

THE SEARCH FOR TALENT  
BY LEE KUAN YEW, PRIME MINISTER

What was the most important single factor for Singapore's rapid development since 1959? Without hesitation, my answer is the quality of the people. For not only are our people hardworking, quick to learn and practical, Singapore also had an extra thick layer of high calibre and trained talent . In the protocol list of the first seven persons in Singapore, I am the only Singapore-born. The President, CV Devan Nair, the Chief of Justice, Wee Chong Jin, the Speaker, Yeoh Ghim Seng, the two Deputy Prime Ministers, Goh Keng Swee and S Rajaratnam, and the Minister for Finance, Hon Sui Sen, were not born in Singapore. One Singapore-born out of the top seven Singaporeans! This is the size of the contribution from the non-Singapore born.

The slowness and difficulty we faced in the 1970s when trying to find successors worthy of my colleagues of the older generation baffled me for many years. I was puzzled by the dearth of the able, the dynamic, and the dedicated, to become MPs, Parliamentary Secretaries, and Ministers. One day, in 1972, I stumbled upon the key to this mystery. A head count of the top men in the Cabinet and in Parliament showed that we had reinforced Singapore-born talent. I also recalled that over two-thirds of the leaders of the Communist United Front were also outside-born: Lim Chin Siong, Fong Swee Suan, James Puthuchery,

and S Woodhull. So was Devan Nair, the only one who honoured their written commitment to the PAP, made public when they released from Changi jail in June 1959. Their political activism was derived from a harsher and more challenging political environment. The Singapore-born has had less to spur him to political action. The able young, especially after independence, have found the professions and business more attractive. So in the 1970s the quest began in earnest, to talent scout for able successors. The original group had come about spontaneously. Talent from the region had gathered in Singapore before the new political boundaries were demarcated, when Singapore became independent on its own in 1965. If we leave it to the normal process of attrition and change, and to the vagaries of chance, we run the danger of leaving Singapore in the hands of mediocrities. To allow this to happen would be criminal.

### **More than our share of talent**

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If we had relied solely upon the talent of our natural population pyramid, Singapore's performance would not have been half as good. From 23 years of experience in government, I have learned that one high-calibre mind in charge of a Ministry, or a Statutory Board, makes the difference between success and failure of a major project. A top mind, given a task, brings together a group of other able men, organises them into a cohesive team, and away the project goes.

That was the way Goh Keng Swee set about the Ministry of Finance in June 1959. He picked Hon Sui Sen as his principal lieutenant, Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Finance), and then in 1961 made him Chairman of the EDB. Hon Sui Sen collected an able team in the EDB and Singapore's industrialisation slowly and steadily gathered steam. Even in 1982, I find it difficult to imagine how we could have made the economic development of the last 23 years without the ability, the creativity, and the drive of these two able men.

Whenever I had lesser men in charge, the average or slightly above-average, I have had to keep pushing and probing them, to review problems, to identify roadblocks, to suggest solutions, to come back and to discover that less than the best has been achieved. To be exasperated and, often, to be totally frustrated, is the price for not having an able and talented man in charge.

Without this extra number of talented men, born outside Singapore, in charge of the principal ministries and the key statutory boards, Singapore would not be what it is today.

### **Non-Singapore-born talent: uplifted Singapore**

When I formed my first Cabinet in 1959, only two of the nine Ministers were born in Singapore. Seven came all the way from Jaffna, from Malaya, and from South China. Even now, in 1982, with the exception of E W Barker, all my

senior colleagues are not Singapore-born. Of the key men who launched and made our housing programme a success, only Lim Kim San, the first Chairman of HDB in 1960, is Singapore-born. Howe Yoon Chong, whom he picked to assist him, came from China. Without his support, Lim Kim San could not have succeeded. Teh Cheang Wan, Chief Architect of HDB in 1960, later in 1970 Chief Executive Officer, now Minister for National Development, was born in China and educated in Penang.

