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OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

SPEECH BY MR YONG NYUK LIN, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MP (GEYLANG WEST) AT THE NATIONAL DAY DINNER ORGANISED BY GEYLANG WEST CONSTITUENCY AT CAR PARK, BLOCK 6, GEYLANG BAHRU, LORONG 1, GEYLANG ON FRIDAY 24TH AUGUST 1973 AT 2000 HOURS

Just as Geylang West is being transformed from a depressed village to a modern township and standards of living are raised so must we jack up our standards of social conduct

For the past 7 years we have been holding our National Day dinners at the Lorong 3 Community Centre amidst many old buildings awaiting demolition. This year, we are celebrating in entirely new surroundings in Geylang Bahru, surrounded by new high-rise flats instead. This symbolises the fast changing scene that is taking place in Geylang West constituency, which was formerly a depressed village - a sprawling kampong of wooden and attap sheds and now fast becoming a modern township of multi-storied flats and workshops.

2 As more new blocks of flats get sold or are rented out over the next few years, we shall be welcoming many thousands more of new residents into Geylang West, and they will come from all over Singapore. How does one react and respond to the changing situation?

3 As they will all be our fellow citizens, we should therefore welcome them warmly like members of one big harmonious family. Let us all, be cooperative and helpful to ensure that this neighbourhood stays peaceful and free of crime so that all, young and old can live happily together.

4 If Geylang West can be transformed outwardly from being what was once a depressed village into a modern township, with rising standards of living, we must also jack up our standards of social conduct. We

should be:

- (a) more courteous to one another,
- (b) respect public property,
- (c) be more social minded
  - (i) adopt family planning measures and have small well provided families.
  - (ii) preserve our environment whenever possible by practising anti-pollution measures.
  - (iii) use precious water sparingly and not waste it carelessly.
- (d) and finally always place national interest above personal interest.

5           Although unemployment was a serious problem in the 1960s, the situation has changed dramatically in recent years as every able-bodied adult (male or female) can now find a job easily, provided he or she is prepared to work. Whereas in the past, generally the father is the sole bread-winner to support the whole family, it is now quite common in many families for either the son or daughter or both to earn a good living and thus bring about a larger family income, than was possible previously.

6           You will note that I have left out mothers from being reckoned as part of our economically active work force. This our Government is trying to rectify by building more creches because we want to encourage mothers to leave their homes and to come out to join the work force by becoming working mothers, as well. It is not generally known that, at present, only 700,000 or less than 35% of our population are economically active. We must try to increase our total work force by enlisting

the positive contribution of our working mothers to generate even greater prosperity.

7        Once the family income is increased, as it has over the last decade, naturally the living standards of households have been raised as they will then have the means to buy more of the necessities of life, like good food, better clothes, radio, TV, motor scooters, motor cycles, cars/<sup>HDB flats</sup> and so on and even spend on some luxuries, as well.

8        To keep this up, we must all continue to work hard, to increase productivity, and thus obtain higher rewards for our efforts. There is no better time to make these firm resolutions than during National Day celebrations and I am confident that not only Geylang West but all Singapore citizens will continue to do their best and keep improving, year after year!

24 August, 1973