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SPEECH BY PRESIDENT SHEARES AT THE DINNER IN AID OF
THE NATIONAL KIDNEY FOUNDATION AT THE MANDARIN HOTEL
ON FRIDAY, 26TH MAY, 1972 AT 8.00 P.M.

My wife and I are delighted to be present at this dinner held in aid of the National Kidney Foundation which was founded on 5th September 1968.

Of the several objectives spelt out in the Foundation's Constitution I should like to stress the three objectives which very clearly indicate the compelling need for the existence of our National Kidney Foundation, namely:-

- (1) To encourage and promote research relating to prevention, diagnosis, causes and treatment of kidney disease.
- (2) To render services to persons suffering from kidney disease.
- (3) To disseminate information regarding causes and prevention of kidney disease.

Since its inauguration, the Foundation has set itself a programme designed to relieve persons suffering from chronic kidney disease. I shall briefly reiterate the positive manner in which the National Kidney Foundation implemented its objectives:-

- (1) It employed two renal nurses and one renal technician.
- (2) It donated equipment and chemicals in order to ensure that dialysis would be available for the maximum number of patients under the prevailing conditions of staff and physical space available.
- (3) It provided travel scholarships to staff specialising in kidney disease, thus enabling them to attend conferences and maintain valuable contacts with colleagues with similar interests in U.K., Canada, Australia and Europe.

These programmes were made possible on account of assistance from the Rotary Club and the Lions Club.

In order to obtain data relating to the incidence of early kidney disease in our population, the Lions Club sponsored a mass door-to-door survey on a large scale. Your Chairman has just stated that altogether 10,000 persons were examined and it was discovered that blood was present

in the urine in 2 per cent, bacteria in 2 per cent and albuminuria in 1 per cent of those examined. Persons showing any of these abnormalities are being followed up.

The recent amendment of the "Medical Therapy education and research act", when it has passed all readings in Parliament, will enable the national kidney foundation to recruit more kidney donors who would only be required to sign a form in the presence of two witnesses to ensure that their willingness to donate their kidneys is not over-ruled by their relatives.

To date only three cases have received kidney transplants.

It has been estimated that every year 400 of our population die of kidney disease and that 10 per cent, that is, 40 of them would benefit from continuing dialysis treatment. If the kidney transplant programme is stepped up, it should be possible to increase the number of patients who need dialysis treatment as more and more patients on dialysis treatment will receive kidney transplants.

I hope that the enlightened citizens of our Republic will join the organ donor group thereby helping the victims of chronic renal disease by giving them the "Gift of Life".

In 1971 Government took over the cost of maintaining the Renal Unit at Outram Road General Hospital as recommended by the committee on medical specialities. This has enabled the National Kidney Foundation to concentrate on its other important objectives.

The renal unit in Singapore is the best in South East Asia and, with ten beds in the unit, it should be able to provide treatment for twenty-four cases per year of patients suffering from chronic renal failure who require dialysis. Its staff has received specialised training and is helping in the training of specialists from neighbouring countries of South East Asia in all aspects of renal dialysis.

The Renal Unit is not yet large enough to treat all patients in Singapore who need dialysis treatment, but when the kidney transplant programme is fully functioning, the Unit might meet the needs of all patients suffering from terminal renal failure. Even in well developed countries of the world facilities are not yet available for the treatment of all kidney cases requiring dialysis and kidney transplants.

The National Kidney Foundation is the only voluntary health agency seeking the total answer to chronic disease of the kidney, namely, its aetiology, prevention, treatment and cure. The Foundation is viable only if our concerned and generous public continues to support it.

I wish the National Kidney Foundation every success, especially in its endeavours to recruit organ donors.

Date: 26th May, 1972

Time Issued: 1200 Hours.