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TEXT OF AN ADDRESS BY THE DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION SERVICES, MR. G.G. THOMSON, O.B.E., THE SECOND OF A SERIES OF FOUR TALKS TO MEMBERS OF THE Y.W.C.A. AT 5.15 P.M. ON FRIDAY, JULY 18, 1958.

The rights and responsibilities of the citizens are frequently taken for granted when constitutions are discussed, as I will discuss them in the next lecture. But the constitution is a machine and there is no point in studying it if there is no interest in it or there is no driving power.

The constitution sets up a democratic way of achieving the will of the people - but if the people want nothing positive and put up with any form or degree of efficiency of Government, in such a state of low morale the details of the constitution matter little. That is the basis of the saying that a people get the government they deserve.

A community must have a government. The choice is not between government or no government, but between bad government or good government or average government. There will be a government after the elections. That Government will have power to make laws, raise taxes and spend public money and control the civil servants, provided they act within the constitution and retain the support of the majority of the Assembly.

And these powers affect intimately the daily life of everyone - schools, hospitals, protection of the worker, the financial and economic health of the community. The impact of inefficient government on the daily life of everyone would be immediate and direct. No one can contract out: no one can be indifferent.

Again, once the government is in power it cannot be disowned. The power and the authority of government comes from the people through the ballot box. What distinguishes them from any other individuals is this power. If people criticise the politicians as of low calibre they are criticising themselves because their votes put them there. And the public interest and intelligence of the people will be judged by the Assemblymen and Councillors they select.

If the standard of debating, integrity, administrative efficient, public intelligence and social conscience are low, they will nevertheless be taken as reflecting the standard of those who selected them.

There is one qualification to this. If no good candidates agree to stand for election, none can be selected. Six mules don't make a race at the Turf Club. It is therefore important that good men and women should put themselves forward, if the voters' choice is to be effective for good. The fate of the elections may be determined on Nomination Day and not on Election Day. And if only the opportunist, the corrupt, the unintelligent and the disloyal are nominated, the new constitution may well be a curse and not a blessing to the people of Singapore. Political parties and individuals of capacity for leadership have for this reason a special responsibility to the people.

Self-government is not only a political status. It will affect every aspect of our life. It means that we will set our own standards. The impetus and the will to achievement must come from within. We may be helped: we may be encouraged: but the will and

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the action must be ours. We can set our own standards, high or low. This isn't only, or primarily, a question of capacity: it is the will to develop one's capacity in order to make the life of a self-governing Singapore fuller or rounder. Whether in politics or welfare, in culture or in athletics, we will set our own standard, and by the standard we set and the standard we achieve will we be judged by others - and, perhaps, by ourselves.

Self-government is therefore a challenge to all loyal citizens to prove their worth to the community; because they will be judged by the community and the community by them. A great artist will raise the name of Singapore - and therefore of all Singapore citizens throughout the world: a brutal secret society sadist will debase the name of Singapore. We have a family loyalty for Singapore and interest in Singapore: and that means a new approach.

Above all, heart, mind and hand must co-operate. There must be the warmth of human emotion in our affection and loyalty: there must be the hard, creative thinking of the brain to solve its problems and join the band of thinkers and creators in all fields who advance the frontiers of human knowledge: and there must be the readiness to act, to put our physical strength and aptitude at the service of the community.

To feel, to think, to build - these are the three pro's - the trinity of training for citizenship, the positive path to power.

JULY 18, 1958.

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