

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

MC. JUL.21/66(CUL)

SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR CULTURE AT THE COCKTAIL PARTY FOR "EASTERN SUN" AT THE CHINESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ON JULY 15, 1966.

I am very pleased to be at this party to mark the opening of the "Eastern Sun".

With the present rate of literacy among our people and their thirst for knowledge, our Republic can do with another English language newspaper. The management of "Eastern Sun" are to be congratulated for their initiative in filling this gap.

In any country, the Press has an onerous burden to perform and in our newly emerging, multi-racial society the tasks and functions of the newspaper are magnified but not beyond the performance or capacity of dedicated and responsible Pressmen.

It is worthy of remembrance that freedom of the Press does not thrive in totalitarian states, where only one channel of communication is tolerated, where the voice of criticism, albeit a constructive one, is suppressed. In Singapore, the Press is free to tell the truth, report factually and influence the people accordingly. It must do so bearing in mind the special circumstances of our Republic in the context of its transformation to a modern, progressive society.

It is well-known that the world is a fast changing one and the rate of change politically, economically and socially is phenomenal. For our people to adjust to rapid changes is a different task. In this direction, the columns of the newspaper can help to inculcate new values, attitudes and ideas, slowly but surely; for the printed word is a very powerful aid in public and informal education.

In running a newspaper, the management must never forget the multi-racial requirements of our Republic. Various communities there may be but they are integral parts of a complete whole. It is too easy for any organisation to serve only sectional needs. But this approach is not in the interest of the newspaper, the readers or the nation as a whole. All sectors of the people must benefit from the contents of the newspaper and it is with the support of all that the newspaper can attain a massive readership. In this way, the Press can help to break down social, racial and language barriers.

I send my best wishes to "Eastern Sun" and hope that it will give us many years of informative and valuable reading.

JULY 15, 1966.

Time issued: 1430 hours