

SPEECH BY MR. S. RAMASWAMY, M.P. FOR CRAWFORD AND  
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL DAY  
BY THE CRAWFORD CONSTITUENCY ON FRIDAY, 11TH AUGUST,  
1967, AT 7.30 P.M. AT BEACH ROAD COMMUNITY CENTRE.

It gives me great pleasure to be with you this evening at this dinner organised by the Crawford Constituency in celebration of the Republic's second anniversary.

We are indeed lucky to have with us this evening, among our guests, some international sportsmen. They are table-tennis players from Japan, Korea, Indonesia and Hong Kong. I have no doubt that our special guests will share our joy in our National Day celebrations.

You have listened to the Prime Minister's message on the eve of the National Day. The facts and figures, which the Prime Minister gave, were not plain statistics, for they meant that inspite of the fact that we have no natural resources, we have in the last two years surged forward towards prosperity and a better living in the Republic. When we attained independence two years ago in August 1965, there were people who doubted whether Singapore, as an independent nation, could survive and there were some who would take joy if Singapore were to collapse. Two years of independence and two years of managing our own affairs have shown to those pessimists, and to the world, that not only we can survive but we can make a better place out of this tiny 224 square miles of island in the southern tip of Asia and right in the middle of a turbulent world.

We have improved our standards of living, we have expanded our industrialization programme and this must go on expanding for the rate of our economic expansion must at least meet with the rate of the job seekers who are flooding the labour market every year, and at least 15,000 of them male students alone.

A fact that we can take particular pride is that, inspite of not having vast pieces of land, plantations, tin mines, oil fields, we are day by day increasing our revenue. Inspite of the increase in public expenditure in providing better living amenities for the people, our coffer shows even a healthier state. Not many developing nations are doing as good as we have done, what appears to be lacking in other newly emergent nations is the drive, imagination and determination of the people and their leadership.

Even in Crawford Constituency there used to be many small factories tucked away in old and dilapidated shophouses, small shops and business. These had given way to urban renewal for a better and more economic use of the little land that we have. Most of the residents have moved out of this Constituency to better homes in the Housing & Development Board estates. For them it is a change to their living environment and undoubtedly a better atmosphere for the up-bringing of their young ones.

Urban renewal is not a mere prestige project as we quite commonly in this part of the world. Impressive buildings and mansions are put up with total disregard to their economic and social capabilities but merely as a show-piece to the world. For us every project's implementation is the result of careful and serious analysis of the nation's needs and planning. We cannot afford any blunders.

Before I conclude I have to reiterate that the success of our nation and our ability to strive forward in the fields of economy, education and industrialization will depend on the amounts of hard work of the people - to build a vigorous nation. Let's all resolve that (1) we shall work hard; (2) we shall not expect anything for nothing; (3) we shall train our children in athletics, we shall inculcate into our generation that physical fitness is equally important as normal academic education for they are the ones who will provide the leadership for the next generation and (4) all able-bodied men will learn the art to defend our nation.

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