The majority of Statutory Board Chairmen were born outside Singapore: 71% in 1960, 75% in 1970, and 61% in 1980. The Singapore-born form a minority of key Statutory Boards' Chairmen. Only Lim Kim San in PSA is Singapore-born. Michael Fam, present Chairman, HDB, is from Sabah. Chairman, JTC, I F Tang, is from Anhui. Chairman, PUB, Lee Ek Tieng, is from Shanghai. Chairman, STPB, I T Tan, is from Sumatra. Chairman, SBC, Wee Mon Cheng, is from Fujian.

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The composition of younger political leaders is radically different. The second generation Cabinet Ministers are all Singapore-born, all five Cabinet Ministers and six Ministers of State. The trend towards more Singapore-born Permanent Secretaries is almost as powerful. In 1964, only one of seven Permanent Secretaries was Singapore-born. In March 1982, 14 Permanent

Secretaries out of a total of 19 are Singapore-born. The five outside-born are the older ones, those over 45 years. Of the seven Acting Permanent Secretaries, all are Singapore-born. Five of them are below 40 years. In 1982, of seven Judges, only two are Singapore-born. This is because only one Judge is under 50 years.

It was this extra concentration of talent which gave Singapore that “high compression” or “high rev” in its leadership. It was not chance that brought so many able and outstanding persons to Singapore. For decades before the war, Singapore was the centre of education. Before and after the war, many able students came to Singapore for their education - to secondary schools, several of which had hostels run by missionaries to Medical College (established 1905), to Raffles College (established 1928), and later, to the University of Malaya, sited in Singapore, when these two Colleges combined in 1950. It was only in 1962 that the university of Malaya moved to Kuala Lumpur. Even in 1982, the Vice-Chancellor of NUS is not Singapore-born.

This flow pattern of brains has now changed. Fewer students from Malaysia and the region come to Singapore for education. They have their own universities in Malaysia and Indonesia. What is worse, many can afford to, and do, go abroad, to Australia, New Zealand, UK, US, and Canada. Most do not return. Of the few who come to Singapore for higher studies, some return to

their homes, but most emigrate to Australia, New Zealand, US or Canada. This is a pity, for such men, prepared to start life afresh in a strange new environment, are usually exceptional in enterprise, drive and determination to succeed - Key attributes for high performance.

### **Immigration ban to white countries lifted for professionals**

The most significant factor that altered the flow of talent adversely, away from Singapore, was the change in immigration laws of the big English-speaking countries. As long as these vast and wealthy English-speaking countries refused to admit immigrants with high brain power because they were Asians, Singapore benefited from their policies of self-denial. Unfortunately, they changed their immigration policies: Australia in March 1966, Canada in October 1967, America in July 1968 (law changed in 1965, implementation 1968), and New Zealand in 1974. Now, from the preferences of our ASEAN scholars, we notice that those who decide to leave their countries in Southeast Asia often decide to quit the region altogether. Having decided to uproot themselves, they want to strike roots in countries far away from the areas of possible conflict, and in countries with greater economic potential, even though they will be members of a not easily assimilated Asian minority and may well have to put up with race discrimination.

Indeed, even some of our own Singapore-born Colombo Plan and Overseas Merit scholars who had studied in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, have emigrated. Last year, in 1981, 40 scholars left the public service, half on completion of their bonds, half buying themselves out of their uncompleted bond periods. Amongst them, two Colombo Plan scholars, graduated in Australian universities, had emigrated to Canada. For them, Australia is too close to areas of potential conflicts.

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## **Being English-speaking facilitates brain-drain**

Now, we ourselves may be threatened by a brain-drain of Singapore-grown talent. Because our graduates are English-speaking, we are more susceptible to a brain-drain. A Japanese doctor or a Korean computer system analyst will think twice before emigrating to America, Canada, Australia or New Zealand. He has major adjustments to make, linguistically and culturally. The English-educated Singaporean is completely at home in the English language, and his cultural adjustment are minimal compared to the trauma a Japanese or Korean will suffer. This poses special dangers for us. Unless we can provide our able graduates a satisfying career in Singapore, one where rewards, job satisfaction, and the prospects for their children's education and future are comparable to those which they can slowly, but painstakingly, create for themselves if they settle in the US, Canada, Australia or New Zealand as minority Asians, we shall be depleted of talent. Sadly, too many of our professionals have found emigration an attractive alternative. We are not a closed society, like China or Russia, which can deny a person a passport and keep him forcibly in the country. We issue a passport to every citizen who wants to travel. And he need not return if he does not wish to. If too many of our able citizens do not return, Singapore will cease to be what it is.

