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SPEECH BY MR CH'NG JIT KOON, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE), AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF
CRIME PREVENTION-CUM-NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEME EXHIBITION
AT TANJONG PAGAR COMMUNITY CENTRE ON 17 JUNE '83 AT 7.30PM

It gives me great pleasure to be here this evening to officiate the opening ceremony of this Crime Prevention-cum-Neighbourhood Watch Scheme Exhibition.

This exhibition is another joint project undertaken by the Tanjong Pagar CCC, CCMCs, RCs, YEC and WSC in conjunction with the Police with a view to promoting a crime-free living environment for everyone who lives and works in Tanjong Pagar. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate them for their team effort in making it a success.

Crime is a disease which affects every society. As individuals who make up the society, we must do something to ensure that crime does not and will not dictate our life style and lead us to a state of misery. Studies conducted by the Police revealed that the majority of crimes could have been prevented had the victims taken the proper precaution and the neighbours shown more concern. This shows that the individual as well as the community as a whole have much to contribute in crime prevention. Hence the role of the grassroot organisations should not just end at this exhibition. They should continue to maintain a close rapport with the Police and play an active part in the various crime prevention projects to encourage and sustain community participation.

The Neighbourhood Watch Scheme (NWS) is one such crime prevention project which requires the active participation of the grassroot organisations like the RCs. To ensure its success, it should be regarded as a community development project which goes beyond the purpose of crime prevention. By encouraging residents to look after each other's family and property as well as to show their care and concern to each other through the formation of neighbourhood watch groups, the RCs are making a positive move to achieve the objective of promoting neighbourliness and community cohesiveness in their zones.

Besides the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, the RCs also organise many other activities such as film shows, children's parties, old newspaper/clothing collections, etc. These activities which may appear to be repetitive and mundane are organised by the RCs as a means to reach out to the residents. Such activities will continue to be organised by the RCs so long as they meet the needs and good response of the residents.

The RCs have grown rapidly in their membership and also in the scope of their activities over the past five years. This would not have been possible without the encouragement and support from the residents. The RC members, therefore, have every reason to feel a sense of pride for being able to serve the community through the various RC projects and activities. On the other hand, there are some people who choose to adopt a hostile attitude towards the RCs for reasons best known to themselves. They look for every opportunity to find fault with the RCs and laugh at the activities carried out by the RCs. For instance, they question the need for forming Neighbourhood Watch Groups. These people probably think that they are unlikely to be victims of crime. Only when they are hit by crime will they be jolted out of their complacency. Some even brand the RCs as "rag-and-bone"

men when they go round the estate collecting old newspapers and clothing. The primary purpose of RCs collecting old newspapers and clothing is not so much to raise fund but to provide an opportunity for the RC members to build a better rapport with the residents. The service rendered by the RCs is well appreciated by the residents. The RC members should not feel discouraged by the comments of such people. They should continue with their good work of promoting a more cohesive and secure neighbourhood for their families.

Finally, I have the pleasure in declaring the Exhibition open.

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