

Speech by Mr Ho Cheng Choon, Parliamentary Secretary (National Development) at the prize-giving ceremony of the poster competition on the theme of "Energy Conservation" organised by the Public Utilities Board, Esso and the Ministry of Education at the San Centre Conference Room of Esso on 10.9.1975 at 3 p.m.

I am happy to be here today to officiate at the prize-giving ceremony of the poster competition for primary, secondary and vocational schools on the theme of "Energy Conservation".

First of all, let me say a few words on the competition itself. The organisers, namely the Public Utilities Board, Esso and the Ministry of Education are to be commended for their initiative and effort in organising a competition on a theme which is of topical relevance. It serves to remind the general public of the need to conserve energy which, needless to say, is not without benefits to them as well as to the country as a whole. Such public-spirited endeavour is laudable.

In the past, particularly prior to the Energy Crisis, when fuel could be obtained cheaply and easily, people by and large did not bother to conserve energy as the need to do so then was not urgent nor rarely, if at all, talked about.

However, with the advent of the Energy Crisis and its ubiquitous effect on the economy of the world, things began to change rapidly. People suddenly realise that the "good old days" of cheap fuel are over. Everyone knows that the same quantity of fuel now costs much more than before and even so, the supply is uncertain as the Energy Crisis is still not completely "out of the woods". The consumers can no longer take things for granted, as in the past, and they have to adapt and adjust to the new situation accordingly. Indeed they can modify, without too much sacrifice, their pattern of consumption of fuel and prevent wastage which collectively will conserve energy.

In Singapore, the need to conserve energy is even more pressing as we have no natural resources of our own. We have to pay for virtually everything, including fuel, that we consume daily. Conserving energy will also save on our foreign exchange. We cannot afford to be a free-spending consumers' society, like the affluent countries in the west, and we really have no choice but to exercise economy and thrift in whatever we do.

I would like to congratulate the winners of the poster competition, and express my appreciation to Esso for sponsoring it.