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# Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY MR CHIN HARN TONG, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
(HOME AFFAIRS), AT THE PRIZE-GIVING CEREMONY FOR  
WINNERS OF THE SAFE-RIDING RALLY AT THE NATIONAL  
STADIUM AUDITORIUM ON SUNDAY, MARCH 2, 1980, AT 11 A.M.

Motorcycles and scooters are becoming an increasingly popular form of transport in Singapore. At the end of November 1979, 107,208 motorcycles and scooters were registered in Singapore. This represents a 9.6 per cent increase over November 1978. It may be worthwhile to note that over the same period, our motor vehicle population grew by 3.7 per cent while the number of private cars grew by only 3.6 per cent. With the latest rise in the cost of car ownership and the rising trend in petrol prices, the growth in our motorcycle population is expected to accelerate further. It is estimated that there will probably be more motorcycles than private cars on our roads before 1985.

The popularity of motorcycles is not due simply to economic reasons. Motorcycles have also proved to be a very convenient form of transport. These machines are highly manoeuvrable and very adaptable to city traffic.

With the increasing motorcycle population, there will also be the attendant problem of traffic accidents. We are indeed very concerned with the number of accidents involving motorcyclists. In 1979, 65 motorcyclists were killed, 649 were seriously injured and 4,355 were slightly injured in traffic accidents. The figures also show that a total of 8,643 motorcyclists were involved in accidents last year. This represents a 14 per cent increase over the previous year. While we are happy to note that the number of motorcyclist fatalities and serious injuries has declined, we are alarmed by the fact that slight injuries have increased by 27 per cent. In 1979, motorcyclists were also responsible for the deaths of 27 pedestrians and two cyclists. You may also wish to know that last year 17 Provisional Driving Licence (PDL) motorcyclists were involved in fatal traffic accidents. All, except one, were under 30 years of age. A total of 1,459 PDL motorcyclists were involved in traffic accidents.

These statistics .....2/-

These statistics are of great significance. Everyday, on the average, 24 motorcyclists were involved in traffic accidents in Singapore. Of these, 14 were injured. On the average, 5 motorcyclists were killed every month on our roads.

These statistics underline a very serious problem which we face today. The gravity of this problem has prompted moves to provide free riding lessons for motorcyclists. These courses should teach them both the theoretical and practical aspects of safe riding. The dramatic increase in the number of slight injuries emphasised the need to teach motorcyclists the proper riding wear and safety equipment they should use. They also need to be taught the traffic rules and highway code and how to maintain their motorcycles. They must be provided with the theory of safe riding and be shown in practice how this is done. All these have been incorporated in the "Safe Riding for Beginners" courses organised by the Singapore Motor Cycle Trade Association in conjunction with the Traffic Police, VITB, ROV, National Safety Council and the Automobile Association of Singapore. It is gratifying to note that so far 500 learner motorcyclists have gone through these courses.

The importance of learning to ride safely cannot be over-emphasised. We should not hold the attitude that accidents only happen to other people. Sometimes that "other people" could be one of us. Safety should be everybody's business. In view of the growing motorcycle population and the increasing number of motor vehicles on our roads, motorcycle accidents are bound to rise unless all motorcyclists make concerted efforts to ride safely. There is indeed an urgent need for all motorcyclists to learn how to ride safely. For a start, these safe-riding courses would be extended to all motorcyclists holding qualified Class 2 licences. I would like to encourage all qualified motorcyclists to respond to this offer and avail themselves of these free courses to be held on the first Sunday of every month for the next three months.

Riding lessons ...3/-

Riding lessons serve to impart to the individuals the techniques of safe and defensive riding. After that, it is the responsibility of the individual motorcyclist to maintain a positive attitude of safe and defensive riding whenever he is on the road. The privilege of riding the motorcycle carries with it great responsibilities. In the hands of the irresponsible, motorcycles can be turned into lethal machines which are a menace to other motorists and a danger to cyclists and pedestrians. Therefore, motorcyclists must first remember that roads are made for all road users and they should make due allowance for others. Secondly, they ought to be courteous and give way where necessary even when it is their right of way. Next, they should obey all traffic laws even in the absence of law enforcement officers. They must also be alert at all times and bear in mind that the most dangerous kilometre is always the one ahead. Finally, they should make sure their machines are always in good-working condition and safeguard themselves by fastening their helmets securely and putting on proper clothing whenever they ride their motorcycles or scooters.

The rally that is organised today is another effort to promote safe and defensive riding. I wish to congratulate all the winners on their fine performance. I would also encourage all of you to continue to exhibit the same, if not higher, standards of safety whenever you are on the road.

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