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SPEECH BY MR CHIN HARN TONG, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY,
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR ALJUNIED,
AT THE ALJUNIED CONSTITUENCY NATIONAL DAY DINNER
AT THE ALJUNIED COMMUNITY CENTRE, JOO SENG ROAD,
ON FRIDAY, 3 AUGUST 1979 AT 7.30 PM.

National Day is meant to commemorate the birth of our Republic, that is, the anniversary of the first day on which we assume responsibility for our own well-being. As such, National Day is an apt occasion for us to take stock of our past and make plans for our future progress.

We cannot deny the need for constant progress if Singapore is to continue to exist as an independent Republic. That is why Singaporeans are constantly being urged upon to work hard. If the published data on Gross National Product and the economic activities of Singapore are any indication, the hard work has paid off and Singapore has made much headway since its independence.

The question is whether the progress of Singapore has resulted in any change in the quality of life of Singaporeans. The collective success of Singaporeans is meaningless if it is not seen to benefit the individual Singaporeans whose efforts have contributed to such success.

During the past fourteen years, educational, health, housing and other facilities and services have substantially improved in Singapore. All these improvements which help to raise the quality of life for Singaporeans have come about through Singapore's economic success.

In this Constituency, for example, you have observed and experienced for yourselves the constant and continuous improvement in various facilities which make this Constituency a better place for you to live and work in. There is now a modern community centre to cater for a comprehensive range of social, cultural and

recreational needs of the residents in this Constituency. This community centre was erected not too long ago and yet, an extension will be constructed soon. The significance of such extension lies in the increasing relevance of the community centre to the residents in this Constituency and in the general well-being of our economy, which enables the necessary funds to be raised for the erection and expansion of a modern Community Centre.

Then again the public housing estate in this Constituency is one of the oldest in the Republic. Many a time residents have voiced their dissatisfaction with the quality of this housing estate which does not compare favourably with newer housing estates with their bigger and better designed flats. I am happy to inform you that such dissatisfaction has been taken note of by the Housing and Development Board which has announced plans for bigger and better designed flats in this Constituency. The proposed flats will consist of four blocks of 20 storey five-room flats totalling 304 units.

The significance of the proposed flats lies not in the mere erection of such flats but in the state of the well-being of our economy, which enables such flats to be erected and enables a number of Singaporeans to be able to afford bigger and better designed-flats.

There are many other examples of how the economic success of Singapore benefits the individual Singaporeans. When you look out of your homes you can find a cleaner and greener environment. Everytime you leave your flat to go to work or to the market, you can see for yourselves how the roads and drains are well-kept and well-maintained. You can also see how the shops and stalls are well-stocked with all kinds of consumer goods which go to make our lives more comfortable and pleasant. All these are not possible if the economy of Singapore is not in a healthy condition and the economic prosperity of Singapore is not evenly shared among Singaporeans.

We should also remember that it is the hard work of past generations of Singaporeans which contributes to the political independence and economic success of the Singapore of today. And just as we are expected to defend with our own resources and efforts the political independence in Singapore, we are also expected to maintain and improve our economic success with our own efforts and sweat. There is no fairy god-mother to wave a magic wand to save

us when we are in economic difficulties through our own failure to keep on working.

In order to ensure that the economic success of Singapore will continue to benefit each and everyone of us, we must continue, each and everyone of us, to contribute to the economic success of Singapore by doing what is required of us. If each and every one of us do our part, I am sure Singapore can look forward to a bright and long future of political independence and economic prosperity.

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