

SPEECH BY DR ANG KOK PENG, MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH  
AT THE NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION DINNER AND CULTURAL SHOW  
OF CRAWFORD CONSTITUENCY HELD ON FRIDAY, 16 AUGUST 1974  
AT 7.30 PM AT THE CRAWFORD COMMUNITY CENTRE

Tonight's dinner and cultural show marks the highlight of the many events with which our constituency is enthusiastically celebrating the 9th National Day.

2 As we enter the 10th year of our nationhood, we can look back with pride at our accumulated achievements in the past 9 years -- achievements often realised under difficult situations. The side effect of our economic success is that some of us became complacent taking things for granted and expecting smooth sailing throughout as a matter of course until the recent world events shook them out of this mood.

3 For over a year the world has faced unprecedented rates of inflation caused by the shortages of foodstuffs and various raw materials and the situation was made worse by the sudden huge increase in the cost of fuel oil and a severely perturbed economic situation. This has brought untold sufferings to many countries. For us it meant high inflation and a slow down of our economic growth in the past year. The present situation calls for a redoubling of our efforts to work hard and adjust our way of life with a greater emphasis on frugality wherever possible. By being united and placing national interest over sectional or personal interest, and with hard work and thrift, we can better deal with our present difficulties which arise from the critical phase the world is going through.

4           The United Nations has designated 1974 as the World Population Year. A main objective of the Year is to sharpen awareness and heighten appreciation of the population problem as it manifests itself in its varied forms in different areas of the world. We are naturally fully interested in this vital problem. Our land area is barely 584 square kilometers and our population density is 3726 persons per square kilometer making Singapore, apart from Hong Kong, the most densely populated country in the world. And with hardly any natural resources you can easily appreciate how important the question of family planning is to us -- it has a direct bearing on our socio-economic advancement and the improvement of the quality of our life. Where families are small the parents are in a better position to bring up their children properly and have enough time for their self improvement. Needless to say, children from small families and receiving good parental care will have a better chance to succeed in life. Unless we wish to be bogged down by over population we must establish a social norm of a 2-child family with the twin objectives of greater happiness for the parents and brighter opportunities for the children.

Date: 16 Aug 74