

Speech by Encik Othman Wok, Minister for Social Affairs, at the Ballotting Ceremony for Housing & Development Board Flats at Ayer Rajah New Town on Monday, 9 Jun 75 at the car park in front of Blk 28 Dover Road at 2.30 pm

This afternoon's ballotting ceremony is for the second sale of flats under the Home Ownership for the People Scheme in Ayer Rajah New Town. 130 units of four-room (improved) flats will be ballotted today. As recently as last December, I also officiated at the first ballotting where 396 units of three-room (improved) flats were sold. The frequency and regularity with which these ballotting ceremonies are held are indications of the Government's earnestness in its programme of home ownership for the people.

2 Gone are the days when a large number of Singaporeans used to live in dirty, unhygienic slums where even the basic home facilities probably had to be shared, for example, communal kitchens, toilets, etc. Today, as a result of the efforts at re-housing put in by the Housing and Development Board, people are able to live in clean, healthy surroundings. Since 1964, when the Home Ownership for the People Scheme was launched, a total of more than 81,000 flats have been sold by the Housing and Development Board.

3 Despite the speed with which flats have been built for sale or rental, a rate which has never failed to impress visitors and housing experts from other countries, the flats the Housing and Development Board has built are not merely houses. It has been our constant aim to ensure that people who live in these flats would be proud to call them their homes. Thus, the housing scheme embodies the provision of urban and community amenities, the creation of pleasant environments and the improvement of flat designs.

4 Ayer Rajah New Town reflects this underlying aim. Like other public housing projects planned along the neighbourhood principle, Ayer Rajah will have neighbourhoods each consisting of about 3,000 to 6,000 housing units with its own neighbourhood centre, a market, a hawker centre, retail shops and other community facilities to serve the daily needs of the residents. Besides the neighbourhood centre, there will be a large town centre to serve as the hub of shopping, entertainment, recreational and community activities in the New Town.

5 A major consideration in the planning of Ayer Rajah New Town has been to preserve as far as possible the existing undulating topography. To take advantage of the terrain, the buildings have been

constructed on different levels. Not only does this ensure that the land available is put to best use, it also makes the town look pleasing and aesthetic. In addition, the Ridge Park, a magnificent stretch of green parkland which begins on the slopes of Mt Faber will extend up to Kent Ridge where a new University complex will be and will form a pleasant green southern boundary for Ayer Rajah New Town.

6 In the future, the New Town will be expanded with the building of more flats. Presently under piling and construction are 3,104 housing units comprising 284 one-room flats, 545 two-room flats, 965 three-room flats, 590 four-room flats, 768 five-room flats and 41 shops. Eventually Ayer Rajah will contain about 24,000 housing units with an estimated population of 120,000 to 130,000. Together with the Telok Blangah and Clementi New Towns, Ayer Rajah New Town will link the City with the Jurong Industrial Estate to become what is known in the island-wide concept plan as the Western Corridor with an aggregate population of nearly one million people eventually.

7 You who are here for today's ceremony are among the first families to move into this estate. In the beginning when all the facilities that have been planned are still under construction and with so few other families having moved in, you may feel a little lonely and also you may experience a lack of ~~com~~community spirit.

However, as more and more people move into the New Town, I hope that this sense of community spirit will develop among the residents in the Town.

8 Finally, I would like to wish you luck in this balloting and that you may get the flat in the block and on the floor that you want.

Thank you.

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