

SPEECH BY MR LIM GUAN HOO, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY,
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AT THE 1ST ANNIVERSARY
DINNER OF THE FEDERATION OF SINGAPORE PETROLEUM
DEALERS' ASSOCIATION ON 11.5.73 AT 2000 HOURS AT
THE AMBASSADOR HOTEL

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I am indeed pleased to join you this evening in celebrating the first anniversary of the formation of the Federation of Singapore Petroleum Dealers' Association.

This island Republic of ours has within the last decade progressed from an important port dealing with entrepot trade to a highly industrialised city state possessing the 4th largest port in the world and providing financial and other important services. Our oil refining capabilities have developed to such an extent that our oil refineries are among the largest in the world. Industrialisation has brought with it the rise in the amount of fuel oil used. The increase in the number of motor vehicles from 192,387 in 1965, the year when Singapore attained its independence, to 344,480 in March 1973, is yet another self-explanatory fact indicative of the expanded volume of petrol consumption and hence the increasing number of oil companies as well as petrol stations. If the number of vehicle continue to increase at the present average annual growth rate of 8% - 9%, there will come a moment when private car ownership would touch the saturation point as defined by the physical features of this small island of ours. The transportation system of a nation would have to be adapted to its geographical size and environmental conditions as in the case of Italy where, it has been said, without railways the existence of a united country would not have been made possible in the material sense. But whatever is the birth rate of private motor cars in Singapore in future, there is no room for any prophot of doom to foretell an immediate decline in the need of communication and transport efficiency provided by motor vehicles. As long as vehicular transport remains an essential part of the present day social and economic life, the services rendered by members of your association would remain a source of strong drive and momentum for the continued progress and prosperity of the society at large.

The question now is in what way can the quality control in respect of services rendered by your members be effectively carried out. No doubt members of your association have made much contributions to the society but complacency would impede further achievements. Your members

are spread all over the island, located in strategic spots. You have indeed one of the widest coverage in the country by a single group of persons making your Federation a very powerful disseminator of information. I am confident that you will use this capability to the benefit of our society. Industrialisation and prosperity would, to a certain extent, do us a disservice if there is a lack of awareness of the importance to control pollution. Apart from factories, vehicles can be one of the main contributors to pollution of the environment. I cannot over emphasise the important role which members of your Federation can play in helping to reduce the threat of pollution caused by vehicles. It is noted that many of your petrol stations are aptly called service centres or service stations where services by competent and experienced mechanics have been made available to car owners. As there is rarely a single week passing by without business contact between these service centres and our car owners, your members are no doubt in a very good position to give their service or assistance in putting across any vital message that is related to mechanical maintenance, periodical car inspections, etc.

A motor vehicle in the hands of a good and careful driver is indeed a very useful tool. However, like all mechanical systems, the engine of a motor vehicle will deteriorate with abuse and age. When this happens, the mechanical system becomes inefficient. Incomplete combustion, poor efficiency and other faults will set in and all these will result in undesirable pollutants being emitted in the exhaust. If every vehicle should do this, then large scale pollution would ensue and we would have a pollution problem on our hands. Being suppliers of what I would consider the source of life to these vehicles, it is only fitting that members of your Federation should constantly remind vehicle owners and drivers of the need to conserve our environment. By strengthening the mechanical sections at your service centres, I am confident, members of your Federation will be able to play a more positive role in contributing towards a cleaner, greener and a pollution-free Singapore.

Apart from the services closely connected with your day to day business, what is equally if not more important is the amateur or non-profitable services that you and I can give to serve the best interest of the society. Your association, formed only in 1972, is now one year old and yet within the brief span of one year, you have been able to organise yourself to put your shoulders to the wheel, in such education campaign as the Courtesy Campaign launched in response to a proposal made by my Minister last year, as a community-like social group. Your

further efforts in making more contributions towards nation building would not go to waste. As your service centres are located at strategic points along our public roads, it would no doubt add to the success of our well run Singapore if these arteries of transport service are filled with the everlasting enthusiasm for social community service so that your stations will not only serve as a source of life to vehicles and machines but would also help to 'propel' the social community service in Singapore.

In conclusion, I would like to wish the Federation of Singapore Petroleum Dealers' Association a very happy and prosperous anniversary.

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