or 173.5 per 100,000 population. Last year, only 548 persons died of T.B.; the rate per 100,000 population was only 28. This dramatic reduction in deaths from T.B. was due not only to the Government's efforts in building clinics and better housing but also to the good work of the Singapore Anti-Tuberculosis Association (S.A.T.A.).

But T.B. has not been completely eradicated. It is a very infectious disease. It affects our lungs and is easily spread by those who are suffering from the disease, especially in conditions of crowded living. T.B. is also a very deceptive disease, that is to say, it is possible for a person to have T.B. without being aware of it. Such a person is therefore a danger to his family and to all those who may come into contact with him. Modern science however has made great strides in recent years, and it is now possible to cure T.B. by means of very effective drugs. But, unless the disease is discovered, the necessary treatment cannot be given.

The best and most effective way of finding out whether a person has T.B. or not is by means of an X-ray of the chest. That is why S.A.T.A. is here to-day offering all of us free X-rays.

We are in the midst of a "Keep Singapore Clean" campaign. Keep Singapore clean will only have meaning if we ourselves are healthy and free from disease. As part of the "Keep Singapore Clean" campaign therefore, I have arranged with S.A.T.A. to conduct a mass X-ray campaign in the constituency of Chua Chu Kang. Starting from to-day, S.A.T.A. offers us the necessary facilities to have ourselves X-rayed, in order that we may be able to enjoy a healthy life free from tuberculosis. For the next two months on every working evening, S.A.T.A.'s Mobile X-ray Unit will be stationed at various places - community centres and the P.A.P. Sub-Branch - to enable everyone above the age of 14 years to have a free X-ray. For the convenience of our own people, the X-ray unit will operate in the evenings from 5.00 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.

While I was going round the constituency the other day, I was asked whether there would be any harmful effects to our body in our being X-rayed. I can assure you all that there is absolutely no ill-effect. Perhaps people were worried because they might have read in the papers of radiation diseases. But that has got nothing to do with this kind of X-ray. This is controlled X-ray, and for medical purposes. It has no ill-effects whatsoever on our body. The radiation diseases you might have read about comes from an exposure to uncontrolled radiation, like that from an atomic bomb. The two are quite different.

I am going to have an X-ray myself after this speech, so will my wife. If there is any harmful effect in X-ray, I would not expose you, my wife or myself to it. You can therefore put it out of your mind that there is any harmful effect from X-ray at all. Only good can come from having an X-ray, and I urge you all to take advantage of this facility offered to us by S.A.T.A.

Now it gives me great pleasure in declaring this mass X-ray campaign open. Thank you.

PRESS SECTION,
MINISTRY OF CULTURE.

16TH OCTOBER, 1968.