

3RD JUNE 1959

VICTORY RALLY AT THE PADANG

Friends and fellow citizens:

Once in a long while in the history of a people there comes a moment of great change. Tonight is such a moment in our lives. Last Saturday saw the end of an era. This morning the new Constitution was promulgated. We begin a new chapter in the history of Singapore. The powers of the people through their elected government is limited to our internal affairs. It is not what we really want. It is but a step forward towards merger and Merdeka.

But even so tonight marks a significant break with the past. For 14 years, since British colonial rule was restored after the second World War, a series of colonial administrators have ruled and ordered our lives. True in the last four years some of the trappings of power were transferred to local Ministers. But the reality of power was never in their hands. And any way they were weak and feeble hands, incapable of wielding power effectively on our behalf.

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This rally tonight is symbolic of the nature of your government, a people's government. Unlike the previous rulers we have no compensation for abolition terms. Unlike the previous local Ministers, we have no iron mines in Ipoh to provide for a rainy day.

We have no personal future apart from your future. Your joys and your sorrows are ours. We share the same future be it good, indifferent, or bad. And so it is our duty to see that it is a bright and cheerful future.

We held no private celebrations to rejoice in victory. Instead we come tonight to rejoice with you. We the people of Singapore have decided to run Singapore affair. We have come to celebrate here on this Padang, and we use the steps of this building as our stage. Do you know, we wanted to use this Padang for our election rallies at night? But a small group of Europeans who were given this field by the former Colonial Government, refused it, although they only use it in the day time for a few people to play games. Well times have changed, and will stay changed.

There are many more easy changes like this which we can effect. But there are other changes which are not so quick and easy to effect. All of us want a better and a fuller life. But a rise in the standard of living of our people cannot be created over-night. The good things of life do not fall down from the skies.

They can only come by hard work over a long time.

We have in our party men whose integrity and ability have been proved over the years in the struggle to build up the mass movement of the P A P. Their dedication to the cause of an Independent democratic non Communist Socialist Malaya gives them the drive that will make the machinery of Government work efficiently on your behalf. My party has asked me to lead the Government and we shall take office formally on Friday.

But all the planning and effort on the part of your Government will not produce the desired results unless you the people support and sustain the work of your government. We shall do our duty to the people. The people must do their duty to themselves and their fellow citizens.

Lastly let it not be forgotten that we have been elected to govern on behalf of all the people of Singapore. The paramount interest is that of the people as a whole. There may be times when in the interests of the whole community we may have to take steps which are unpopular with a section of the community. On such occasions remember that the principle which guides our actions is that the paramount interest of the whole community must prevail.

Let us work together as a more united people towards a brighter and better future. May the next 5 years be happy, peaceful and prosperous years for all of us.

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