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Speech by Encik Othman Lok, Minister for Social Affairs, at the Victory Tea-Party at Kelong Restaurant, Pulau Bukom on Saturday, 12 Feb 77 at 4.15 pm

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I am very glad to have this opportunity again to meet my constituents on Pulau Bukom. Although you are physically separated from the mainland by a short stretch of water, you are very important as far as the contribution to our economy is concerned. I am grateful to all of you who have supported me through the years and I can assure you that I shall serve you to the best of my ability.

2 The PAP has been returned to power with an increased mandate from the people. This is a reflection of the maturity of the electorate and an indication of their ability to distinguish between good government and opportunists. The achievements of the Government since it came into power are seen and felt by the people. The measures taken are by and large for the benefit of the people and unpleasant measures which have to be taken are done so with consideration and caution. However, in all that it does the Government does not show any favouritism to any quarter and this element of fair play and justice is the hallmark of good government.

3. The Southern Islands may see a change in the course of time. This is in line with the development of the whole of Singapore where the old has to give way to the new so that a better environment with better land use is effected. Some of the islands have already been affected by developments. Sentosa is one such example together with Kusu, St Johns and the other islands which are being converted for recreational and industrial uses.

4 In the process of modernisation those who live on the islands may have to make some adjustments in their way and style of living. This is not without inconvenience to those affected and the Government will try its very best to assist in resettling them.

5 One of the islands affected will be Pulau Sudong which has an existing area of 10.12 hectares. There are about 600 people living on the island. From the 10.12 hectares, reclamation work will take place to bring it to about 243 hectares. The island, together with the reclaimed land, will provide recreational facilities which will include swimming lagoons. Reclamation work has commenced and will be completed in about three years.

6        The turning of Pulau Sudong into a recreational area is part of the move to effect better land use in Singapore.

However, as in any other area in Singapore the land use may change through time and its eventual use may have to be changed when the need arises for more land for development purposes.

7        I am sure you will appreciate that whilst the interest of the people affected should be looked after adequately, in the long run the measures taken will be of benefit to Singapore. The Government will strive to improve the quality of life in Singapore and we hope to have your continued support.

8        I would like to thank you for this tea-party this afternoon and I wish you all the best.

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