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ADDRESS BY MR HOWE YOON CHONG, MINISTER FOR HEALTH,  
AT THE POTONG PASIR NATIONAL DAY DINNER AT THE SENNETT COMMUNITY CENTRE  
ON SATURDAY, 7 AUGUST 1982 AT 7.30 PM

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This is the fourth occasion since 1979 that I have the pleasure of addressing you at our National Day Dinner.

For this 17th Anniversary of our Independence I am glad to report that the resettlement problems of Potong Pasir, Kolan Ayer and Kampong Woodleigh have been satisfactorily resolved. Those affected are properly rehoused in their new homes. Government Departments and Statutory Boards have worked closely with our community leaders to improve living conditions in our Constituency.

(a) The two L-shaped blocks of JTC flatted factories in Jalan Kolan Ayer were completed on schedule towards the end of 1981. So far 50 industries have commenced their operations in the new buildings which are now 65 per cent occupied. Soon they will be fully occupied. Most of the industries are capital-intensive, modern, clean, and involved high technology. They provide more job opportunities for our people. Hopefully they will bring more prosperity to Potong Pasir. Eventually these industries can give better support to our community efforts. They are a vast improvement over the slummy conditions that used to be found in the old Kolan Ayer area.

(b) The HDB Potong Pasir Housing Estate is coming up according to plan. The new housing estate will rise on land formerly occupied by vegetable gardens, farming plots, ponds, squatter areas, and attap huts. This specially designed Housing Estate has a total of 2,500 units of three, four, and five-room flats and 104 executive flats constructed under five contracts.

The first 921 units of flats under two contracts will be ready for occupation in early 1983. By September/October 1983 the remaining 1683 units will be completed. With the addition of 2604

families to ..... /2.

families to our Constituency, there will be more amenities and greater community activity. We must plan to welcome and assist the new families to integrate them into the Potong Pasir Constituency. We should involve as many of them as we can in our community work right from the beginning.

(c) There are other projects still under construction. When completed they will change the face of Potong Pasir. The new Community Centre at Potong Pasir is coming up on schedule. Construction work commenced late in 1981. The building will be completed in the middle of 1983. Our community leaders have worked hard to raise more than \$900,000 for this project.

The People's Association has ruled that no further funds need be raised in connection with this Community Centre. This is regrettable as it dampens the enthusiasm of our community leaders to work for what is clearly a worthwhile public project. But in spite of this discouragement, our community leaders will continue in their efforts to raise more funds to provide the wide range of facilities and equipment the new Community Centre will need. They are aware that in doing so the donations they receive will not get any income tax exemptions.

Our CCC is fortunate to have accumulated sufficient funds to give more scholarships and cash grants to deserving primary and secondary school-children, both to reward the hardworking students and to assist those from poorer families.

Our many accomplishments in the last 17 years had not been achieved without hard work. It was not plain sailing all the way. There were many ups and downs. Though most of our more urgent problems have been solved, new and more pressing problems keep cropping up. The nature of our society is such that there will always be more difficult problems for us to tackle. But with proper leadership, hard work, goodwill, and cooperation from every citizen, and a little bit of luck we shall pull through.

Even at the risk of repeating what I have said to you before, I must remind you that for us one fact of life is not likely to change. Either we strive for further advancement and improvements or we stagnate and wither away. For us one false

step may prove our undoing. Once we go down we are not likely to come up again.

At the national level we have to put in more effort to solve problems of rising expectations. We have to upgrade the standard of living of our people, to improve our education system, to provide more health care services, and to extend welfare services to more senior citizens. To achieve all these we need better educated and trained people to work harder with higher skills, utilizing more advanced technology to attain increasing productivity. The many scholarships and financial grants to encourage more young people to acquire better skills are directed towards this objective. Better educated and better trained workers using advanced technology and sophisticated equipment will attain greater productivity, and improve the quality of our products. Better management and more efficient use of manpower and resources will lower the cost of production to enable our industries to compete more successfully and survive in the very difficult international market.

International economic and political upheavals will continue to affect us and slow down our economic growth. The next few years will be difficult ones. But this should not stop us from working harder towards improving the quality of life in our society. Clearly material progress must be balanced with better inculcations of moral and cultural values. We have therefore to give more priority to moral education. Our people will be exposed to open discussions on Confucian Ethics, on spiritual and cultural values, and on moral education in school. Greater attention will also be paid to physical education which has for so long been neglected. We shall encourage our citizens to pay more attention to physical exercise and to adopt wholesome lifestyles so as to keep themselves healthy all the time. More government efforts will be channelled towards the improvement of health care services and to tackle the problems of the increasing numbers of older people in our society.

On this 17th Anniversary of our Independence let us resolve to work harder for peace, progress, and prosperity in the years ahead.