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SPEECH BY PROF. WONG LIN KEN, MINISTER FOR HOME
AFFAIRS, AT THE ALL MALAYA MUSLIM MISSIONARY SOCIETY
BUFFET PARTY AND CULTURAL SHOW AT THE MEI CHIN ROAD
SOCIAL FUNCTION HALL, ON SATURDAY, 4TH DECEMBER, 1971
AT 8.00 P.M.

First, allow me to thank you for the invitation to this Hari Raya party. I appreciate your invitation the more because this Hari Raya party is not a constituency function but one organised by a religious association for the Malay community in the whole of Queenstown. Hari Raya celebration like Chinese New Year, Deepavali, Vesal Day and Christmas are national holidays. These holidays are enjoyed by all, if not, celebrated by all. This is how things should be in our multi-racial society.

Queenstown is a mini multi-racial society in the making. The residents come from all parts of Singapore, both rural and urban, and from all communities. Living in flats is a step forward in multi-racial relations for the Malays, the Chinese, the Indian and others alike. The people of all races are brought closer together in this housing estate, and life is a daily discipline of communal tolerance and understanding. The residents are more conscious that they are members of a flat-dwelling community than of their racial community. This is a healthy sign of integration in living, among the various races.

In Queenstown, the Malays have taken to living in flats as naturally as other communities. They have become adjusted to the changes in Singapore. More important, they have been shown that they can adjust to the changes in Singapore. In Queenstown, social classes have emerged according to whether they own flats or rent them, and according to whether they live in 3-room flats, 2-room flats or 1-room flats. Many Malays own flats in Queenstown. In Alexandra constituency, practically every block of sold flats has Malays, who form up to as high as 42% of the population in the block. This situation reflects economic gains as well as movements upward in status in the society of flat dwellers. Indeed, many own cars, televisions and refrigerators. They are just as conscious of the need for small families, better food for their children and better education. This is particularly true of the younger educated Malays.

What this means is simply that, upon the challenge and the will to accept the challenge, attitudes will change. What is even more important, there is a growing awareness that unless the Malays, as a community, accept the necessity to change quickly, they may find the pace of changes harder to cope with, in future. The desire to be successful in this life does not conflict with the teachings of the holy Koran. Indeed, at one time in history, the Muslim world was one of the richest and most advanced civilisations.

The Holy Koran also encourages discipline. The month long Ramandan is meant to give the Muslims inner strength and to improve their moral fibres. It requires a great deal of stamina and determination to fast for one month. The same kind of qualities can also be applied to study and work. It will benefit the Malay community if the kind of discipline shown in Ramandan is also extended to their daily life for the rest of the year.

On this Hari Raya party let us adopt a custom from the West. This is the custom of making a New Year resolution. Let us resolve that in this coming year we will take further steps to meet the challenges of the modern world. It now remains for me to wish all of you Selamat Hari Raya.

DATED: DECEMBER 4, 1971.

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