

14 MAY 1982

Acc. No.

NRH

| | | |
|----|------|---|
| 82 | 0112 | 5 |
|----|------|---|

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

Information Division, Ministry of Culture, City Hall, Singapore 0617 • tel: 3378191 ext. 352, 353, 354/3362207/3362271

07-3/82/05/07

SPEECH BY MR CHOR YEOK ENG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (ENVIRONMENT)
AND MP FOR BUKIT TIMAH AT THE BALLOTING CEREMONY AT BLOCK 240,
JURONG EAST STREET 21 ON FRIDAY, 7 MAY 1982 AT 2.30 PM

Singapore has a relatively low crime rate compared to other cities. However this does not mean that we can lower our guard against crime and allow complacency to erode our security awareness. In fact, it is noted that there is a gradual increase in crime over the past few years. Our socio-economic development has created greater opportunities for crime and rendered police efforts at controlling crime ineffective without active public support. The community must realise that it has a share in crime prevention and its members must complement the police to create a safe living environment.

Robbery and housebreaking are two of the most common and serious crimes prevalent in our society. In 1981, there were 1,392 cases of robbery against 1,264 cases in 1980; an increase of about nine per cent. Housebreaking also registered an increase of about two per cent with 2,628 cases in 1981 compared to 2,588 cases in 1980. In addition, there were 772 cases of theft of motor vehicles for Jan - Mar 82 against 606 cases for the same period last year. Cases of outrage of modesty also increased from 100 for the first three months of last year to 118 for the same period this year.

Fortunately, there is a slight improvement in the general crime situation for the first quarter this year. For Jan - Mar 82, 291 robberies were reported against 362 cases for the first quarter last year. Housebreaking also dropped from 771 cases in Jan - Mar 81 to 636 cases in Jan - Mar 82. This can be attributed, to a great extent, to public co-operation in crime prevention. We must sustain this police-community working relations if society is to curb crime effectively.

...../2.

In the Bukit Timah constituency, the crime rate has been fairly stable. In the first three months of last year, there were 22 cases of serious offences like robbery, housebreaking, theft of motor vehicles and outrage of modesty. For the same period this year, there were 21 cases of such crime.

Police studies have revealed that most of the crimes, especially those involving loss of property and valuables, could be prevented if the victims had taken some preventive measures. Due to work constraints and limited resources, the police need the support of every citizen in preventing crime. Independent police actions can only achieve minimal results. The best way the public can help is to be conscious of and practise simple crime preventive measures to protect themselves and their properties. By doing so, they will eliminate the opportunities for criminals to thrive.

Past experience has shown that there is generally a high crime rate in new housing estates. This is because most flats are being renovated and valuable properties are shifted into the new premises before the residents take up occupancy. Moreover, the lack of interaction and neighbourliness among new residents enhance criminal opportunities. In addition, the new occupants may also be unduly bothered by undesirable characters who attempt to monopolise various delivery services in the estates.

To prevent crime and eliminate these problems, the police have, for the first time, planned to introduce a comprehensive programme of crime prevention activities for all new housing estates. They propose to reach out to all prospective residents from the outset to advise and encourage them to implement measures to protect themselves and their homes against crime. In this regard, the police will conduct crime risk surveys of the new homes upon the request of the owners. They will help to identify the areas of weaknesses and recommend suitable physical protection and other preventive measures to enhance security. At the same time, the police would monitor the occupancy rate so as to deploy patrols to protect the estates. The police will be writing to the flat-owners to offer their services. Therefore, the Officer-in-Charge of the Tanglin Police Station and his team of Crime Prevention Officers are here to advise you on crime prevention measures.

To kick off the programme, the Police has staged a crime prevention exhibition at this balloting session for your benefit. The Crime Prevention Officers will demonstrate various security devices that could be used to protect your homes. They will also distribute leaflets to offer useful advice. I urge you to heed the police advice and implement these measures to prevent crime.

One programme which will be introduced to you is the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. This is a mutual assistance scheme in which the residents are encouraged to form Neighbourhood Watch Groups with the informal arrangements to look after one another's well-being. They can help each other by looking out for neighbouring homes, families and properties. By creating a sense of communal spirit and friendly co-operation, residents will call the police when they witness any criminal acts or when they notice suspicious characters loitering in the vicinity. Initially the Crime Prevention Officers, and later with the help of the Resident Committees, when they are formed, will advise and guide the residents into forming Neighbourhood Watch Groups. Since its introduction in June last year, 17,500 households in 57 constituencies have already joined the Scheme.

Another crime prevention programme for your participation is the Operation Identification. By this, the public is encouraged to mark their personal valuables with identification marks. The rationale is that marked stolen properties are difficult to dispose and easily identified when recovered. This will help to deter thieves. By actively participating in the Ops ID, the public will help in crime prevention.

The safety and well-being of you, your family and your new home is the primary concern of the police. I am sure all of you like to live in a safe and caring environment. But let us remember that such a situation cannot be achieved by police efforts alone. You must do your part by giving the police your co-operation and support and by participating in the various crime prevention programmes. Together, the police and public can be a great force in the control of crime. Remember, you can help prevent crime.

- - - - -