## **1971-80 sample of Singapore-trained doctors emigrating**

When we discovered that our total number of doctors in the 1970s was not increasing as fast as the annual graduate output, we traced all those who had graduated from the University of Singapore from 1970-80 and had not retained their names on the Medical Register. The search disclosed that of the total of 1215 doctors who graduated from the University of Singapore between 1970 and 1980, 225 or 18.5% have been deregistered. If we include all medical graduates of the University of Singapore, those who graduated before 1970-80, and overseas trained graduates, a total of 1111 doctors have failed to retain their names on the register from 1973-81, half our present total of 2041 doctors.

Before 1973, registration was not required, so many might have emigrated before 1973 without noticing them. In Australia alone, there are 621 Singapore-trained doctors on their state medical registers, about five times our annual medical graduate output of 120 for the 1970s, or about one-third of the present total of 2041 doctors in Singapore: 1472 Singapore-trained, 569 trained abroad.

However, 192 out of the 621 Singapore-trained doctors registered in Australia are still on the Singapore register. They have registered in Australia as insurance against catastrophe.

These figures have serious implications for us. The figures for engineers and other professionals are less devastating only because they are less professionally mobile across national boundaries. Unless we are able to instill patriotism and self-respect, unless we succeed in inculcating a sense of commitment to fellow-Singaporeans in our talented youths, we can be creamed off. We shall become diluted like skimmed milk. We must ensure that because Singaporeans value their Asianness, they will not want to be tolerated and patronized as minorities in predominantly Caucasian societies. Therefore, any policy which denies trained talent its free-market rewards by punitive taxes, as in Britain, must lead to a brain-drain and to our inevitable decline. It is the chicken and egg cycle. As long as we are able and growing, our talented will stay and help our economic growth. Because they stay, we can offer them comparable standards of life, and decent prospects for their children's future. Furthermore, we can attract talent from abroad to work in Singapore. The reverse cycle will be devastating and swift in bringing about our ruin.

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## **The mass of Singaporeans cannot emigrate**

It is only a few thousand Singaporeans who can emigrate - the professionally trained and the very wealthy - not more than a fraction of one percent of the population. Manual workers and clerks cannot gain entry into Australia, New Zealand, Canada or US. As in other societies, the mass of Singaporeans have to rely upon the dedication of their talented sons and daughters. The talented must have a deep sense of commitment, debt, and obligation to their fellow Singaporeans, to the society that matured them. If they had been born elsewhere in Asia, they might never have been educated to their full potential on government scholarship, not given the opportunities to contribute at a higher level to society. If they, the talented, leave, their less-talented relatives, brothers, sisters, cousins, parents, face a dismal future. Indeed, this has happened in many new countries. Decolonisation has spawned more than 100 new governments who rule multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-religious populations - not one people, but several peoples, without a sense of a common history or bonds of nationhood. Often, there are deep suspicions, envy and enmity between them. Blacks versus Indians and Chinese in Jamaica, Buddhist Singhalese versus Hindu Tamils in Sri Lanka, the Buganda tribe around Uganda's capital, Kampala, versus the Lango tribe of President Obote in Uganda. These peoples do not feel they are one nation. They do not understand their obligations as ordinary

citizens, and how much more responsibility they carry when they become leaders of their society. This understanding is crucial for the interests of all to flourish. It is in the interests of all Singaporeans, whatever our race, religion or language, that our talented young should be educated to their fullest potential. It is in the interest of the not-so-talented that the talented should be adequately rewarded for the contribution they can make to the total progress of Singapore. Drained of our trained talent, Singapore will be like a man with a truncated right arm, unable to function effectively. Once a brain-drain has taken place, as in Sri Lanka, Jamaica or Uganda, it is extremely difficult to reverse the process and persuade the brains to come back. After spending several years striking roots elsewhere, the talented are chary about uprooting and returning to an uncertain homeland. Of the many Sri Lankans serving in UN agencies, or research and development institutes in US, Canada and UK, or Chinese and Indian Jamaican professionals who have settled in Canada and US, or 30,000 Indian Ugandan professionals, doctors, accountants, engineers and lawyers who have settled in Canada, and 40,000 Indian Ugandan shopkeepers who have established shops in London, few have gone back to Sri Lanka, Jamaica or Uganda although the government of their original home countries have changed. Tempting offers are made to them to return and to help rebuild their countries. But they are unwilling to risk restarting their careers when there is a real risk of another disruption of their lives by the folly of populist politicians who win elections playing the politics of equal

