

As we enter the 15th year of our Independence there are still many problems and difficulties ahead of us. For one thing the increase in oil price will pose a continuing threat to the economy of the whole world. Unfettered oil price increases can bring recession to many of the countries that have to import oil for their industries. For another we are being threatened with unsettled conditions because the communists in Vietnam are systematically exporting unwanted people to South East Asia. Many of these unwanted people are ethnic Chinese and the Vietnamese communists know that in so doing they will stir up communal tensions in ASEAN. Singapore cannot be cushioned against its many effects. We must, therefore, all the more be conscious of our National identity that is we are Singaporeans first, and Malay, Chinese, Indian or Eurasian afterwards.

Let us hope that every Singaporean will heed the messages that are given in the many public campaigns to conserve energy, to be courteous, to keep our environment clean and green, to pay attention to safety, to avoid drugs, to maintain good physical health, and many others.

To maintain our economic stability and political well being, we must cushion ourselves against the adverse effects of disturbances over which we have no control. We have at times to be hard-hearted and hard-headed especially when dealing with the problem of refugees who are being used as political pawns by the Vietnamese communists to cause disagreement among the countries in the ASEAN region.

The sad plight of these refugees should constantly remind us that we are in a turbulent region where the struggle to impose the communist ideology on us is likely to grow in intensity. We have successfully defeated the internal communist threat through social and economic development, but the external communist threat will be there for a very long time. If we weaken in our resolve, many of our people can become refugees. We must, therefore, strengthen our resolve to work harder to build a more just and equal society, and to make some sacrifice towards building up our defence forces to meet with any internal or external threat. The need for everyone to be trained to take up arms to defend Singapore becomes all the more important. Our system of National Service requiring every able-bodied young man to be trained for two to two and a half years

of active service /3.

of active service and to be placed in the reserves for a further ten years becomes all the more necessary.

As from this year, plans are already in hand to implement various programmes that will encourage young people to keep themselves physically fit not only to be better prepared for their full-time National Service in both their active and reservist capacities in the various military units but also every effort will be made to encourage them on their own to keep themselves physically and mentally fit all the time. The Ministry of Defence, working jointly with the Ministry of Education, the Sports Council, and other Government departments and institutions will implement a programme to enable every able-bodied person to take part in one or other of the many individual and mass participation physical fitness exercises like jogging, running, gymnastics or the many sports and games to encourage every able-bodied young person to keep fit. Reservists will be provided with facilities to maintain their physical fitness under the supervision of doctors stationed either at SAFRA, the Singapore Sports Council or at a later stage at certain designated community centres. In this way when they report for their annual in-camp training they will already be fit to proceed to do their technical and military training that will upgrade their level of skills and their professional capability to defend Singapore.

Coming to the problems in the Potong Pasir Constituency, the long awaited redevelopment plans for the Potong Pasir area is now being implemented. The many hundreds of families in the first stage of resettlement are being offered alternative accommodation mainly in the Ang Mo Kio area.

The Housing and Development Board officers have been most cooperative in their efforts to explain to many of those who consider Ang Mo Kio too far from town by showing them that it is no further from town than Serangoon Garden Estate. Many Potong Pasir people have accepted this explanation and have realized that with the improvement in the bus services that must come, with more and more industries being located in the new housing estate, and with markets, shops, and other commercial activities moving into Ang Mo Kio, this new town will be fully self-contained and will not be as distant from town or from their places of employment as they think. Once all the families in the Potong Pasir area are resettled the

work of redevelopment can then proceed and in a few years' time we can have a new and modern housing estate with all the facilities and amenities that Singaporeans have come to take for granted being completed here. Human beings are always very concerned when they are requested to make changes to their normal way of life. But we live in a world which is subject to so many technological and scientific advancements which cause many changes in the patterns of living and employment. It is unavoidable that many of us will have to adjust to accommodate these changes, otherwise we may be left behind. The people of Potong Pasir is one example. They avoided change and saw the new town of Toa Payoh rising in front of their eyes without making any move to transfer their residence to Toa Payoh until too late. The whole new town of Toa Payoh was soon completed and fully populated while the huts and vegetable plots in Potong Pasir remained. Now they want to go to Toa Payoh but there is no more room for them. If only they had accepted the change earlier, they would be happily accommodated in Toa Payoh and Potong Pasir would long since have been modernised. But because they did not accept change they continued to live in unhygienic circumstances, great inconvenience and probably suffered much more sickness and disease for another 10 or more years before progress and advancement of our redevelopment programmes caught up with them.

With the resettlement of people away from Potong Pasir, a new phase of development in the Constituency will come about. The Housing and Development Board has very kindly accepted many of the suggestions that were submitted to them to accommodate many of the difficult cases in Potong Pasir. New types of flats with improved exterior and interior designs will be constructed in the Potong Pasir area. In a few years' time the Potong Pasir housing estate will probably be the choice housing estate for many applicants.

Notwithstanding the lack of activities in resettlement and redevelopment in the past the people in the Constituency of Potong Pasir can expect new developments of public housing by the HDB and a new industrial estate in Kolan Ayer by JTC that will be completed in a few years. As we enter the 15th year of our Independence we can look back with pride and joy to what has been achieved in the past with confidence and optimism that with the full support of the people, the PAP can continue to lead Singapore into the future and overcome whatever difficulties and problems that may be ahead.

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