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SPEECH BY PUAN NOOR AISHAH, WIFE OF HIS
EXCELLENCY THE YANG DI-PERTUAN NEGARA, AT
THE OPENING OF THE SIGLAP CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL
AT ST. PATRICK'S SCHOOL ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER
5 AT 2 P.M.

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to be here today with the children and parents living in this area to participate in Siglap Children's Festival. I was very pleased to have accepted your invitation when I learned that about 3,000 children, among whom more than 1,500 are under-privileged, are to be entertained today.

It is not always that children of all races, religions and cultures come together for the sole purpose of enjoyment, although we know that in our schools much is being done to integrate Singapore's school children. Many of the children who are here today are very young and are not yet at school. And yet a get-together like this means so much for them and their parents. I am sure they will remember today's occasion for a very very long time. To bring good cheer to these young and innocent children, simply for the love of doing it, is indeed a noble act.

Singapore's children are, I think, very fortunate. Some have creches where they are looked after when their mothers are at work. Many go to kindergartens run at community centres and privately. All our children of school-going age have places in schools which are well equipped. There are community centres all over Singapore to cater for their needs. Our handicapped children are also cared for.

However, there is much more we can do for them at no great cost. We can organise excursions, shows and other forms of educational entertainment on an area basis from time to time. Community and social workers can do much for our children in addition to the formal education our children get at school. This Children's Festival is one way of bringing together not only children but parents and members of the public for the benefit and entertainment of our children. As a mother I know how happy they are to be here today.

Young children need the care and the love of their parents and wards. It is only with the true and tender love of their mothers and fathers that children can grow up in the knowledge that they2/-

that they have been cared for. In this way, children will in due course of time return that love not only to their parents but to society at large. And where society also cares for them in their later years, then in the same way they will be ever grateful to those around them in society. In this way they will become useful and responsible citizens.

The importance of proper and planned upbringing of our children from the youngest years is indeed a very important matter for all of us if we want our nation to continue to progress. I have no doubt that the organisers of Siglap Children's Festival, that is, the Siglap Citizens' Consultative Committee, the Management Committee of the Siglap Community Centre, with the co-operation extended by the Siglap Women's Association and the Army Wives' Association in the area had these noble objectives I mentioned uppermost in their minds when they decided to hold and help organise Siglap Children's Festival. I must congratulate them for their hard work, and I wish them success not only in today's function but also for the future. I wish more of such festivals were organised in other parts of Singapore.

DECEMBER 4, 1965.

(Time issued: 1900 hours)
