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SPEECH BY DR AHMAD MATTAR, ACTING MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS,
AT THE 16TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE HIMPUNAN
QUEENSTOWN SINGAPURA ON SATURDAY, 30 DECEMBER 1978
AT PRINCESS GARDEN RESTAURANT, KING'S HOTEL AT 7.45 P.M.

There is a total of 2,475 registered societies in Singapore as at the end of November 1978. Of these, 328 are social/cultural societies, forming 13.2 per cent. I suspect that most of these social/cultural societies do not have club houses or regular meeting places for their members. The Himpunan Queenstown Singapura belongs to this category of organisations which is without its own club house facilities.

One may well then wonder how it is that there are still so many societies without homes and how they keep their members together. This is particularly interesting as I have observed that a regular exercise at annual general meetings of such organisations is to think of incentives to get members to attend in order to fulfil the quorum required for the meeting. Various devices like free or subsidized lunches, dinners or teas are provided. Invariably, many of the societies will get their quorums and will survive somehow or other.

Most of these societies continue with their good work only through the dedication and interest of a core of leaders. These are the people who have conviction and are willing to sacrifice their time and energy to do a voluntary job of providing services for members of their organisations. In any organisation, there will be this handful of people who are the live-wires behind the scene. What motivates these people? It is surely not for the glory as most of these organisations are not really significantly important in terms of status and recognition. We can only say that in any group of people, there will be some of those who have natural talents and are able to lead and provide the necessary breath to activities.

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I would, therefore, like to pay a tribute to these people who are running the 2,475 registered societies of various kinds in Singapore. Because of their belief in fostering comradeship amongst particular groups of people, in fostering group identity and in encouraging mutual assistance, they are the people who organise and provide most of our sporting, social and cultural activities in Singapore. These are the people in the organisations who provide the richer meaning to our lives.

The Himpunan Queenstown Singapura is celebrating its 16th anniversary. It has survived for sixteen years without a club house. Nevertheless, it is still very active and is an important part of the social and cultural life in our constituency. It has a very important role to play in providing social and recreational activities for its members. We tend to be confined to our homes, the TV and shopping complexes. Group activities and opportunities for participation in healthy social and cultural activities must be encouraged so that the natural quality of gregariousness can be satisfied. The saying "No man is an island" is true in any context. He needs to communicate and to participate in group and social activities in order to foster physical and mental health.

There are many tasks ahead for the Himpunan Queenstown Singapura to achieve. First of all, it is desirable to have your own club facilities. In Singapore, this can be a difficult thing but given the interest, there must be a way. The second important objective probably would be to sustain the interest of your members and to enrol more new members. This can only be achieved through better facilities and more meaningful activities for the members. For these, the Club would need to raise funds.

It is my hope that your noble objectives can be realised with hard work and determination. Your fund raising efforts deserve support and my best wishes go to you in your endeavours.