

Speech by Mr. Ho Cheng Choon, Parliamentary Secretary
(National Development) on the occasion of the 29th
Anniversary of the Ho Clan Association and the 17th
Anniversary of their Mutual Benefit Association
on 26th October, 1974 at 8.00 p.m.

Acc. No.

NARC

74 0244 651

It gives me great pleasure to address you on this most auspicious occasion of the 29th Anniversary of our Ho Clan Association.

Clan associations have a long and illustrious history in our Republic. In the early colonial days, clan associations were formed to protect and look after the welfare of their members and they have all played an important part in helping immigrants adjust to a new and alien environment.

Through the years, there is little change in the activities of most clan associations which have been restricted among their own clan members. This is understandable when Singapore was largely an immigrant society, and people came here not to settle down but simply to make money.

In the present era, however, the situation is entirely different. Singapore is our home and we all have a permanent stake in the well-being of our country. Clan associations must therefore keep up with the changing times. They should widen their scope of activities to encompass the interest not only of their clan members but also that of the country as a whole for the benefit of all citizens.

One of the ways by which clan associations can mobilise their resources for the good of society is to educate their members on national policy and urge them to make positive contributions. Recent nation-wide campaigns such as the "Keep Singapore Crime Free" and "Keep Singapore Accident Free" campaigns are primarily aimed at making life safer and happier for each and everyone of us.

Clan associations have the advantage of a closely-knit membership. They can indeed play an invaluable role in moulding the right attitudes and values among their members. Such an effort should not be left to the government, the community centres or the citizen's consultative committees alone. It concerns the nation as a whole and each one of us can, with a little effort on our part, set a good example for others to emulate.

In the next few years, life will be getting more and more difficult as inflation continues unabated and the world faces shortage of food and fuel and other essential commodities. We have no choice but to gear ourselves to meet the hard times ahead. We must think not only in terms of ourselves but also of the country as well, for it is only when our country is prosperous and peaceful can we have a better life for ourselves and our children.

Clan associations need to expand their traditional activities of caring only for the interest of their members and participate actively in national campaigns which are of benefit to all sectors of the population. The change is necessary and will be timely too if the Clan associations are not to become anachronism in a modern setting.
