THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH FOR SECOND READING OF THE BILL TO AMEND THE CIVIL LIST & PENSION ACT, 1970

Mr. Govindasamy, Sir,

When the Civil List and Pension Bill was taken through Parliament earlier this year, the doctors who were treating the late President were optimistic that he might be able to serve his full term before retirement. But it was not to be.

Had he retired at the time of his death, the late President would have been entitled to a pension of $17,466.66 per year, or $1,455.55 per month. As he was 60 years of age, he could have taken a gratuity of $72,777.75 (one-third of his full pension x 12½ years), together with a reduced pension of $970.37 per month. This formula for computations apply to all Ministerial pensions.

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The late President left behind a widow and three children the youngest of whom is 18. Under the present law, Puan Noor Aishah would only be entitled to a gratuity. This could not have been more than the gratuity the late President would have been entitled to. She is only in the second half of her thirties and so has a considerable life expectancy. My colleagues and I decided that we should

amend the Civil List and Pension Act for her special circumstances, without making it a precedent for the future.

By this amending Bill, we shall provide her with a pension of $2,000 per month for life. As in all pensions to widows, it will cease in the event of re-marriage. There will be a further $500 per month for her children, until the youngest one has reached 21, or on her marriage if it is before 21.

As their house has not yet been built on her piece of land, we have made available to her a government bungalow she has chosen from a number which were suitable. She will pay one-quarter of the economic rent of the house for a period of three years. During this time her own house could be built.

In the declining years of the late President, she carried more of the social responsibilities of his office. I am sure the House would be with my colleagues and me in wanting to make these provisions for her and her children. This amending Bill will give her more than what the late President himself would have been entitled to. But there are special reasons why we feel justified in seeking to make the necessary provisions set out in the Bill.

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Date: 30th December, 1970.