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SPEECH BY MR E W BARKER, MINISTER FOR LAW AND THE ENVIRONMENT, AT THE 8TH ANNUAL DINNER OF THE SINGAPORE INSTITUTE OF SURVEYORS ON FRIDAY, 1 JULY 1977 AT 8.00 P.M. AT SHANGRI-LA HOTEL

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As Singapore is only a small island, in spite of our active efforts at reclamation, and as modern Singapore has been in existence for more than 150 years, one would think that our whole land area had been surveyed long ago, and that there is therefore no need for surveyors today. But that proposition would not even be true for land surveyors. With intensive urban renewal and housing development, both in the private and the public sectors, the need for trained surveyors and survey technicians in great and your prospects bright.

I am glad to know that you have made much progress since I last attended your Annual Dinner in 1970. My congratulations! But I must urge you to continue to maintain a high standard of work and integrity. Government prefers to allow our professional bodies to regulate their own standard of conduct and practice. It is only when things go wrong and are not put right that we have to step in in the interest of the public.

Your Institute consists of three branches -

- (1) Land Surveyors;
- (2) Quantity Surveyors;
- (3) Valuers, Estate Managers and Real Estate Agents.

The practice of land surveyors is governed by the Land Surveyors Act, 1970. This Act provides for the registration of land surveyors. Disciplinary powers are vested in the Land Surveyors Board.

Quantity Surveyors are, however, not governed or covered by any legislation. The question of their registration was first raised in 1968 when the Professional Engineers Bill was being drafted.

After consultation with the professional bodies representing engineers and surveyors, it was decided to omit quantity surveyors from the Bill.

The practice of your third branch, namely, Valuers, Estate Managers and Real Estate Agents, is governed by the Auctioneers Licences Act. The Act does not provide for registration but only requires licensing, whether it be an auctioneer's licence, an appraiser's licence or a housing agent's licence.

Your President has suggested that it may be timely to introduce legislation to control surveyors of all facets in Singapore, but he himself has pointed out that there are problems arising from qualifications and standards for different kinds of surveyors concerned with either land or property, or both. As for housing agents, it would be quite absurd to spell out qualifications for practice. Further, the stipulation of qualifications in any category would restrict membership and could give rise to monopolistic practices.

In the circumstances, Government does not think it appropriate or timely to introduce such legislation.
