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SPEECH BY THE CHIEF MINISTER, MR. LIM YEW HOCK,
AT THE OPENING OF THE MALAY YOUTH LEADERS'
TRAINING COURSE AT THE SINGAPORE YOUTH
COUNCIL AT 7.15 P.M. ON FRIDAY, NOVEM-
BER 22, 1957

It is heartening to note in recent months a great desire on the part of various youth organisations in Singapore to provide training in Youth Leadership. Only last Tuesday, the Federation of Boys' Clubs started a training course for the Chinese-educated youths. A course is now organised for the Malay youths, this time under the auspices of the Singapore Youth Council.

In the plural society of Singapore with its many races and communities, it is perhaps natural to have separate courses for the different cultural groups. Though we attempt sometimes to minimise our differences, we must not pretend that they do not exist. What we should do, however, is not to ignore the fact that different types of people live in Singapore, but to stress the essential basic similarities. And this holds true especially of our youths.

A youth is still a youth, whether he is Chinese-educated, Malay-educated or English-educated. He has an abundance of energy, a desire to do many things, but above all he has a lifetime of opportunity ahead of him. The best years of his life are still ahead of him. This is the essential similarity among youths, be they of different races. We all live in Singapore; this is our country and our homeland. It is in this little island that our youths have pursued their education to fit themselves in the battles to come; and it is here that most of them will seek their livelihood.

In detail, the particular problems facing different groups of youths may differ. They may speak in different tongues, they may eat different types of food, they may come from families of different cultural backgrounds. Time will bring about a cultural fusion between these communities. But this will not happen unless people are made more aware of the need for an over-riding loyalty to transcend their sectional interests. In this process of cultural fusion, youths have an important role to play.

It must be one of the principal aims of local youths to break down the social barriers which now help to emphasize the differences between the communities. Though each community lives in harmonious relation with the others, there is need for more conscious effort to think and act in terms of the total group and less in terms of the sectional interest. Young people can do this more easily than adults. Their minds are less loaded with prejudices, and being gregarious for the most part, they mix more easily with each other.

It is for this reason therefore I am pleased to come to declare open this Malay Youth Leaders' Training Course. It is a heartening sign of the zest for learning and for leadership which is being stirred among the Malay youths in Singapore, as is the case with other youths.

I am certain that this course will do them a lot of good. They will emerge wiser and more acutely aware of both the
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privileges and responsibilities of leadership. I am particularly delighted that so many lecturers from the University of Malaya have agreed to give their valuable time to do voluntary work in this course. It gives me even greater pleasure to note that it is the members of the local academic staff of the University of Malaya that have ventured forth from Cluny Road to do their bit in advancing the cause of the people in Singapore.

I am sure that you will join me in voicing our special thanks to them.

I wish to thank also the officers and committee of the Singapore Youth Council for this enterprise and I wish both the organisers and the participants all success in their future endeavour.

I have great pleasure in declaring the first Malay Youth Leaders' Training Course open.

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