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SPEECH BY MR FONG SIP CHEE, M P FOR KG CHAI CHEE AND
SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER FOR
LABOUR ON THE OCCASION OF THE 12TH NATIONAL DAY
CELEBRATION ON FRIDAY, 12 AUGUST 1977, AT 7.30 PM AT
BLOCK 27, CAR-PARK, CHAI CHEE ROAD.

and
Singapore.

20 AUG 1977

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On the occasion of our National Day celebrations, it is befitting that we should set our minds to problems confronting our country. Without doubt, we have travelled 12 long and tedious years to be what we are today. It is important that our people, whilst being temporarily burdened by the day-to-day shortcomings, should not lose sight of the national objectives.

That we have sailed through the hard times is a testimony of the resilience and discipline typical of Singaporeans. People and leadership with lesser grits and guts would have fallen for softer options which eventually will bring the whole nation and its systems crumbling down.

It is important that we look into ourselves on this occasion of national celebrations and to question ourselves if we have put in our best so that we will not be left behind in this competitive world.

But we can certainly do better. Work hard, better discipline, more advanced skill and higher productivity are the four cardinal points in our battle for survival. Yet, one disturbing fact is that few workers or employers ever set their mind to examining the source of the problems. Most of them are quite satisfied with the status quo resigning themselves to the fact, and hence, convenient excuse that this is a world problem, at least it is that of the Government's. So, there is little they can do. Complacency is a time bomb. If our productivity at the moment is the best of what we can do, it will be a futile exercise for us even to think of planning further for the future, if our capacity is dependent upon flagging will-power and half stamina to reach out and to achieve.

Our generation is the pace setter. Different and continually changing approaches must evolve in the face of increasing protectionism by the developed countries. Our cost of production must remain low, if we are to emerge from this battle or even to stand our ground with the

2

finance and industrial capacity of the developed countries, combined power of which though ailing but still command the world's economy. I do think that there is any way, short of a miracle, but a national commitment to hard work and discipline. This is within our capacity to do so, and hardly anybody can be blamed if we are found wanting.

At the risk of being parochial, I think it is relevant for me to digress onto some constituency matters on this auspicious occasion. We have achieved much in the last 7 months. Below is a brief on our progress and the things to come in Chai Chee.

(1) DEVELOPMENT

Chai Chee is undergoing a transitional phase. Resettlement is well in progress to make way for the new neighbourhood development as well as the Pan Island Expressway. Industrial areas have been set aside for more factories to be established in the Constituency to provide more employment opportunities for the people. 72 blocks of highrise flats will be completed by 1979/80. 2 sites have been reserved for schools with a third possibility of a Vocational Institute. 4 of the 7 neighbourhoods in Bedok Newtown are in Chai Chee and before long Chai Chee will be transformed into a modern housing estate complete with social, recreational and educational facilities to service the needs of the people.

(2) RE-ORGANISATION OF THE CITIZENS' CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The first stage of the re-organisation of the Citizens' Consultative Committee has been completed but there are rooms for further improvement. The Citizens' Consultative Committee now work with new vigour and they are geared to shoulder even heavier responsibility when residents move into the new neighbourhoods.

For the last 9 years, the Citizens' Consultative Committee has been conducting its meetings outside the Chai Chee Constituency. This is a very peculiar situation and I have decided to put a stop to it. A new meeting place has been found in the Constituency and it is only right and proper that the Citizens' Consultative Committee should conduct its affairs within its constituency.

There were 7 Citizens' Consultative Committee Sub-Committees in the past. They have now been re-organised into 3 Area Committees with the possibility of a fourth for the new part of the estate when the residents move in.

(3) KAKI BUKIT COMMUNITY CENTRE

The re-organisation of the Management Committee has been completed although there is still a vacancy to fill. New activities will be launched and at the moment the Community Centre has acquired sufficient fund to set up a Cultural Section which eventually will merge with the Chai Chee Community Centre's Cultural Section to form a Constituency Cultural Troupe.

An extension of the Community Centre is being planned and it is hoped that with this extension, a Woodworking Class will be set up to provide vocational/hobby training for the youth in that neighbourhood. The Management Committee also has in mind, subject to the availability of space, to open other vocational classes such as Wireman and Plumbing.

(4) CHAI CHEE COMMUNITY CENTRE

The re-organisation of the Management Committee has been completed and it is satisfying to note that the new leadership is working with top-stem. More activities to cater for the need of the people will be organised.

The Chinese Orchestra has been established and a section of which will be making its debut at this celebration. It is hoped that when the Orchestra has acquired sufficiently acceptable standard and able to offer a wider repertoire, their practices will be conducted out-doors at the open spaces in the HDB estates so as to bring this enrichment activity to the doorsteps of the people. The Orchestra requires more fund to augment its strength by way of a junior or "feeder" orchestra.

The Committee is re-examining the plan of the community centre which is hoped to be completed in the next 2 years.

(5) A BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAMME

A beautification programme under the theme "Chai Chee - The Garden Estate" will be launched after the fund raising project in September. The main concepts of this programme are:

- (i) The extension of the living room to the open space where residents can communicate under more pleasant environment.
- (ii) To instil a sense of pride and love for the estate where one lives.
- (iii) Proper demarcation of play area for the children.
- (iv) It is in effect a "Use Your Hands" Campaign the whole year round not so much under the campaign atmosphere but with a spirit of pride and volition.

The project will be undertaken by the Management Committee, the Youth Movement and the Women Sub-Committee together with the Citizens' Consultative Committee Area Committees under the guidance of the Citizens' Consultative Committee.

A survey was conducted by the Youth Movement and the conclusion was that majority of the residents will be happy to participate in this scheme in improving the neighbourhood environment. A Design Team will be set up and the Project Committee will work closely with the Area Office of the Housing & Development Board. A full scheme will be worked out within a month or two.

(6) LEBAH BEDOK AREA

There has been little contact with this area in the past. From the sample of opinions from my tour, it is necessary to bring these people into the fold of the community and also to make them feel that the geographical distance from the main activity centre of the Constituency should not be a handicap for their participation in community endeavours. It is hoped that when finance permits, regular gatherings will be held at the village itself so that better liaison can be established and their welfare looked after.

(7) THE YOUTH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES AND WOMEN SUB-COMMITTEES

These are the functional groups of the community centres and they have been charged with new responsibilities. The functions of these 2 groups should be that of a catalyst to activate the youth and the womenfolks

in the constituency through their activities. More enrichment courses/ classes will be organised. It is heartening to note that the Chai Chee Youth Group / has managed to increase their membership in a recent membership drive. The main purpose of these 2 functional groups should be to reach out to the constituents and not indulge in activities which will give rise to a situation being inward looking.

(8) FUND RAISING

Funds are needed to implement all these projects in the next 2 years. For this purpose, a Marathon Swim and Carnival will be organised on 17 Sept 77 at the Toa Payoh Swimming Pool. Details have been circulated through handbills distributed to the residents. The Carnival is intended to provide an opportunity for the residents to meet freely in an informal atmosphere and also to involve them in the community effort in striving to better their living environment.

The Marathon Swim is receiving good support. It is hoped that with the new financial resources, more can be done for the people and the efforts of the M P will not be so bogged down with solving problems of individual citizens through the "Meet-the-People" session.

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