

CONDOLENCE LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW
TO MRS TEH CHEANG WAN ON THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND

16 December 1986

Dear Mrs Teh

I was so shocked and upset on Sunday morning that I did not adequately express my sorrow at Cheang Wan's death when I told you that I was very sad.

I knew him for nearly 30 years. I remember him as an able, resourceful and imaginative Chief Architect of the HDB. His immense energy and his sense of the practical got HDB's ambitious five-year plans transformed into reality. At the beginning it was crucial for the Government to show results quickly. Backed by Lim Kim San as Chairman of HDB, and Howe Yoon Chong as Permanent Secretary of Ministry of National Development (MND), he produced enough flats by September 1963, to prove that the PAP government could deliver on its promise to house the people.

Year by year he gave the people better and better homes. He has helped to make Singapore a property-owning democracy, with 70 percent of Singaporeans belonging to property-owning families.

He reluctantly took up public office in 1979 after I asked him to contest elections and take charge as Minister of MND, one of the bigger Ministries, until a second generation of Ministers have gained enough experience to fill it.

In his nearly eight years as Minister, he helped our construction industry modernise and encouraged our contractors to become internationally competitive. He also speeded up the building of expressways and lessened the traffic jams which used to plague Singapore.

These are contributions to the nation for which Cheang Wan will be remembered.

My wife and I offer you and your children our deepest sympathies. We hope time will help to heal your grief.

Yours sincerely

LEE KUAN YEW