rewards or egalitarianism: squeeze the successful to pay for the welfare of the poor, and end up with the equalization of poverty. If a brain-drain ever happens in Singapore, if our brightest and our best scatter abroad, because of populist appeals to soak or squeeze our able and successful professionals to subsidise those who are less able, less educated, and less well-paid, Singapore will be ruined. The sufferers will be the mass of the workers and their families who cannot emigrate because they are not wanted by the wealthy and developed English speaking countries.

### **Singapore-born talent -- core of our strength**

The Singapore-born must be the pillars on which we can place the cross beams and struts of foreign-born talent to raise us up to higher standards of achievement. If we begin to lose our own Singapore-born and bred talent in significant numbers, then the pillars are weakened, and additional cross beams and struts cannot make up for pillars. The Singapore-grown talent must, by the nature of his upbringing and schooling, be the most committed, the most emotionally and intimately attached to Singapore. We shall lose our own Singapore-grown talent if our policies punish the outstanding and the talented by progressive income tax with the objective of income redistribution. It has happened in an old established society like Britain. Because Britain doctors have

to work on National Health Service rates, and further because of high progressive income tax on those top doctors with private patients, every year from 1965 to 1975 inclusive, an average of 379 doctors have emigrated, or 12.6% of the annual output of doctors in the UK. They lost high calibre men, with specialist qualifications, and made up with lesser qualified Indian, Pakistani and other immigrant doctors to fill up vacancies in their hospitals. Foreign-trained doctors make up between 45% to 50% of hospital physicians in Britain in the late 1970s (vide National Health Issues, the British Experience by Cotton M Lindsay, 1980, p 64).

### **Less non-Singapore-born talent, especially those below 40 years**

Annex 1 shows the percentages of Singapore-born as against non-Singapore-born in the Cabinet, Parliament, Public Service Commission, superscale officers in the Statutory Boards, and teachers in Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL). Annex 2 sets out the actual numbers of Singapore and non-Singapore-born in each group. In each category, the Singapore-born percentage of talent (see Annex 1) has increased from 1960 to 1970, further increased in 1980. In each category, this Singapore-born percentage is higher amongst those below 40. In the Government Service, Singapore-born superscales were 20% in 1960, 57% in 1970, 65% in 1980. Of superscale officers in the Statutory Boards,

Singapore-born were 13% in 1960, 48% in 1970, 62% in 1980. One exception is the Institutes of Highest Learning (IHL). Through an intense recruitment drive by the National University of Singapore, the Polytechnic, Ngee Ann, and Institute of Education, we have been able to attract talent from abroad in a big way. So the Singapore-born rates stayed low: 26% in 1960, 19% in 1970, 31% in 1980. Had we not recruited these professors, associate professors, lecturers and teachers from abroad, the Singapore-born percentages would have increased more significantly. Furthermore, were we confined to Singapore-born academic staff, we would not be able to set up the Nanyang Technological Institute. Without the input of foreign-born talent, in NUS, NTI, Institute of Education, and our Junior Colleges (with native English-speaking teachers), we could not have hoped to improve our standards of education, and increase our intake of students, so speedily and effectively.

The key question is: Is there enough talent in Singapore to maintain in the future the standards of leadership in the Cabinet and efficiency in the public service that has prevailed in the last 23 years, as new Ministers and Permanent Secretaries become more and more only the Singapore-born? My answer is a qualified yes, qualified because it depends on whether we succeed in recruiting talent from outside to supplement Singapore-born talent. It is not that Singapore

lacks talent, but that we have been able to achieve so much more because we had doubled our talent pool by a brain inflow.

