TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
AT THE 6TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE
QUEENSTOWN COMMUNITY CENTRE ON SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 1967.

Friends and Fellow-citizens,

Briefly, if I could summarise what I have said in Chinese: Every time I go abroad and come back to Singapore, I am relieved that I have one corner of South-East Asia which is my home and which is not bad at all compared to what is around us in Asia.

And I am often left with the impression that we have to educate the leaders of our community -- the trade union leaders, the student leaders, the community leaders. And I think the best way really, is to let them do a tour of all the countries in Asia. If you are a leader, before you begin to talk about what is right, what is wrong, please see the background against which our standards apply. Have a look at Jakarta, Colombo, Rangoon, Bangkok, Saigon, Manila, Delhi, Madras, Tokyo; and only then will you know what you are talking about.

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You know, tonight as I look around and see the shoes, the shirts, the slacks, the dresses and not one hungry beggar around the place to socially

blackmail us, to make us feel let down, I say, "Well, this is a society which is worth the preserving, the nurturing and the fostering."

But I am often left with this thought: that we are too complacent.

You know, I have just come back from Tokyo and it is a city of 12 million people, now nearly 13 million. And you see one of the indices of a civilization....

You know, in simple societies, you have vast land areas, small villages with perhaps one person to 10 square miles, and you lead a primitive sort of life. But to be able to get one million people in about 50 square miles or 20 square miles -- or, as in the case of Tokyo, 13 million people -- sprawling in a place not much bigger than half of Singapore and the roads are clean, not with dirt and filth and refuse thrown away and drains clogged: it shows social organisation. Every individual man, every individual woman, every digit, is a highly trained and disciplined person. He does not just smoke a cigarette and throw it onto the roadside or onto a stall or onto a carpet. He stubs it out and puts it properly in an ash-tray. The people take their lunch to office and they don't just finish it and throw the remains, the fish-bones out into the street. They pack it up, put it into the dust-bin or bring it home in the little luncheon-basket. That is organization and training and standards. And we must learn that.

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You know, here we plant a tree and export it to grow and there is a lot of trouble to prevent little boys from climbing up or wilfully cutting down the little sapling.

You know, there they transplant trees, ten years old. You grow them somewhere and, after ten years, you dig a big hole. When the tree is sleeping in winter, you lift the tree up and place it in a park by a big road, by a main highway and you tie it down nicely because the wind blows -- there are typhoons and the tree may be blown off. And when you pass by, you see lovely pines because of the human effort and the organization that went into it. And I say we learn that.

Ten years from now -- and we have ten years -- if you let all these boys and girls grow up learning nothing, they will just be hooligans, ruffians and sluts. And we will be to blame. They will climb up trees, and pull them down; break telephone boxes, do foolish, stupid things. But if we teach them ... Even a dog can be trained, you know. You see a dog in the police training school: you whistle and it knows what to do. It can jump through a hoop; it can sit down; it can attack those you want him to attack. And it is training that does it -- constant discipline, the effort.

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And in ten years' time, as the torch passes on to the next generation, you and I, we should see that they are robust, healthy, and vigorous, with a social feel -- not selfish individualists, uncaring for society -- understanding that without the collective effort, without the caring for one another, none of us will have a future.

But, on the whole, as I look around, I am thankful I am in Singapore because there are very few places like this -- very few places where you can sit down, the lights you switch will come on, the water will run and you are sure that there will be peace tomorrow morning when you wake up, that the world will be more or less the same; that the price of rice will also be more or less the same. There are not very many such places.

I say we must use this time that we have -- ten years perhaps -- in which to consolidate and secure our future.

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Finally, as I look up and see this banner marked "6th Anniversary", I say to myself, "How quickly time flies."

But with every passing day, we must build so that those who come after us have solid foundations on which they can build their society.

And, on that note, I wish you many more happy anniversaries.

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