

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

ADDRESS BY TUAN HAJI SHA'ARI TALIN, MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT FOR BEDOK AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE
EXHIBITION ON CRIME PREVENTION AND ANTI-DRUG
ABUSE AND THE RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTARY PROBATION
OFFICERS CAMPAIGN ON FRIDAY, 25 MARCH 1977 AT
8.00 PM IN FRONT OF BLOCK 30, UPPER CHANGI ROAD,
NEW BEDOK TOWN

23 MAR 1977
Acc. No. NARC
77 000 3 17

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a new town. It is hardly eighteen months old.

But, 5,000 units have already been occupied and an estimated
16,300 persons are now residents in Neighbourhood I.

2 While, the incidence of crime, delinquency and drug
abuse may not be acute in the estate, we cannot remain
complacent. If we do not nip these social problems in the bud,
they may grow out of proportion, much to the detriment of
our community. None of us may have a restful night nor the
satisfaction that our wives and daughters can move about
safely in the estates or take the lifts. The clean and
green estate which we are now nurturing, may well become
a blighted neighbourhood with acts of vandalism of all forms.

3 Of particular concern to all of us is the problem of
drug abuse. The young and a growing number of young females
have taken to the narcotic drug, heroin. Drug addicts can be
a threat to our society. Many resort to crime to finance the

purchase of drugs. Female addicts turn to prostitution and thereby bring about other serious social problems like an increase in venereal disease and unwanted pregnancies. If left unchecked, the hand that rocks the cradle may well 'rock' the fabrics of our society.

4 Drug pushers must be identified and ferreted out of their nooks and corners. They are the cause of the misery of so many innocent children and their families. There cannot be any sympathy in dealing with them. The next person he recruits or falls prey to his persuasions could well be anyone close to you or to me.

5 The police will keep criminal activities in the estate under control. The Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association will do its share to educate the community against the danger of drug abuse. The Probation and Aftercare Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs will supplement the concern and efforts of parents to reclaim their children who have offended or are on the verge of getting out of hand. But, we cannot abdicate or totally delegate the responsibility for the prevention of crime and drug abuse in our midst to these

and other agencies alone. Prevention of crime, delinquency and drug abuse, inevitably must be an involvement of the community and these agencies. One of the factors that retards the effectiveness of these agencies is public apathy. This apathy is often amplified by disinterested neighbours to come to the aid of a screaming victim or worse, failing to assist the police in its investigations into the crime. Many of the crimes committed against us in our homes and estate are preventable, just as delinquency and drug abuse among our children can be prevented.

6 The exhibition on Crime Prevention and Anti-Drug Abuse during the next few days is directed at creating a greater public awareness among the residents in our neighbourhood on the urgent and continuing need to be security conscious in our home and estate, as well as to recognise the early symptoms of delinquency and drug abuse in our children so that immediate remedial assistance can be given to them. Prevention is always better than cure.

7 While we must work closely with the police in reducing criminal activities in our estate and with SANA and other agencies in educating our children against the dangers of drug abuse, we must also try to reclaim those who have got into trouble with the law.

8 Many boys and girls want to change; give up their career of delinquency and their addiction to drugs. Their rehabilitation will ensure our continued protection. As long as we have unrehabilitated criminals, delinquents and drug addicts amongst us, they can be a potential source of contamination of the innocent and increased criminal and delinquent activities.

9 Whatever correctional measures are taken against them by the State, they will eventually return to our families, homes and estate. It is therefore, in our interest that we play a more neighbourly and positive part in their rehabilitation. The handful of Probation and Aftercare Officers of the Ministry of Social Affairs have, by tradition and dedication, continued without drawing much publicity in shouldering the responsibility for rehabilitating offenders and drug addicts in our community.

10 The Probation and Aftercare Service requires more volunteers to help them in their rehabilitation work. There are 284 Volunteer Probation Officers from all walks of life, working hand in hand with the professional Probation and Aftercare Officers. These volunteers have found their community service personally satisfying and socially useful.

11 There are many of us in this estate, who would like to take on this new challenge in community service. There are much talents and abilities among our residents. We know our people and our neighbourhood. Therefore, Volunteer Probation Officers from our neighbourhood, with the professional support of the Probation and Aftercare Department, can achieve better results for the good of the total society. Be a Volunteer Probation Officer and give a helping hand.

12 To those, Volunteer Probation Officers who will presently receive their Certificates of Attendance, I congratulate you on your successful completion of your training course. It is your commitment in providing the necessary time and concern for those who are under your care, that makes your contribution precious.

13 I thank the Chairman and Members of the Steering Committee for a job well done. I now declare open the Exhibition on Crime Prevention and Anti-Drug Abuse and the Recruitment of Volunteer Probation Officers Campaign. Thank you.