### **Are there enough talented Singaporeans to keep up standards?**

The message of the declining number and percentages of non-Singapore-born in Annexes 1 and 2 is clear: go out to recruit and to retain talent to supplement our own finite pool. Otherwise we shall not be able to maintain the pace at which we have progressed.

After 23 years in government, to my senior colleagues and me, the need for ability and talent in politics and the administration, in the Cabinet, the Administrative Service, and the Statutory Boards, is self-evident. There may be those who believe that having sound men with modest minds in charge of the government will not make all that difference. Indeed, an anti-elitist ethos prevails in many Western countries, especially amongst New Left groups in Britain. They glorify mediocrity into a cult. They condemn excellence as elitism. They advocate wild programmes to dismantle their own institutions of excellence because the children of manual workers are under-represented in these institutions.

## **Decline into mediocrity disastrous**

There is a heavy price to pay if mediocrities and opportunists ever take control of the government of Singapore. And mediocrities and opportunists can accidentally take over if Singaporeans, in a fit of pique or a moment of madness, voted for the politics of opposition for the sake of opposition. Five years of such a government, probably a coalition, and Singapore will be down on her knees.

What has taken decades to build up in social organisation, in industry, banking commerce, tourism, will be dismantled and demolished in a few years. The World Bank has a queue of such broken-back countries waiting to be mended: Jamaica, Uganda, Ghana, Nicaragua, to name a few recent casualties seeking emergency World Bank aid. At least they have land for plantations or mines to dig from, or rivers to be dammed for hydro-power and irrigation. Singapore has only got its strategic location and the people who can maximise this location by organisation, management, skills and, most important of all, brains. Once in disarray, it will not be possible to put it together again.

There is no substitute for high quality Ministerial leadership. No back-up by staff officers, however excellent, can make up for the lack of keen intelligence, verve, imagination, creativity, drive and thrust which a Minister himself brings to his office. No prompted response, however wise the prompter,

ever matches the spontaneous response from an active, knowledgeable and free-ranging mind. No resounding ghost-written speech can ever have the ring of conviction and sincerity of the words from a Minister who has felt his own problems deeply and thought them through to their solutions. In several established countries, average leaders have managed to get by with superb staff back-up. But each time they go to summit meetings to encounter strong and able leaders of other nations, their inadequacies show up, painfully and alarmingly. And Singapore, a small, barely established, nation, cannot afford to have anything less than her ablest and her best, to be in charge of the government. If we are to preserve what we have, and more, to build on the present, and achieve further heights, we cannot have mediocrities either as Ministers or Permanent Secretaries. Prompters and ghost-writers are a luxury for those who have large margins of safety due to their large size, great wealth, and considerable institutional strength.

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Here we see a law similar to Gresham's at work. Gresham pointed that bad money drives out good money from circulation. Well, bad leaders drive out good men from high positions. Idi Amin was a bad leader. He killed or drove out good Ugandans, ruining Uganda for decades. Solomon Bandaranaike was not an evil man like Amin. But he was a bad leader who brought race, language and religion into the centre of political debate. He ended up, intentionally or

otherwise, by driving out good Ceylonese, and later Sri Lankans, from politics, whilst able administrators took jobs in UN agencies, leaving their own administration impoverished of talent. On the other hand, a good leader, in government or in large corporations, attracts and recruits top talent to reinforce his own capability to overcome problems. Hence the high quality of Germans in top position under Konrad Adenauer, and of top Frenchmen under Charles de Gaulle. Charles de Gaulle's Cabinet included Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing, both to become French Presidents.

I am not suggesting that Singapore has not got its own talent. We do. The Chairman of the Public Service Commission, Tan Teck Chwee is Singapore-born. Of the three Permanent Secretaries who are the first to achieve Staff Grades, Head of Civil Service, Sim Kee Boon, and Permanent Secretary (Prime Minister's Office), Ngiam Tong Dow, are Singapore-born; J Y M Pillay (Permanent Secretary (Revenue Division) and Chairman of Development Bank of Singapore and Singapore Airlines) is not. Some older and former Ministers, like E W Barker and Lim Kim San are Singapore-born. And I hope it was only partly in jest when my Cabinet colleagues told me that I was Prime Minister as a concession to Singapore.

