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SPEECH BY MR CH'NG JIT KOON, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER, AT THE FAMILY CHRISTMAS PARTY ORGANISED BY TIONG BAHRU ZONE 'E' RC AT THE CAR PARK BETWEEN BLOCKS 127 AND 128, KIM TIAN ROAD ON SATURDAY, 25 DECEMBER 1982 AT 3.00 PM

I am very happy to be here this afternoon to celebrate the Christmas Day together with so many fellow residents from Tiong Bahru Zone 'E'.

I was told that when your RC first sent out an invitation to residents in the zone to participate in this gathering, the response was not so good. But Mr Alan Liang, your RC Chairman and his members were not in any way discouraged. Instead, they got together to conduct home visits to get the residents' support. Obviously, their efforts have paid off with more than 300 participants gathering here this afternoon in the full spirit of both Christmas and neighbourliness. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Liang and all his members for their team efforts in making this big gathering a success.

The most significant of this gathering is that every resident participant has contributed to its success by paying his or her pro-rata share of the expenses incurred. This form of participation is the key to the long-term success of any RC. It is financially impossible and, in fact, self-defeating for any RC to resort to giving away everything free to the residents in order to sustain their participation. The primary objective of the government is to encourage the RCs to promote self-reliant activities among the residents. To achieve this objective, the residents must always be prepared to contribute their part to ensure the success of any activity organised for their own benefit. Judging from the big turnout this afternoon, I am glad to say that the residents in Tiong Bahru Zone 'E' have responded to such self-reliant activities very well.

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There are many self-reliant activities and projects worth pursuing by the RCs and their residents in HDB estates. One such activity is the cleanliness campaign organised by the RCs from time to time. In this campaign, the contribution from the residents is not the payment of a participation fee but their continual and co-operative effort in keeping their own estate clean. Unfortunately, some residents tend to regard such a campaign as a waste of time. In their minds, keeping the estate clean should be the sole responsibility of the HDB as its workers are paid to do the job. Little do they realise that money alone cannot buy or sustain a clean and good housing estate in the long run.

As it is, very few Singaporeans are willing to work as sweepers as they prefer a clean and skillful job. For social and economic reasons, we also cannot depend solely on foreign labour to clean our estates. On the other hand, more and more HDB estates will be built and need to be cleaned daily in times to come. It is therefore not a surprise that the HDB will eventually be unable to recruit enough labourers to clean the housing estates even though the residents are prepared to pay a high service charge.

The regular cleanliness campaign organised by RCs is an attempt to bring about a greater awareness among the residents of their role in keeping the estates clean. You may now ask what is this role? It is indeed a very simple role, that is, to always use the refuse chutes or refuse bins provided for your refuse disposal and to discipline yourselves as well as your children from littering or dirtying the common corridors, the lifts, the staircases and the open grounds of the estates. Such a self-reliant or self-disciplined role on the part of every resident would not only save us considerable amount of labour in keeping our HDB estates clean but also prevent a lot of misunderstanding and disputes between neighbours. The end result of the total effort of the residents is the preservation of a clean, pleasant and friendly living environment for themselves and their families.

I hope all residents in Tiong Bahru will play a positive role and give their continual support to the RCs in this direction. Finally, may I wish everybody here a Merry Christmas.