

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

SPEECH BY ENCIK OTHMAN WOK, MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE LABRADOR NATURE RESERVE PARK (OFF LABRADOR VILLA ROAD) ON SATURDAY, 10 MAY 1975 AT 5.00 PM

Nowhere in Asia are people living the way we are - discarding attap houses and the shacks, clearing slum and squatter settlements, going on to the modern multi-storey homes with shopping centres, cinemas, playing fields, swimming pools and sports complexes, wide roads and green spaces. No other place in South-East Asia are people as conscious as we are in improving the environment. Every time I visit factories, welfare homes, sports facilities and other places in the various constituencies, I see improvements. Places become cleaner. There are more trees, flowers and shrubs in the public places. All these mean we have a people who can organise themselves to look after their own interests and do their bit to make Singapore a Garden City.

2 Recently, the Ministry of the Environment was created to be responsible for maintaining a high standard of public health, for improving the environment and for controlling pollution.

Efforts to improve our environment will be co-ordinated and these will include conservation measures such as protection of trees,

streams, foreshore land and beaches, landscaping of roads and public open spaces, control and prevention of all forms of pollution - air, water, noise, soil, marine. Campaigns such as the Keep Singapore Clean and Pollution Free together with the enactment of legislation will help to improve the environment, but more important are the efforts made by us individually and collectively to make Singapore always a clean and beautiful city.

3 In implementing this "Garden City" concept, certain natural factors are working for us. The climate and soil conditions in Singapore permit lush vegetation to grow all the year round. Our industrial estates can easily be made attractive with trees and greenery. Within urban areas, the planting of trees will add to the elegance of the areas. Roads can also be landscaped by judicious planting of trees and shrubs.

4 While clearing land for development purposes, we in Singapore must preserve some areas where the natural landscapes are unspoilt and still retain the beauty and majesty of natural landforms and the flora and fauna. Singapore cannot afford the luxury of huge national parks but we are very fortunate in that we have several Nature Reserves within the city area. Bukit Timah, for

example, is only seven miles from the city centre and has a piece of **unique** and irreplaceable primary forest which has provided much material for many species named by botanists. We need these Nature Reserves not just to give beauty to our city but for our recreation and relaxation away from the hustle and bustle of city life.

5 Today we are gathered here to declare open Labrador Nature Reserve Park. Labrador is unique in a different sense. It is the only sizeable piece of botanical reserve in Singapore with a vegetation typical of rocky shores. The beauty of Labrador is further enhanced by the promenade approved by the Government for recreational purposes. I feel happy for the public who lives in Pasir Panjang and Telok Blangah that **here** they can enjoy the scenic view of a natural cliff face. Experts tell me that this is the home of the Ketapang and the Putat Laut. There are more than 15 species of birds of which the Abbot's Babbler is uncommon. There are some 55 species of butterflies of which 2 are very rare. Labrador is also the only place where a fern called Dipteris Conjugata still survives in its natural state.

6 Finally, I would like to appeal to the public to help the authorities to conserve and preserve the environment, particularly our Nature Reserves. Nature Reserves are only part of the answer to nature conservation, providing sanctuaries to plants, animals and insects. The public must help in the conservation effort. They must be made to realise that they have a responsibility to protect vanishing species of birds, insects and animals. They must understand that to catch a butterfly is not just to annihilate one specimen but a whole generation of butterflies that are responsible for pollinating forest plants. Birds, spiders and milliards of other insects, some too small to be seen, all have their functions in keeping the forest a self perpetuating organism. Therefore, I would like to appeal to all of you to help make Singapore a biological sanctuary so that our future generations ~~can~~ continue to enjoy our natural heritage.

7 I now declare open Labrador Nature Reserve Park.

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