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STATEMENT BY MR FONG SIP CHEE, MP FOR CHAI CHEE AND SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR, WITH REGARD TO THE BALLOTING CEREMONY FOR THE SALE OF FLATS IN BEDOK NEW TOWN WITHIN CHAI CHEE CONSTITUENCY HELD AT THE CAR PARK BETWEEN APARTMENT BLOCK 416 & 418 BEDOK NORTH AVENUE 2 ON TUESDAY, 31 JAN 78 AT 1.00 P.M.

May I first of all extend to you on behalf of the Chai Chee Citizens' Consultative Committee and the Chai Chee Community Centre Management Committee, and on my own behalf a warmest welcome to all of you who are prospective residents of this Constituency. Some of you may, for one reason or another later, decide to decline the balloted apartment, but to most of you who decide to re-establish your new homes in a better environment, I assure you that the Constituency's functionary organisations such as the CCC and MC are here to service you.

With the balloting of 1,704 units of apartments today, comprising 1,084 3-room units, 428 4-room units and 192 5-room units, another section of the fast-changing skyline of Chai Chee is unveiled.

Bedok New Town comprises initially 5 neighbourhoods, with Neighbourhoods I, II and part of III in the Bedok Constituency, the other part of Neighbourhood III in Tampines, and Neighbourhoods IV and V in the Chai Chee Constituency. In fact, the greater part of the Bedok New Town is located in the Chai Chee Constituency.

The flats to be balloted today form part of the Neighbourhoods IV and V. The Constituency will be part of a bustling new housing estate complete with all the necessary social and educational amenities, in addition to the large Malay Settlement at the Kaki Bukit and Jalan Eunus areas.

By 1980, the full development of the Bedok New Town which falls within the Chai Chee Constituency will see the completion of nearly 22,575 units of residential apartments, including the present 4,286 units now in the Upper Changi Estate which is a component part of the Bedok New Town.

There will be ample shopping facilities with the provision of some 338 shops and two markets/cooked food centres with another 344 stalls. These facilities may not be available in the near future, but when the estate gradually takes shape, it will be a self-contained housing estate with all the daily necessities almost at the people's doorstep.

In our concentration on providing better housing for our citizens, the Housing and Development Board has extended its resources to the limit. We have not forgotten to provide employment opportunities for residents of the New Town too. There will be flatted factories and 751 terrace workshops within easy access to all parts of the estate to cater for the residents. Seven schools will be located within the Constituency and this will, no doubt, relieve a great burden of the parents having to send their children to schools far away from their homes.

The entire New Town, which spreads over three constituencies, will also be serviced by a Town Centre. Facilities in the Town Centre will include four cinemas, one library, a recreation centre, one market and two food centres with 306 stalls, super-markets, restaurants, eating houses, emporiums, a social function hall, banks and a post office.

I have listed all these statistics and facilities, not so much to elaborate the extent of the New Town, nor only to highlight the convenience made available to the residents. I do so with the hope that our people should realise that the efforts of the Housing and Development Board should not be gauged only by awe-inspiring statistics but should appreciate all those who work tirelessly to provide a better standard of living for our people - a standard which is the envy of many other countries, their natural resources economic strength notwithstanding.

It is true that many of the HDB residents have to readjust their pattern of life in a new environment. I can understand that adaptability to new neighbours, who might speak a different tongue and to get use to a completely strange neighbourhood requires some effort. In the process, I am afraid to say, the HDB might come in as a convenient "whipping boy".

This attitude must change. The HDB is here to help and I am sure they take no pleasure in causing inconvenience to the people. Of course, there can be improvement, and I too have a number of observations which I transmit to the HDB Area Office from time to time. My dealings with the Area Office has been most pleasant and this can be borne by the prompt

attention accorded to suggestions and other defects brought to the attention of the Area Office by the various Block Committees and myself. I have, in fact, issued a directive to the CCC, the MC, the Area Committee and, through it, the various Block Committees that we work together with the HDB Area Office with full understanding and co-operation. This is precisely the same spirit which I hope all our present and future residents will share.

To put it in a nutshell: we are here to set up our homes, some may get married here, our children born here, and may even have to bring up our grandchildren here. So it is only right that each of us put in that little extra effort to make this our home and the sooner we learn to love our place, the happier we will be. The CCC, the MC, CCC Area Committee and the Block Committees are here to help. The HDB Area Office is here to service. But are responding appropriately?

There are a good number of things which we as good neighbours and in the spirit of neighbourliness can do, without demanding too much and all the time from the HDB. It is not my intention to plead for the HDB or to exonerate them for little deficiency here and there, but I believe that it is only fair that we first must record our appreciation when credit is due.

May I, in conclusion, say that the Government, in this case the HDB, as an agent, is here to service and maintain a reasonably high standard of living environment, but it is the individual households which eventually must count on their own efforts to make their homes truly "happy homes".
