

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY MINISTER FOR LABOUR,
MR. JEK YEUN THONG, IN PARLIAMENT ON 30.12.65.

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Over the last few days after the introduction of the National Registration Bill in Parliament on 13th December, 1965, much public concern has been expressed through the back-benchers and through the press over a provision in the National Registration Act that an unnamed birth certificate supported by a statutory declaration shall not necessarily be sufficient evidence for the purpose of establishing Singapore citizenship by birth. The Registry of Citizens has been besieged with enquiries as regards the citizenship status of persons holding unnamed birth certificates.

The Government wishes to make it clear that this provision in the Act is designed to ~~ce~~bar people who were actually not born in Singapore but who claimed birth here by using unnamed birth certificates not belonging to them. The Government appreciates the fact that there are many people who were born in Singapore but whose names have not been entered on their birth certificates either through the ignorance of their parents or through the tardiness of the colonial registration authorities. As far as those who were in fact born in Singapore and holding unnamed birth certificates are concerned, there need be no worry over this provision in the Act.

I would like to announce the Government's policy which is - that a person who holds an unnamed birth certificate and has a Singapore identity card issued in 1949 or earlier stating that his place of birth is Singapore, is presumed to be a Singapore citizen by birth. There is therefore no cause for anxiety by persons whose identity cards issued in 1949 or earlier stated that they were born in Singapore. They need not rush to the Citizenship Registry to have their citizenship status verified. They can apply for the new plastic laminated identity card when their turn comes.

All those of 12 years in 1949 must have taken identity cards as required by the law then. In other words all those now over 28 years, i.e. 12 years old at 1949 plus 16 years (i.e. 16 years since 1949 to 1965), have their proof in their identity cards.

There are persons born in Singapore who attained the age of 12 years after 1949. In such cases their birth certificates, whether named or unnamed, have an endorsement on them by the Registry of Persons when they obtained their identity cards. This endorsement shows their present identity card number. When such persons produce their birth certificates together with their present identity cards for re-registration they will be accepted as Singapore citizens by birth and will be given a citizen plastic laminated identity card.

Further, any person who holds an unnamed birth certificate together with a statutory declaration made by one of his parents can always prove his Singapore citizenship by birth by other supporting documents such as: -

- (a) birth certificate of his brothers and sisters;
- or (b) birth certificates of his children;
- or (c) school leaving certificate;
- or (d) vaccination notice or certificate;
- or (e) baptismal certificate,

which my Ministry will accept as sufficient evidence to establish status as a Singapore citizen by birth.

A citizen plastic laminated identity card in future will be a very important document for a person to possess. In fact, the Government has taken measures to see that the new plastic laminated identity card is forge-proof, tamper-proof and waterproof. With a citizen identity card a holder will have all the rights and privileges conferred on a citizen of Singapore. It will be his passport to social amenities like education, housing, health, employment, etc.

This statement should clarify the position and allay doubts of those who are born in Singapore.

DECEMBER 30, 1965.

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