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SPEECH BY MR HOWE YOON CHONG, MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MP FOR  
POTONG PASIR, AT THE BABY SHOW PRIZE-GIVING CEREMONY AT THE  
SENNETT COMMUNITY CENTRE, ON SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 1980, AT 11 A.M.

The success of the Family Planning Programme in Singapore and the increasing income levels and higher standards of living have brought with them three noticeable improvements:

- (i) Parents of babies are very much happier.  
There are no more babies who are unwanted;
- (ii) Mothers of babies are healthier;
- (iii) Babies are better looked after and are assured of parental love, better nutrition, child care, and education. Generally they are better provided for.

All these could not come about overnight. It is the result of better planning, hard work, and close cooperation between the people and the government.

After 20 years of struggle and strive, the people of Singapore can look back with pride and satisfaction over what they have achieved, particularly where it concerns their home and the upbringing of their children. These achievements have given rise to greater expectations. Our targets will now be set higher. We will have to work harder to attain them. The government can plan well ahead for the future. It only needs your hard work and full support to realize each plan.

Today let me congratulate those parents whose babies have won prizes at this Baby Show. But congratulations are in order all round for every baby and parent who participate in this Baby Show. A baby is the most precious gift a couple can have. Parents who have babies to enter today's Baby Show are indeed blessed with great joy and happiness.

We all share their delight in having such handsome and healthy babies. The Baby Show has enabled them to show off with justifiable pride their lovely little darlings. Babies are a joy to behold; time spent looking after babies for the doting parents can be, in the words of the Irish Poet, William Bennett:

"Minutes filled .....2/-"

"Minutes filled with shadeless gladness,  
Minutes just as brimmed with sadness."

The baby entertains you all the time with:

"Happy smiles and wailing cries,  
Crows and laughs and tearful eyes."

Watching babies can be great fun.

All the time the baby is having:

"Ever some new tiny notion,  
Making every limb all motion."

He smiles and cries, he looks all around and makes faces.

His hands and feet are constantly doing something:

"Clutching fingers, straightening jerks,  
Twinging feet whose each toe works;

Hands all wants and looks all wander,  
At all things the Heaven under;

Tiny scowls of smiled reprovings,  
That have more love than lovings."

Make the best of the time you have with your babies. He or she will soon grow out of one stage to another, and much of the present type of joy will give way to a different one. Of course with all these gladness and happiness will come the many problems of child care, upbringing, and education. But whatever these problems are, as parents you are blessed with:

"Wealth for which we know no measure,  
Pleasure high above all pleasure;  
Gladness brimming over gladness,  
Joy in care, delight in sadness;  
Loveliness beyond completeness,  
Sweetness distancing all sweetness."

That is what babies are and I congratulate those who have them  
to love and cherish.

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