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BROADCAST TALK BY THE PRIME MINISTER

OVER RADIO SINGAPORE ON THURSDAY,

2ND JUNE, 1960.

So many things happen every day of the year that, once a year, it is necessary to put things in their right perspective. Government do it; trade unions do it, business companies do it. All of them make a habit of the annual stock taking. What has the PAP Government done in the past one year? Are things better or worse?

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My appraisal, which I hope will be as objective as possible, can be broadly split into three sections:-

First, the people

Second, the administration

Third, the economy.

What the mass of the people feel - their tempers and their attitudes - is a fair indication of how things are going. If things are going from bad to worse, it is not likely that the people will be reasonably cheerful and peaceful; and the past year has been notable for the absence of any demonstrations of discontent or dissatisfaction with the new State.

Why was 1959-1960, the first year of office of the new Government, so different from 1955-1956, the first year of office of the last Government? Why were turbulence, disorder and confusion absent in this past year, unlike the year 1955-1956? It would be immodest for me to suggest that it is because of the PAP leadership in the Government. There were broad factors which produced a change of temper as a result of a change in circumstances. The most important of all was of course that 1955 saw the pent up fury of a suppressed people against the colonialists, whereas 1959 saw the sober appraisal of the new situation in which Malaya is independent, and Singapore is only internally self-governing, and likely to remain so, unless certain conditions are created to make ultimate merger possible. The P.A.P. played its part in bringing about this change in circumstances. But even more important we brought home the realisation of the vital issues which face us. We brought in analysis, arguments and sober re-appraisal in place of out-dated slogans and sentiments.

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But it is in the field of the administration and its impact on the people that we piled up a substantial amount of the credit side. There were some mistakes, and there were hard feelings. True, the cut in allowances of Government servants was painful. True, school teachers were pushed too far in the extra half session. Rectifications had to be made. Half sessions have been dropped. Professional allowances were paid to certain categories of officers in the Government service.

But on the credit side is the sense of purpose, integrity and stability which have been achieved in the administration and, through the administration, in the body of the people. Decisions may be right; decisions may be wrong. But nobody now doubts that decisions were taken honestly and fairly with no influence of gifts or cash or patronage having been brought to bear. True, this should be taken for granted of any government worthy of the name.

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A most significant change in the past year is the conscious effort to bring the administration to the people. A Political Study Centre was started to educate and explain our political and ideological problems to the administrative officers

of the State. Senior officers were asked to rethink our political problems. Counter clerks and other officials who deal with the public now understand that they are servants and not masters of the people. And the Police have been brought down to the people to be their friend and protector not their guardian and punisher. Assemblymen organised mass rallies to re-educate both the Police and the public into the new relationships which must bind them. This is a constant and continuing process, and the work must go on. But after one year there are clear signs that the position has changed for the better.

But a good government is expected not only to carry on and maintain standards. It is expected to raise them. And it is ultimately in the sphere of economics that results must be achieved. More jobs must be created; more prosperity diffused amongst more people. The past year was a slow beginning brought about as a result of the growing realisation of stability and sanity. The wheels for industrial expansion have been put into motion, albeit slowly. We must continue this next year. We have started with two oil refineries, a small steel mill and several small factories for tiles, biscuits, etc. With growing confidence, good faith and the effectiveness of the Government in maintaining fair, just and stable industrial conditions there should be growing momentum in our economic expansion. There have been a few set backs. A few irresponsible employers threatened lock-outs and a few unions called unnecessary strikes. But

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these have been kept within proportions and will be kept down. You have heard of our 5-year development plans from Dr. Goh, our Finance Minister. If we get these plans into swing, there should be a real hive of economic activity for several years to come.

I venture to suggest that in the past year more and more people have come to support the Government as they realised the problems facing us and the intensity of purpose and effort with which the Government sets out to resolve them. But if I were asked to sum up on one sentence what I think was the strongest single feature of the PAP Government in the past year, I would say that there was a Government prepared to govern firmly, fairly and justly, within the limits of its power, in the interests of the people.

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