

Singapore Government **PRESS RELEASE**

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SPEECH BY MR ONG TENG CHEONG, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND LABOUR,
AT THE OPENING OF THE ROAD SAFETY EXHIBITION
AT KIM KEAT COMMUNITY CENTRE ON SUNDAY, 24 OCTOBER 1982 AT 10.00 AM

To be courteous and considerate are desirable qualities and essential elements in any field of human activity. They are particularly necessary in the context of road usage for they make road safety a reality. While the increase in our population is now very slow and hardly discernible, our vehicle population has increased by leaps and bounds. Over the last five years, that is from 1977 to 1981, the number of motor-cars has increased by about 28 per cent, motor-cycles and scooters by about 42 per cent and heavy vehicles by an enormous 77.2 per cent. To keep pace with this rise, the Government has, over the last five years, spent some \$65 million to build new roads and widen the old ones, build overhead bridges and underpasses, provide signalised pedestrian crossings and traffic lights, paint traffic lanes and yellow boxes. The Government has also enacted several new laws with the safety of road users in mind. These include the Pedestrian Crossing Rules, the Safety Belt Rules, the Expressway Rules and the law requiring riders of motor-cycles/scooters and pillion passengers to wear protective helmets.

All these facilities would have been a waste if road users do not exercise courtesy, consideration and work as a team to make our roads safer. Due to the physical size of Singapore, there is a limit to which our roads can be extended and widened. All road users, whether they are pedestrians, riders or drivers, have to share the same road facilities. It is, therefore, important that they have the proper attitudes and behaviour, in particular, the attitude of those driving bigger motor-vehicles towards those in smaller motor-vehicles, and the attitude of those in motor vehicles towards cyclists and pedestrians. Cyclists and pedestrians likewise should show courtesy and consideration for motorists by observing the laws relating to their behaviour on the road, for

example, /2.

example, to use pedestrian crossing facilities, and not to dart out suddenly onto the road and expect motor vehicles to stop immediately.

Over the last five years from 1977 to 1981, 1,317 persons had lost their lives in road accidents, 10,045 were seriously injured, and 50,512 were slightly injured. The grief and trauma resulting from the loss of loss of loved ones, particularly those in the prime of their lives is incalculable. Economically too, they are a grave loss to Singapore for the majority of those killed were doing productive work. Many were breadwinners. Those who are seriously injured put a heavy strain on their families because they have to receive special care.

In eight to ten years' time, our MRT will become a reality. Hopefully it will, when completed, result in less motor vehicular traffic on our roads, especially during peak hours. During its construction, however, traffic congestions will result. While action will be taken to minimise them, all road users are urged to exercise patience, courtesy and consideration. Unless they do so, driving, riding and even walking can become dangerous and exasperating experiences. The degree of safety on our roads therefore depends on you.

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