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TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE POLITICAL SECRETARY TO THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, MR. LEE GUAN BOO, AT THE LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF THE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY CAMPAIGN AT THE PEOPLE'S PARK COMPLEX CONCOURSE ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, AT 3 P.M.

Last year, 287 people died in road accidents in Singapore. Of these, 46 per cent were pedestrians. The National Safety First Council is launching a Pedestrian Safety Campaign today to reduce the unnecessary loss of life, and suffering to pedestrians. I consider this a very worthy cause and I wish the Council every success in its Pedestrian Safety Campaign.

In the affluent society of Singapore today, the ratio of motor vehicles to persons has increased from about 1:9 in 1960 to about 1:4 today and the number of cars is every-increasing. We Singaporeans must therefore learn to adapt ourselves to modern life in an environment in which roads are crowded with vehicles. The Government is doing all it can by widening roads, improving street lighting, introducing new road signs and speed limits, but the pedestrian must take active steps to protect himself by observing safety rules. Furthermore, the pedestrian should conduct himself in such a manner that not only will he not be hurt, but other people, both motorist and pedestrian, around him will not be injured or killed through his actions.

Very often, the motorist is blamed whenever a pedestrian is injured in an accident. However, the pedestrian is in many cases the cause of the accident or equally to blame. The Safety First Council has devoted much effort to inculcating safety driving by our motorists, but this Pedestrian Safety Campaign will ensure that pedestrians are also reminded that their safety on the streets depended to an equal extent on their observing certain safety rules. We do not have laws against jay-walking as we believe our citizens will be responsible enough and wise enough, to use zebra crossings, overhead bridges and to cross roads in a safe and proper manner. This responsibility has amply been borne out by the response to the water-saving campaign and I am confident that with more care, pedestrian casualties can be significantly reduced. The Safety First Council will promote better pedestrian safety consciousness over Television and Radio, through the Press, schools, community centres and cinemas.

For safety on our roads, "Prevention is better than cure." However I would like you to ponder on the fact that if safety rules are not observed, accidents can happen for which there may be no cure.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1971. (Time issued: 1600 hours)