Fortunately, in the last 23 years, we have ensured that every Singaporean of talent has been educated and developed to achieve his or her potential, which was not the case 25 years ago. Otherwise we would not have been able to maintain efficiency of the administration in the 1980s despite higher percentages of the Singapore-born. Nevertheless, it is unrealistic not to recognize that the quality of Ministers, of Permanent Secretaries, and Chairmen and Chief Executive Officers of the Statutory Boards will be of lower capacity unless we are able to increase the inflow of talent from outside Singapore. The Singapore pool of talent is finite and limited. Singapore has been like the American space shuttle. It has two rockets to boost it into space. We have a powerful Singapore-made rocket. For that extra zip, we had a second rocket, assembled in Singapore, but with imported components. We must try hard to continue to have that second rocket.

We must be grateful that the talent profile, or IQ spread, of our population enables us to produce, from a yearly birth rate, in the 1950s and 1960s, of 60,000 to 50,000 about 60-50 first-class minds, an average rate of 1 in 1,000. Alas, not all of these bright minds have strong characters, sound temperament, and high motivation to match their high intelligence. I have found, from studying PSC scholarship awards for the last 15 years, and reading confidential reports on their work in the public service and the SAF, that the scholars who also have the

right character and personality, effectively works out to 1 in 3,000 persons. In the 1970s, our annual births went down to 40,000. The numbers of talented and balanced Singaporeans will be between 12-14 persons per annum at one per 3,000.

And it will get progressively worse, because University and 'A' level graduates have much smaller families than those with little or only primary education. The 1980 Census disclosed that women with university or tertiary education (who are likely to marry husbands with similar qualifications and are likely to have children who will make it to university), have, on average, 1.6 children. Women with primary school qualifications (who are likely to marry husbands with primary education and are likely to have similarly qualified children), have, on average 2.7 children. Women with no educational qualification (who are likely to have similar husbands and children), have, on average, 3.6 children (Annex 3). If we confine the figures to women below 40 years old (Annex 4), there is a less depressing reproductive gap between those with tertiary education, on average 1.3 children, and those with no educational qualification, on average 2.8 children.

Part of the reason we have a fair share of talent is that the talented who have immigrated to Singapore have raised their families here. They tend to have

children like themselves. Let us not deceive ourselves: our talent profile is nowhere near that of, say, the Jews or the Japanese in America. The exceptional number of Nobel Prize winners who are Jews is no accident. It is also no accident that a high percentage, sometimes 50%, of faculty members in the top American universities on both the east and west coasts are Jews. And the number of high calibre Japanese academics, professionals, and business executives is out of all proportion to the percentage of Japanese in the total American population.

MPs have been echoing the complaints of their constituents that certain point blocks or executive-type tower blocks have been reserved for professional visit pass holders, while Singaporeans are waiting eagerly to purchase their homes. Armed with the facts and figures I have set out, MPs must explain to their constituents, first, why we need to recruit these trained talents; second, why we shall never be able to recruit them unless we give them housing. If we throw them into the open market for private housing, without paying for their high market rents, as private corporations do, they will never come. A few point blocks are a small sacrifice for the extra boost they will give to our economy.

**Active recruitment to make up for lost brains inflow**

How do we persuade talent to come and strike roots in Singapore under these changed circumstances? Several years ago, after a journey through Europe, I formed a committee to study and report on the prospects of recruiting talent for Singapore. Its report led to a committee under the PSC called PIPS (Professionals' Information and Placement Service), Another committee, called CATS (Committee for Attracting Talent to Singapore) helps recruitment for the private sector. Its recommendations were accepted. Two exercises have been completed. The first was disappointing. The second showed improvement and promise. We went through the job emplacement offices of the better British universities looking mainly for Asian talent, since they are likely to take up jobs in Singapore and to stay permanently. Applicants, they were many. First-class applicants could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Nevertheless, it was a start. Singaporeans must realise and accept as desirable the need for more of the able and the talented to come to work in Singapore. We have to compete against the wealthy developed countries who now also recruit such talent. We have to make these people feel welcome and wanted, so that they will make Singapore their permanent home and contribute to the overall progress of all our people. We should encourage them to take up permanent residence with a view to citizenship so that they can enjoy the same opportunities to buy HDB executive flats and HUDC homes as Singaporeans, and to shoulder the same responsibilities. They can give that extra boost which has lifted our economy and

our society to heights we could not have achieved if we had depended only on Singapore-born talent.

