

SPEECH OF MR YONG NYUK LIN, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS  
AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL  
ORGANISATION TRAINING SEMINAR ON SYNOPTIC ANALYSIS AND  
FORECASTING IN THE TROPICS OF ASIA AND SOUTHWEST PACIFIC  
AT THE CULTURAL CENTRE ON WEDNESDAY 2/12/70 @ 1000 HOURS

It gives me great pleasure to extend a warm welcome, on behalf of the Government and people of Singapore, to all the participants and consultants of the Training Seminar on Synoptic Analysis and Forecasting in the Tropics of Asia and the Southwest Pacific. This seminar is being organised by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) within the framework of the United Nations Development Programme. Its object is to provide training in the latest methods and techniques of weather analysis and forecasting for practising meteorologists of the region concerned.

2. To Singapore this seminar has two-fold significance. Firstly, it is the first international seminar in meteorology that is being convened in Singapore, and secondly the topic of the seminar is of great interest to us, since our weather is so easily influenced by the vagaries of a tropical atmosphere.

3. The science of meteorology was given a tremendous impetus during World War II, when much research and effort were made to provide military aviation with adequate meteorological services. In the post-war era, this science acquired new dimensions because of new applications in agriculture, transportation and water resources development.

4. I understand that one of the reasons for the slower development of tropical meteorology in the past, was due to the relatively sparse network of observing stations in the tropics. This situation should now improve, with existing fairly widespread availability of data from meteorological satellites, and other technological aids like the weather radar, automatic weather stations and computers.

5. Unlike many countries, we in Singapore tend to take our weather for granted so much so that it is rarely a topic for conversation. This is because our weather is generally featureless and monotonous. There are no distinct seasons, really, as it rains throughout the year in Singapore on the average of one day out of two. Although showers and thunderstorms are common yet they are usually of short duration, with occasional flooding should the heavy shower coincide with prevailing high tide, thus causing great inconvenience to transport and sometimes previous damage to property. We are indeed fortunate that the varieties of our weather are not catastrophic in their consequences, such as the cyclone of unprecedented fury which hit the coastal areas of East Pakistan, on 12th November and again, of Typhoon 'Patsy' which stormed across the Philippines, a week later.

6. With meteorological satellites, an improved network of observations and research in meteorology undertaken by several institutes, the meteorological fraternity in the tropics is optimistic that before long, they will be able to provide short-range forecasts 2 to 4 days ahead, in the future. The benefits that will accrue to countries from this improvement will be tremendous. In the Singapore context it would mean improved flood warning and control during heavy rainfalls, and better deployment of water stocks in our reservoirs and catchment areas.

7. Singapore is not unaware of its duty to make a positive contribution towards the development of meteorology.

I am pleased to state, that during the course of this year, several sophisticated meteorological aids will be set-up, as a pre-requisite to improved weather services:-

- (a) A 10 cm. weather radar, costing over \$1 million, and capable of detecting storms within a 250 mile radius is now being installed at our Airport.
- (b) A ground station for the reception of data for meteorological satellites is expected to be operational also at the Airport by March, next year.
- (c) A second radar for the measurement of high-level winds will replace older equipment at the Upper Air Observatory in Kim Chuan Road and this is expected to be operational in a few months time.
- (d) On the international scene, because of our unique geographical location, Singapore was selected to serve as a telecommunications relay centre since June 1966 for the interchange of meteorological data between the Northern and Southern Hemisphere in the Global Telecommunications System for meteorology, and we shall endeavour to meet all international obligations to the best of our ability.

8. It is therefore hoped that this Seminar will give you a better insight into the process of the tropical atmosphere, and to provide answers to some of your problems of forecasting. I also hope that your short stay here will be an enjoyable one, and that you will carry back with you most pleasant and happy memories of Singapore.

9. It now gives me great pleasure to declare open the Training Seminar on Synoptic Analysis and Forecasting in the Tropics of Asia and the Southwest Pacific and to wish the organisers and participants every success in their endeavours.

Date: 30th Nov., 1970.