

EMBARGOED UNTIL AND SUBJECT TO DELIVERY.

Speech of Mr. L. P. Rodrigo, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, at the Installation Night of the Lions *CLUB* *International* on Saturday, 3rd July, 1971, at 7.30 p.m. *Singapore North* at the Hotel Equatorial.

I managed a quick and cursory study of the objects of Lions International upon accepting your kind invitation and noted that one of your objects is to promote the principles of good government and good citizenship.

All countries strive for good government but that country achieves it when her people, through the democratic process secures good government which in turn and by the same process, also succeeds in educating good citizenship from the people. Here in Singapore, good government and good citizenship are not only the natural aspirations of our people but are the crucial prerequisites to our survival in this turbulent part of the world.

Being a small sovereign state and having to shape the destiny of our country within the framework of severe political, economic and social limitations, we cannot afford anything less than good government and good citizenship.

Thus each time that the Lions programme and direct the efforts of its membership towards the promotion of the principles of good government and good citizenship, it is making a worthy contribution to nation building.

You would realise by now that we are undertaking the reconstruction of our country with considerable acceleration. The reconstruction entails vast economic and social changes which require our populace to discard traditional modes of living for modernised forms of urban dwelling and to abandon the accustomed patterns of intellectual and emotional responses for the pragmatic and constructive reactions of fully committed citizens of our country. But extensive as these changes are, we may be confident that we will succeed.

It is my view that these changes are taken at an opportune time in the growth of our society.

I hold this view because of the fact that our populace today is extremely youthful. While change tends to be difficult for the elderly who are settled in their patterns of living and thinking, youth are amenable to change because of their goal, their enterprise and their zest for the New and the Novel.

It is good citizenship when the populace respond by adapting to major changes in the country for the general welfare of the nation - changes which are found necessary after a realistic consideration of the issues and not because of an uninhibited preference of the government.

But I also wish to take this opportunity to emphasise the presence of another potential in our youthful population - and it is the idealism of our youth.

I have much respect for it.

The idealism of our youth can and should be the motivating force in nation building. While this does not yet appear to be distinctly so, we are at least fortunate in that hitherto this idealism has not shown general indications that it is inclined to simulate the excesses of liberalism which have emerged in the societies of some developed countries.

But if this idealism has not developed into a force in nation building, it should not be allowed to dissipate.

It should receive direction and guidance. It should be tempered with a strictly sane and keen sense of the present. Then it should develop, because our national aspirations require that the idealism of our youth urgently mature so that in their vision of our country's future, our youth will not be moved to over-react to ideals of human conduct which have become enshrined as eternal truths, but can discern the political, economic and social realities which all the time impinge upon our national interest, appreciate the sober pragmatic national policies which are formulated upon principles of good government and participate positively in nation building through good citizenship.

I have tried to describe the scope of one aspect of your large interests. Your work in this field will undoubtedly prove to be highly interesting and I wish you success in your endeavour.
