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TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS,
DR. WONG TIN KEN, AT THE OPENING OF "KEEP SINGAPORE
POLLUTION-FREE" CAMPAIGN AT ALEXANDRA COMMUNITY
CENTRE ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, AT 8 P.M.

A nation-wide campaign has just begun to re-affirm our determination to keep Singapore clean and free from all kinds of pollution. Since 1968, a national campaign has been held every year, to remind ourselves that in a crowded island we should do all we can to keep the air clean; to keep the water in our reservoirs and rivers as fresh as possible; to develop new habits of not littering the streets, and, generally, to cultivate habits of personal hygiene. Laws have been passed to make sure that people and institutions play their part to keep our country an example of cleanliness, and fines have been imposed for those who do not obey these laws.

Laws are useful because they remind us of the serious intention of the Government to make our nation clean, and free from pollution. However, the most effective way for our country to be kept clean is to remind ourselves that a pollution-free Singapore benefits all of us; and, to achieve such an objective, we develop habits of personal hygiene, and consideration for public cleanliness.

The family plays a very important role in developing such habits. Parents, in particular, should exercise their authority and responsibility to inculcate the values of personal hygiene, and care for public health, and cleanliness. What the school can teach, and what the Government authorities can enforce, cannot completely make up for what the parents have not done at their homes. The family is the most important organisation in any society. Good habits, like courtesy, personal hygiene and consideration for others, are best imparted by the fathers and mothers of the children. It will be a sad day in our Republic, if parents fail to exercise their authority and responsibility, and leave the schools and other governmental authorities to discharge what have always been traditionally performed by responsible parents. The Government through its agencies can only provide inspiration for good social behaviour. Ultimately, the parents must bear the main burden of responsibility. No amount of Government legislation, or the increase in the number of policemen, health officers, and other Government agents can prevent people from2/-

people from littering the streets, children from urinating in the lifts in Housing Board estates, and developing anti-social habits. Good social behaviour begins at home: it reflects on the way in which parents exercise their responsibility.

One of the virtues of Asian societies is the cohesion of the family, and the authority of the father. The father is responsible for the transmission of social values, like moral standards, good manners and respect for authority. It is inevitable that as we modernise, some of the traditional values which hinder progress must give way to values that make for success in industrialisation. However, it is important that parents should not lose their authority as heads of the family, and be the source for the transmission of values that make for responsibility towards the family and society. Our campaign to inculcate values of personal hygiene, and collective social behaviour, to keep Singapore free from pollution, will be wasted if parents also do not play their role in seeing that what is encouraged in one month is continued for the rest of the year. Neither the Government nor any government agency, can replace the father or the mother in transmitting the kind of discipline that makes for individual responsibility and collective obligation towards the common good. Traditional Asian societies have given great responsibility to parents. Parents should take up the challenge of making use of this responsibility to transmit values of good social behaviour in a modernising society like Singapore. Parents have upon them a grave and enduring responsibility to see that their children develop new habits that will promote the welfare of their society and the society into which their grandchildren will grow up. With these words, I like to declare the "Keep Singapore Pollution-Free" campaign open in this constituency of Alexandra. My thanks go to community leaders who have put in so much work to make this campaign a success.

OCTOBER 2, 1971.

(Time issued: 1430 hours)
