

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

MC/OCT/23/71 (EDUN)

SPEECH BY MR. LIM KIM SAN, MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AT
THE OPENING OF TEACHERS' PARK AND FOUNDATION STONE
LAYING CEREMONY ON 19.10.71 AT 7.00 P.M. AT 12½ m.s.
YIO CHU KANG ROAD, SINGAPORE.

It has been a pleasure to be associated with the housing scheme initiated by the Singapore Teachers' Union. This scheme has made it possible for teachers to own 180 out of the 256 housing units in this estate.

When Devan first approached me regarding a Government loan to help members of the Teachers' Union to build their own homes, I had no doubts about the benefit of such a scheme. We were then in the midst of encouraging our citizens to become home-owners through the Housing and Development Board home-ownership scheme, and the plan of the S.T.U. ties in beautifully with the overall plan to make Singapore a home-owning democracy.

Therefore, I am as happy as you are that the first housing scheme of the Teachers' Union has been successfully implemented, and we are able to celebrate the Silver Anniversary of the S.T.U. in Teachers' Park.

Those of you who had the foresight to buy houses here, have invested wisely and well. Your assets have appreciated or increased in value and will keep on appreciating. I do not see your properties having a lower value than what you have paid for them. Your investment is safe. This I am sure, you all know.

2/One other aspect...

One other aspect of your investment which some of you may not know is this. There is a world of difference between living in a rented house and living in one of your own. Take a look around the Housing and Development Board's estates. You can, without much difficulty, see which block is owner-occupied and which is rented out.

The former is well groomed, if one can say that of a block of flats. It is better maintained and, on the whole, cleaner and more orderly than the latter. The pride of ownership shows through the bright paintwork, clean corridors and well kept balconies but what is more important, there is an air of permanency around the place. This gives it the stability and the ballast without which it will be well nigh impossible for us to build a happy and prosperous nation.

It will be the same with the house-owners in this or any other housing estate. I am sure you will look after your homes, now that you own them, better than you did your former rented houses, or flats and, most important, you will begin to grow roots here to give it the stability and permanency essential for our economic growth.

Home-ownership is enough incentive to make you keep the estate beautiful and make real homes of your houses. You have the knowledge and the means for gracious living. Make this a model estate, keep the place clean and green, keep it free from flies and mosquitoes, and keep it free from noise and smell.

You can live a comfortable life here. However, a comfortable life can also be a selfish life so may I ask you, now that your dream of owning your own homes has come true, to try and live a full and useful life. Take cognizance of the fact that there are many others in Singapore less fortunate than you are, but without whom the affluence of the professionals, teachers like you, doctors, engineers, lawyers, businessmen, etc. would not be possible. The workers and the underprivileged too,

have their hopes and aspirations and I think we owe ourselves the duty to do what we can to help them fulfil their dreams.

There are many things which you can do in this respect. As a start, perhaps you can interest your co-residents here to serve in school management committees. Get them interested in community service. They can serve as members of the Management Committees of community centres. The People's Association has 191 community centres. The activities of these centres have to be controlled and managed by the residents. A community centre is a success if the residents take an active interest in its management and help run and finance the many activities provided in these centres.

The S.T.U. is aware of the importance of identifying themselves with the well-being of the majority, and has successfully encouraged its members to give their services to welfare associations and charitable organizations. As teachers you are educating our children. I hope you will now also educate some of our more fortunate and better-off adults on the importance of giving their time and money in helping our less fortunate fellow-citizens. Apart from making this a model estate for gracious and full living, I hope the teachers will also act as a catalyst to start our more fortunate citizens on the road to assisting their fellow-citizens. You can regain the great respect which teachers once commanded if you will set your mind to nobler pursuits and become a model for others in cultivating and imparting the right values.