Instead of getting high quality men; we have imported over 150,000 unskilled workers as work permit holders. Instead of importing first-class brains, we have imported unskilled brawn. To continue this policy is to court disaster.

Fortunately, we have also freely allowed qualified professionals to work in Singapore. Large numbers have done so in the private sector. On 1 Jan 82, we had 14,767 employment pass holders. They are the managers, engineers, bankers, accountants, and other professionals, in the manufacturing multi-nationals, international banks, and business houses. Their contribution to the total of Singapore's GDP is more considerable than their actual numbers, because of the high quality of their talent. Their brains, their enterprise, their energy make their companies thrive and succeed. They provide employment and accelerate our economic growth. This philosophy of free movement of goods and people, upon which Raffles founded Singapore, has made for our success. Singaporeans must recognise that without this input of high calibre talent over a wide range of specialties, our growth in the last 20 years would not have been possible.

We have succeeded because we understood that talent is the crucial factor for success. The private sector will be able to keep up fresh inputs of talent from overseas. For the public sector getting fresh inputs will be difficult. Apart from getting men of ability and integrity, before they can be absorbed into the political or administrative core of our leadership, they must have become Singaporeans in ethos and in loyalty. Assimilation is a long and gradual process. Even Singapore ministers who were originally from Malaysia found it extremely painful when they had to accept separation from Malaysia in 1965. And this was after long years of residence in Singapore. But whatever the difficulties, we have to try, we have to increase our talent pool.

We must redress the balance and recruit brains. If they are Asian brains, they are more likely to settle permanently. However, we shall also recruit non-Asian brains, and if they like our society, offer them life-long employment, not just short-term contracts. Only then are we likely to recruit good brains. We must double, nay, triple the number of able men and women we have, men and women trained in disciplines which can help us become a fully developed society.

Our past performance was due to this extra pool of trained talent who had been naturally attracted these extra brains, we shall not make it into the era of the

computers and the robots. In the last 20 years, this extra top talent has given our own Singapore-born talent that extra boost and transformed Singapore from a colonial trading-cum-military outpost into a manufacturing, financial, and servicing centre. If we get these extra brains, in the next 20 years, we shall become a key link in a world-wide network of leading information, financial, and servicing centres, linked to each other by telecomputers, by video telephones, by jets, and perhaps space shuttles.

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## Annex 1

## Percentage Distribution of Place of Birth of Dignitaries and Superscale Officers

	Jan 1960		Jan 1970		Jan 1980	
	Percentage born:		Percentage born:		Percentage born:	
	In S'pore	Elsewhere	In S'pore	Elsewhere	In S'pore	Elsewhere
<b>Members of Parliament</b>						
Cabinet Ministers 40 yrs & Below	22 (20)	78 (80)	45 (50)	55 (50)	47 (100)	53 (--)
Ministers of State 40 yrs & Below	-- (--)	-- (--)	33 (--)	67 (--)	56 (50)	44 (50)
Sub-total 40 yrs & Below	22 (20)	78 (80)	43 (50)	57 (50)	50 (75)	50 (25)
Other MP's 40 yrs & Below	55 (59)	45 (41)	61 (63)	39 (37)	71 (100)	29 (--)
Total MP's 40 yrs & Below	49 (54)	51 (46)	57 (62)	43 (38)	64 (93)	36 (7)
<b>Members of Public Service Commission</b> 40 yrs & Below	20 (--)	80 (--)	40 (--)	60 (--)	63 (--)	37 (--)
<b>Chairman of Statutory Boards</b> 40 yrs & Below	29 (33)	71 (67)	25 (--)	75 (100)	39 (100)	61 (--)
<b>Others on Table of Precedence*</b> 40 yrs & Below	22 (--)	78 (--)	45 (100)	55 (--)	39 (--)	61 (--)
<b>Public Service</b>						
Government Service 40 yrs & Below	20 (31)	80 (69)	57 (57)	43 (43)	65 (75)	35 (25)
Statutory Boards 40 yrs & Below	13 (--)	87 (100)	48 (71)	52 (29)	62 (65)	38 (35)
IHL's ** 40 yrs & Below	26 (36)	74 (64)	19 (--)	81 (100)	31 (57)	69 (43)
Total Public Service 40 yrs & Below	21 (29)	79 (71)	49 (55)	51 (45)	57 (70)	43 (30)

