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SPEECH BY DR ANG KOK PENG, MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH, AT THE ANNUAL DINNER OF THE PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF SINGAPORE ON SATURDAY, 27 JULY 1974 AT 8 PM AT THE ISLAND BALLROOM, SHANGRI-LA HOTEL

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I am very pleased to be with you at your Annual Dinner.

I am, however, conscious of your expectations; your Hon Secretary, Miss Tan Chee Woon, suggested some topics which I might touch on tonight. In response to her suggestion I shall deal briefly with some of these which are of special interest to your Society.

2 I can understand your concern regarding the pending legislative amendments -- the Pharmacists Act and the Medicines Act. These would form the framework within which you will practise your profession. I have no doubt that your concern is motivated by more than a sectional interest and that you wish to see to it that controls in the practice of pharmacy and in the use of medicines are introduced for the general protection and benefit of the public at large.

3 The Medicines Act has already been drafted and is in the final stage of editing. The provisions in the Act are aimed at a comprehensive control over the manufacture, importation, sale and supply of medicinal products. The Act will afford the general public greater protection against poor quality and harmful drugs being put on the market. The Registration of the Pharmacists Act will, however, have to await a policy decision after careful study.

4 Traditionally your work has been concerned mainly with the dispensing of medicines. Times have however changed, and gone are the days when the dispensing of medicine occupied most of your time. The availability of ready-made preparations and ready-to-dispense packages has now made the dispensing work of the pharmacist rather a mechanical activity. With this development

the demand for pharmacists in this aspect of work has reduced considerably. Pharmacy graduates have also to seek openings in other fields such as the administrative service, business management and other occupations unrelated to the practice of pharmacy.

5 To cope with the reduced role of the pharmacist in the dispensing of medicine and a correspondingly increased role in other areas of activity, the training of pharmacists in Singapore has had to undergo certain changes from time to time. These changes are in recognition of the wider role the pharmacy graduates have to play in to-day's society. It is also hoped that such an adjustment will enable the profession to maintain its legitimate and important position in the medical services and at the same time to be more actively involved in the development of a pharmaceutical industry in Singapore.

6 On the members of your profession will depend the maintenance of a high standard of service and an ethical conduct befitting your professional responsibility. And those of you who also provide the leadership in the profession it behoves you to see that professional integrity is always upheld and that the members play an active role in ensuring drug safety in Singapore and maintaining the health of our people. May I wish you success in these heavy responsibilities expected of you.

I thank you for your hospitality this evening.

Date: 27 July 1974