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SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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SPEECH BY ONG SOO CHUAN, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY,  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR  
NEE SOON AT THE OPENING CERIMONY OF ROAD METALLING  
OF LORONG PELUANG AND PART OF LORONG ACHARA BY GOTONG  
ROYONG ON SUNDAY, 30TH SEPTEMBER 1973 AT 8.00 A.M. AT  
THE LEE CHENG SCHOOL

We are very grateful and encouraged to have with us two hundred eager and willing National Servicemen who will be working with members of this Constituency's Youth Group and residents of Chye Kay Village to metal Lorong Peluang and Lorong Achara. Once again, our National Servicemen have demonstrated their readiness to actively participate in community projects. The familiar sight of our National Servicemen toiling with their fellow citizens is testimonial of the growing co-operation between the army and people. By their active participation in community projects, our National Servicemen have also shown themselves capable and willing to shoulder their social responsibilities and provide enlightened leadership. Through such intimate contacts, the people too, have come to better understand and respect the role of our National Servicemen in the national development of Singapore.

2 Singapore is enjoying an economic boom and with it comes rapid urbanisation and modernisation. There is also a growing ability and expectation among the people to acquire more material comforts. The search and race for more material comforts may erode the quality of social and spiritual life. One finds the rural people more alive and reactive to their neighbours' joys and sorrows. The rural people unaffected by the rush for material desires, show more concern and willingness to help those in need of them or in distress. The rural people have more neighbours as friends and such friendly relations socially and spiritually enrich their lives.

3 Urban life presents a sharp contrast to that of rural. For example, some people living in high rise flats show no interest for their neighbours' welfare nor will they answer any call of distress from their neighbours. Yet, people living in such

flats are only separated by a wall and they are willing to continue meeting each other as strangers even after prolonged periods during which they have met on innumerable occasions in the corridors and lifts. Many people living in urban areas have withdrawn all to themselves. Nothing appears to interest them except those matters which directly affect them.

4           The drift towards such a withdrawal syndrome should be stopped and people should be encouraged to come out with themselves and be active in socially beneficial activities. Today's project will also serve to inculcate the value of a more gregarious life which will be of benefit to all and country.

5           There is a tendency among some of our youth to be reckless and irresponsible in their behaviour. Some over-enjoy themselves, some resort to drugs and yet others try to evade National Service - these youths have become soft, indulgent and irresponsible. The youth should not take the growing prosperity in Singapore for granted. They should know that today's achievements are the endeavours of yesterday and they should contribute to the national development. The youth should commit themselves to the well-being of Singapore. They should develop self-discipline, be willing to work hard, and equip themselves with as much knowledge as possible, so that they will be able to contribute more effectively to the national development of Singapore.

6           Just as we share the task of metalling Lorong Peluang and Lorong Achara so will we share the fruits of its completion for it will not only serve the residents of Chye Kay Village better but it will also further strengthen the bonds among all of us who have participated in this project. Such harmony and active co-operation among the people augur well for the future of Singapore.

7           In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the National Servicemen, members of the Constituency's Youth Group and residents of this area for their valuable co-operation and help in this project for the people.

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