Acc. No. 66 0058 NARC 149
1st copy

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT MC.JUL.23/66(EDUN)

TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION, INCHE RAHIM ISHAK, AT THE SWITCHING-ON CEREMONY OF THE STREET LIGHTING IN KAMPONG HAJIJAH AND KAMPONG GOH CHOO AT WAYANG STAGE ON SATURDAY, JULY 16, AT 7.30 P.M.

We have all gathered in Kampong Hajijah and Kampong Goh Choo tonight to witness the lighting up of your villages. As residents of both these kampongs you know better than anyone else that these lights are being installed for your benefit for the first time in the history of Singapore.

Most, if not all the land in Kampong Hajijah and Kampong Goh Choo is private land. It does not belong to the Government. Yet like in so many other places in Singapore the Government realises that certain public amenities should be brought to the people who need them although they might live on private land. That is why for more than seven years since the P.A.P. Government took office you have seen day by day, month by month and year by year all kinds of public amenities and public services being extended to our people. It might be stand pipes for water, community centres, clinics, roads, drains hospitals, schools and houses or as we witness tonight electric lights for kampongs.

The Government knows that you need these lights in the kampongs and the Government also knows that as people who belong to the lower income group you will find it difficult to pay for the lighting yourselves. For these reasons the Siglap Citizens' Consultative Committee put up plans last year for the installation of lights in Kampong Hajijah and Kampong Goh Choo, and tonight you have all come to join in this little ceremony to light up your kampongs.

We realise that the installation of lights in your villages is not everything. There is more work to do for your betterment. You can be sure that members of the Siglap Citizens' Consultative Committee will continue to look after your welfare and to investigate into your needs and that they will continue to recommend to the Government for your other requirements. I know that the chairman, other office bearers and committee members of the Siglap Citizens' Consultative Committee have worked hard for the people in the last two years. In fact in the last two years we have met regularly twice a month discussing problems relating to the needs of the people and organising mass activities which sometimes lasted into the early hours of the morning and on most occasions lasting till past midnight.

The Government has succeeded in gradually improving the living standards of the people because of the practical and matter-of-fact policies we have consistently followed. From 1959 to 1963 when we were an internal self-governing State, we implemented our development plans according to the needs of the people and within the resources available. We worked on the basis of priorities, the most needy always being served first, while we kept our long term objectives uppermost in our minds. Even when we joined Malaysia, we were mindful of the interests of the people of Singapore. Now that we are a separate independent State, we have adjusted ourselves to the new position with policies and objectives which are in no way less practical and less realistic.

For example we have made trade and other contacts with countries in Eastern Europe and Africa which previously we did not have contacts with. This means that we want to diversify and broaden our international trade and international relations. At the same time we have taken care that our old trading partners are not let down. We have carried on with even greater vigour in our programme of industrialisation in Singapore.

Our foreign 2/-

Our foreign policy based on non-alignment with the power blocs is meant to expand the circle of freindly countries, while at the same time making new friends and not losing the old ones. All these we have done with meticulous planning and care.

The suddenness of our expulsion from Malaysia and the frustration which followed could have led others less patience and courageous to take drastic and irrational action. The Singapore Government has successfully kept its head as well as its heart in that period of disappointment, and today we are more than ever before able to stand squarely on the Singapore soil to meet all problems and challenges. The people of Singapore, we know, are today imbued with confidence for the future and what is more important they are together with the Government imbibed with the spirit and determination to make a success of the job of making Singapore survive and succeed. Though Singapore has no natural resources, except human resources, our people are not worried because we fully appreciate the fact that determination, intelligence and the capacity for honest labour are factors on our side. Most important is the awareness that the future is in our hands. The people of Singapore trust their leaders and dearly love their country. That is why they have not left this fair land despite offers of acres and acres of free land for resettlement in a neighbouring state.

You can imagine what the position will be if they Government had panicked and pushed into making the wrong decisions. Then not only would our internal and external enemies quickly exploit the uncertain situation, but the people of Singapore would have lost confidence in the Government leadership and might have themselves lost hope. You will see that even after 11 months after we have successfully steered the ship of State there are sinister elements from the extreme left as well as the communalists and racists in the right who, given the slightest opportunity, have tried to cause alarm and bring about despair among the people.

Do not for a moment think that these bankrupt elements have given up hope of bringing chaos in our midst. You have seen how the anti-national pro-Communist groups have time and again attempted to bring about disorder in our State. We have also seen racialist and communal groups from the right wing in 1964 attempt to disrupt the life of the country by senseless acts which led to violence and the sacrifice of innocent men and women. These have been lessons which the people of Singapore have learned in recent years.

In a way it is a blessing in disguise for by showing their dirty hands and even dirtier motives the people of Singapore have become wiser, more alert to political realities and the meaning of freedom and good Government. This is the situation in Singapore today and whatever reckless action these anti-national and racial elements might take, we on our part will be firm and steadfast in our action and movement towards a peaceful, stable and more prosperous society.

Finally, I wish to thank all of you for coming here tonight. I wish also to thank officials of the Ministry of National Development who have made preparations for tonight's ceremony, members of the Siglap Citizens' Consultative Committee who have helped in the preparations and also the Ministry of Culture who have come to continue tonight's occasion with a film show.

JULY 16, 1966. (Time issued: 1615 hours)
