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SPEECH BY MR. S. RAMASWAMY, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(M.C.) AND M.P. FOR POTONG PASIR AT THE NATIONAL DAY
& 150TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER AT THE SENNETT COMMUNITY
THEATRE ON THURSDAY, 7TH AUGUST, 1969 AT 8 P.M.

I am very happy to be with you tonight for this dinner as we celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the founding of modern Singapore. This occasion marks not only Singapore's 150 anniversary, but with it, the overall economic progress and higher standards of living achieved since Singapore became a separate and independent nation four years ago.

This occasion also offers an appropriate moment for recollection and taking stock. Looking back, there have been numerous problems and difficulties which, though appearing insurmountable at the time, have now been overcome - by the practice of honest and pragmatic government on the one hand, and by the hard work and ability of our citizens on the other. This has provided the background of stability and continuity so essential for economic growth, particularly in the field of industrialisation.

Had the Government been less dynamic in its policies, and our people less resilient to the demands of changing social conditions, there would have been little cause for celebration tonight. At it is, today, the signs of improved living conditions and industrial progress are evident everywhere in the Republic.

The rapid pace of industrialisation is epitomised by the phenomenal growth of the Jurong Industrial Complex, and the development of Singapore into the fourth largest world port and the leading transport and communications centre in South-east Asia, by the increased activity in her wharves and shipbuilding yards. Singapore's public housing programme has won international acclaim.

It is therefore with some measure of self-assurance and pride that we are able to face more critical and troubled times ahead. That there are more crucial problems and turbulent time yet to be overcome, no-one now doubts. We live in a region whose peoples have historically followed a pattern of conflict and eruption, and this situation calls for judicious and calculated planning to ensure economic and political well-being for all. The crux of survival in this region is, therefore, to promote racial harmony, tolerance and mutual confidence among the diverse peoples living here.

So far, we have shown that it is possible, despite the smallness of our size, to survive as a multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious nation - that we continue to do so depends entirely on our nation-building efforts and determination to ensure an enriched and purposeful future for following generations.