

TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER,
MR. LEE KUAN YEW, WHEN HE OFFICIALLY OPENED
THE NEW P.S.A. BLAIR PLAIN HOUSING ESTATE
ON 8TH OCTOBER, 1968

The opening of this Blair Plain housing complex underlines many things for me tonight. First, the time-lag between planning and fruition. Early in 1963, I thought the best way to give everyone, including our harbour workers, a stake was to give them a good home. Five years have elapsed between the first plans and the final building. It emphasises the importance of always being ahead of your problems, because there is a time-lag between the formulation of a solution and the actual implementation.

Further, the time-lag can make the solution inadequate. It frightens me to see the number of children around. There must be, on the average, seven children per family. This cannot go on. There is a Family Planning Unit at Nelson Road. Its use should be expanded quickly. If we are to raise our standard of living, get away from poverty, filth and squalor, we must not only use modern science and technology to build the things we want. but also to prevent

us from dragging ourselves to the ground by having too many in the family to care for.

I would like to come back here in ten years, see all the old buildings and even some of the newer ones pulled down and rebuilt. And this can be done, because this is an achievement-oriented society. This society reaches out for the moon and the stars. If despite all the exhortation, encouragement, warnings and cajoling nothing happens, I would have given up the job. But the people of Singapore have always been splendid in their response.

I expect you, the workers and your union, to adjust, to change your thinking and your work habits. You want more pay and higher standards of life. I want you to get them, better homes, better schools for your children, good hospitals, good social amenities and better pay. These can come about if you make this place the PSA hum.

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Why work three shifts when you used to work one-and-a-half?

Well, because there is no other way to get the better things you and I want.

There is no way a poor man can make himself rich except by working hard and saving.

When I opened the block in Everton Park over two years ago, I said we would move into the next phase where everyone would own his own home. It has taken nearly three years to work out a plan so that we can sell Housing Board flats to occupiers. If you are intelligent you will buy one. If I were working in the Port Authority and had the choice of a P.S.A. quarters or a two or three-room flat in Toa Payoh, I would go for the flat in Toa Payoh because at the end of 25 years of your PSA work here, you would have to move out. You would have your pension and your gratuity but no home. On the other hand if you buy a \$7,000 - \$8,000 flat in Toa Payoh now on an instalment plan, it is yours in ten to twelve years time. And in 25 years time, when you retire, that flat would be worth about \$30,000 to \$40,000. The increase in value is inevitable because land is limited and money is not. And money gets cheaper all round the world.

We will gradually create a society where every member has more stake in its security and its continued prosperity. It can be done. What I ask is your full-hearted co-operation to make this possible, as soon as possible. Let us work the three-shift system well and, by next year, have the fastest turnaround of any harbour in South Asia.

Singaporeans should always be proud to look the world in the face, to look at the moon and say, “Yes, man is going there. Whilst we may not be the first to get there, at least we can think like those who are going to get there.”

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