\* Excluding those included under Public Service

\*\* Institutes of Higher Learning

## Annex 2

## Numerical Distribution of Place of Birth of Dignitaries and Superscale Officers

	Jan 1960		Jan 1970		Jan 1980	
	Number born in:		Number born in:		Number born in:	
	In S'pore	Elsewhere	In S'pore	Elsewhere	In S'pore	Elsewhere
<b>Members of Parliament</b>						
Cabinet Ministers 40 yrs & Below	2 (1)	7 (4)	5 (1)	6 (1)	7 (2)	8 (--)
Ministers of State 40 yrs & Below	-- (--)	-- (--)	1 (--)	2 (--)	5 (1)	4 (1)
Sub-total 40 yrs & Below	2 (1)	7 (4)	6 (1)	8 (1)	12 (3)	12 (1)
Other MP's 40 yrs & Below	23 (19)	19 (13)	27 (17)	17 (10)	32 (11)	13 (--)
Total MP's 40 yrs & Below	25 (20)	26 (17)	33 (18)	25 (11)	44 (14)	25 (1)
<b>Members of Public Service Commission</b> 40 yrs & Below	1 (--)	4 (--)	2 (--)	3*** (--)	5 (--)	3 (--)
<b>Chairman of Statutory Boards</b> 40 yrs & Below	2 (1)	5 (2)	3 (--)	9 (1)	9 (3)	14 (--)
<b>Others on Table of Precedence*</b> 40 yrs & Below	2 (--)	7 (--)	9 (1)	11 (--)	9 (--)	14 (--)
<b>Public Service</b>						
Government Service 40 yrs & Below	15 (5)	60 (11)	97 (24)	72 (18)	232 (92)	125 (31)
Statutory Boards 40 yrs & Below	2 (--)	13 (4)	21 (12)	23 (5)	101 (40)	61 (22)
IHL's ** 40 yrs & Below	10 (5)	28 (9)	9 (--)	39 (6)	44 (12)	97 (9)
Total Public Service 40 yrs & Below	27 (10)	101 (24)	127 (36)	134 (29)	377 (144)	283 (62)

\* Excluding those included under Public Service

\*\* Institutes of Higher Learning

\*\*\* Includes 1 member appointed in Apr 70

Annex 3  
**Mean Number of Children Born Alive to Per Ever-married Woman by Ethnic Group  
 and Highest Qualification, 1980**

<b>Highest Qualification</b>	<b>Mean Number of Children Born Alive</b>				
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Malays</b>	<b>Indians</b>	<b>Others</b>
No Qualification	4.4	4.3	4.9	4.5	3.6
Primary	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.7	2.7
Secondary & Upper Secondary	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.8	1.8
Tertiary	1.6	1.5	0.7	1.8	1.6

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Annex 4  
**Mean Number of Children Born Alive to Per Ever-married Woman Aged Below 40  
 Years by Highest Qualification and Ethnic Group**

<b>Highest Qualification</b>	<b>Mean Number of Children Born Alive</b>				
	<b>Chinese</b>	<b>Malays</b>	<b>Indians</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>Total</b>
No Qualification	2.72	2.96	2.91	1.71	2.77
Primary	1.77	1.99	1.99	1.75	1.82
Secondary & Upper Secondary	1.27	1.26	1.33	1.53	1.30
Tertiary	1.19	0.61	1.53	1.44	1.27
Total	1.98	2.23	2.07	1.57	2.02

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