

SPEECH BY MR. DINESH SINGH AT SRI TEMASEK

ON OCTOBER 8TH, 1965.

Mr. Prime Minister and friends,

I am deeply touched by the kind words you have said, Mr. Prime Minister, about my country and my people.

We have in India struggled hard against the colonial system which did not only dominate India but dominated a very large part of the world. And it is true that we were fortunate in having achieved our independence a little ahead of other. But we are very conscious of the fact that it could never have been possible by our efforts alone. It was in every possible way a co-operative effort made by us in India, by you here in Singapore, by other people living in other parts of the colonial empire. And therefore, we share this in common the gains that we have made against colonialism.

I am most grateful to you, Mr. Prime Minister, for your very kind hospitality during my stay here, and I have been particularly touched by the warmth of friendship that has been shown by all your colleagues and by the people of Singapore.

As you have mentioned yourself, we are not exactly new to one another, although maybe some of our people passing through this way did not exactly settle down here. But the fact is that they did pass through and they did meet people here. And sometimes, the bonds that are established in passing through are really deeper than the bonds that are established by living in a place because then you start getting involved in the conflicts. And the fleeting memory of passing through a beautiful country and beautiful journey always remains in the mind with a deep impression.

And so we in India have always looked upon Singapore and this part of the world with great affection and with great feeling of close bond between our peoples. Even the languages that we speak in India -- and, as you know, we speak many tongues and languages that you speak here -- there is quite a similarity: many words are common between the different languages. But of more than this is what we share a common future together in the world that is yet before us. The past has been very good, very glorious, very friendly.

And we have now to look forward to the future that is yet to come before us. And there are many conflicts today that did not exist not the time when we could move about much more freely. And I think that it is the thinking of your people because you represent them more than anyone else -- I can look forward

and so can people at home look forward to ever increasing bonds of friendship between the two countries.

We have got to live together in a world which consists of many peoples professing different religions, speaking different languages, having ways of life which are not exactly common. And if you want to build the co-operative world and live in it peacefully, then we have got to make these beginnings at home.

We in smaller communities living together must accept other people who live with us: their languages, their way of life. And then only we can hope for a peaceful co-operative world. And therefore, the experiment that you are carrying out here in Singapore in building a common society out of divergent people is also the experiment that we are carrying on in India.

And I think that in all these 18 years that we have lived in freedom in India, we have made some progress. As you are aware, we have faced difficulties. We had difficulties with one of our neighbours a few years ago. Very recently, we had difficulties with another neighbour. And more than anything else, the territorial gains or the success of the army or otherwise, to my mind the greatest achievement of the Indian nation has been the welding together of the various people that compose India and the people of different faiths and of

different racial stocks even have fought together in trying to save what they considered their India beyond the ties of religion or beyond the ties of certain thoughts. And this, I think, is the greatest achievement that we can claim today, that our people have felt the common bond of a nationality, of an Indian nationality.

And I think it is a matter of great satisfaction to us irrespective of the outcome of the struggle that we in India have built one nation and one people out of 470-million human beings living in climate for varied from one another, speaking, as I have said earlier, different languages and professing different religions.

We have no doubt that whatever may be the temporary difficulties and they are many-- and however insurmountable they may seem today, the world will move on towards a common co-operative society, and in this society the experiment that you are carrying on here and the experiment under which we are living in India will be the experiments that will -- succeed -- they must succeed -- if the world is to survive.

And therefore, for me personally, it has been a very happy occasion to have had this opportunity to come to your country and to meet you. When we last met, I said good-bye to you as the Chief Minister of Singapore. This

evening, I was very happy to meet you as the Prime Minister although to some extent it may have meant a certain personal disappointment to you, but it gives you an opportunity with greater authority to put through the programme that you have always held dear to your heart, and which we greatly cherish in India. And I hope that you will pursue these with us great vigour as in the past you have done and that together, we shall all be able to achieve the ideas that we hold dear to our hearts.

Mr. Prime Minister, you drank a toast to the friendship of India and Singapore and it is something which is very dear to our hearts.

May I request you and friends to join me in drinking a toast not only to the strengthening of this very close bond that exists between the two countries but also to the success of the experiment which will establish the close bond not only between our two countries but between all the countries of the world so that we may be able to live in peace and prosperity for ever.

To you Mr. Prime Minister personally and to the growing friendship between India and the peace in the world.

8th October, 1965.