

Singapore Government

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# PRESS RELEASE

Information Division, Ministry of Communications & Information, 36th Storey, PSA Building, 460 Alexandra Road, Singapore 0511. Tel: 2799794/5.

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**SPEECH BY DR AHMAD MATTAR, MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT  
AT THE BRICKWORKS CONSTITUENCY NATIONAL DAY DINNER  
AT THE BRICKWORKS COMMUNITY CENTRE, LENGKOK BAHRU  
ON SUNDAY, 7 AUGUST 1988 AT 8.30 PM**

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This is the last National Day Dinner we are celebrating together as a constituency - Brickworks Constituency. As you all know, at the coming General Elections, Brickworks together with Alexandra and Queenstown Constituencies will be grouped together under the Group Representation Constituency or GRC Scheme and be known as Brickworks GRC. Not only is the Brickworks GRC about three times the size of, and with a population of about three times as large as that of each of the present Brickworks, Alexandra and Queenstown Constituencies, it will also have three Members of Parliament (MPs) working together as a team for all the people in the GRC.

There is also this possibility that the Brickworks GRC may become a Town Council after the coming General Elections. This means that the three MPs elected as a team will take over from the HDB the control of maintenance and administration of all the housing estates in the GRC. This is a change for the better, but at the same time, it requires honest, sincere and competent people to run it effectively. And it is entirely up to the people of the present Brickworks, Alexandra and Queenstown to decide.

We certainly have come a long way to where we are today. I still remember what Singapore was like in the 1950s and 1960s. The period between 1959 and 1965 was difficult - politically, socially, and economically. We had to fight the communists (1961-63) and the communalists (1964-65). We also had to overcome the problems of

massive unemployment, housing shortage, education for all, and better health care. In short, the initial years of self-government were characterised by tension, crises and violence.

The Government has succeeded in overcoming these adverse circumstances and transformed Singapore into what it is today.

The onus is on us now to ensure continual success. In the final analysis, it is human qualities that will determine our future in whether we retain the will to work and the drive for excellence. We must not allow social tension to threaten our cohesive society which we have painstakingly built up. We must have love and loyalty for Singapore strong enough to sweep aside all racial differences and cultural prejudices so that it unites all ethnic groups in one common national identity. This love must be the cornerstone of our nation-building and the motivation for us to cherish and defend Singapore.

But the most important factor for success for Singapore is the continuity of an honest and efficient government. And as with the choice of persons to run Town Councils, the decision to have an honest and efficient government lies with you, the people of Singapore, when you go to the polls.

The task of nation-building is daunting. After a long struggle and concerted effort, we have not only survived but also succeeded in many fields. We can now look back at our past with pride and into the future with confidence. Let us solve the problems of the future together. Let us all stand up for Singapore.

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