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TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE (FOREIGN AFFAIRS), ENCIK A. RAHIM ISHAK, AT THE OPENING OF THE SINGAPORE ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEAF REFRESHMENT KIOSK AT EAST COAST PARK LAGOON ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1977 AT 11 A.M.

It gives me great pleasure to say a few words at the official opening of the refreshment kiosk of the Singapore Association for the Deaf. The Singapore for the Deaf has, since its formation in 1955, steadily expanded the services available to our deaf citizens, and supplements the effort by the government to provide them with a meaningful place in society. The less fortunate in our society, the deaf, the blind, and similar groups, need both government help as well as the help of the community in general. Voluntary social workers in the organisations serving our less fortunate citizens are fulfilling an important role.

However, it is equally important that these less fortunate citizens should endeavour to improve themselves by acquiring skills and knowledge which will enable them to find the dignity and self-respect that comes from economic independence, and not fall into a state of self-pity. Neither should they take advantage of the charitable impulse of their fellow citizens. As in the case of man as well as nations dependence on charity can destroy self-respect. The best kind of help we can give the deaf, and similar groups, is that which will enable them to become economically independent.

The Singapore Association for the Deaf is to be congratulated for this, its first business venture. I see no reason why an organisation dedicated to the handicapped should not go into a business undertaking like this. As stated earlier, one should not depend on charity all the time. In the Singapore situation where we do not lack expertise and advice from the business community,

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this refreshment kiosk should gradually achieve bigger returns.

I understand the Association for the Deaf is considering the setting up of other business projects.

Apart from the business aspect, objectives in setting up this refreshment kiosk and the Association's other business projects are to give employment to the deaf, to further publicise its objectives and to continue to raise funds for its work which are all commendable efforts. The Apex Club of Bukit Timah which raised the funds to construct this kiosk, and all other members of the organising committee are to be congratulated for their co-operative efforts.

OCTOBER 9, 1977.