

17TH MARCH 1955

ELECTION SPEECH - WHY I CHOSE TANJONG PAGAR

I had 25 Divisions to choose from when the P.A.P. nominated me to stand for elections. I chose Tanjong Pagar. The people of Tanjong Pagar has a right to know why.

Tanjong Pagar is a working class area. No other division has such a high proportion of workers, wage-earners, small traders and such a low proportion of wealthy merchants and landlords living in it.

I wanted to represent workers, wage earners and small traders, not wealthy merchants or landlords. So I chose Tanjong Pagar not Tanglin.

National Archives of Singapore

Mr. Peter Lim Seck Tiong and Mr. Lam Thian have also chosen Tanjong Pagar. But up till now they have done nothing for the people. Both of them say they have lived in Tanjong Pagar for nearly 30 years. Why then have they done nothing for the people all these years? It is only now before the elections that they say they want to serve you.

I have not lived in Tanjong Pagar. But I do not have to live here to know the hardships and problems of the people.

When the printing workers of the Straits Times who live in Anson Road in the Tanjong Pagar Division were on strike two years ago, I fought for them. When the postmen who live in Maxwell Road in the Tanjong Pagar Division were on strike three years ago - I fought with them.

No one heard of Mr. Peter Lim Seck Tiong or Mr. Lam Thian coming out from their homes nearby to help these people.

I can predict that no one will hear of Mr. Lim or Mr. Lam fighting for the people after these elections, especially if Mr. Lim or Mr. Lam are not elected.

But win or lose I shall fight on for what is right, for a better life for the people in an independent democratic Malaya.

The P.A.P. represents all the races in Malaya not just the Chinese. We are fighting for official recognition not for the Chinese language alone but also for the Malay and Tamil languages. That is what we fight for - so that in our Legislative Assembly Chinese, Malay and Tamil can be used together with English.

We shall be delighted to have a debate with the Democratic Party officials in Chinese, Malay, Tamil and English. We suggest that the debate should be for 2 hours with ½ hour for each language at a place and time mutually convenient.

We would like to warn all politicians that the playing up of just one particular language will provoke very grave communal and racial animosities. Malaya is a land of Malays and Indians and others and Chinese.

LEE KUAN YEW

National Archives of Singapore