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SPEECH BY THE CHIEF MINISTER, MR. LIM YEW HOCK,  
AT THE BRITISH EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION DINNER AT THE  
SEA VIEW HOTEL, AT 9.30 P.M. ON FRIDAY, JULY 26,  
1957.

There could be no toast to which I could more happily respond than to this one. I am a Malayan, but I am a Singaporean as were my parents before me, and my loyalty to Malaya, of which we are a part in heart and of which we hope to be a part in political reality, is through my loyalty to Singapore. And the things which we have heard in praise of Singapore can only give me pride in what has been done, and enthusiasm for what still lies before us to do.

And I could wish that at every function of this kind those present would, after toasting the Queen, drink a toast to Singapore, even if without the happy speech to which we have all been listening. The word in itself brings up for each of us a different set of pictures of Singapore, and will remind us that it is our duty to our contemporaries and our younger generation to seek increasingly the wealth, welfare and well-being of Singapore.

This is not selfishness. This is not to limit our horizon. This is to remind us that we, the people of Singapore, and we alone have the prime responsibility for what happens in this Island-State we call Singapore.

It is our duty to ourselves and to our neighbours to keep Singapore secure and sound, so that we can contribute to our neighbours' welfare and not be a cause of fear and alarm. As a commercial community, Singapore can only prosper when our neighbours prosper.

Our responsibility as a Government to the new Asia is to make this Island-State of Singapore a city of which Asians can be proud in its achievements. Our population may be barely into the seven figures among the giants of nine figures, but our achievements can be none the less outstanding. And as our lot is cast in this Island-State, we must, according to our means, play our parts in fighting the battle against ignorance, against poverty, against sickness, against any fanaticism and violence. And in taking over full command of our section of the line we gladly pay tribute to the high standards set and the solid results achieved by the Colonial administrators.

In toasting Singapore we also emphasise the unity which we must achieve. We of Singapore are from many lands and many races: we have worked and played together harmoniously and tolerantly. We were friends. But now we must be citizens and brothers, for this is our homeland. There can be no linguistic or cultural or racial exclusiveness: the contributions of each must be for the enrichment of all. This is the aim of our educational policy for this crucial first generation the greater part of whom are Singapore-born. We insist on no one avenue to citizenship and loyalty: but we have the right - and the intention - to insist that the many avenues we leave freely and democratically open must lead to one central focus of loyalty. When, therefore, we toast Singapore, let us remember that, however many the spokes, there is but one hub to the wheel.

But may I go on from there, and ask you to see the fuller meaning of what at first appear platitudes? Some of us in political life find it difficult to understand the British attitude to politics. You speak of Magna Carta, of the Parliamentary system, of the democratic elements in your public life. But you have few good words for politicians in general or your own politicians in particular. You seem to suggest that Parliament would be a wonderful institution if Mr. Speaker were the only one to sit in Parliament. You seem to want a political Hamlet without the pouting, ranting and self-important Prince of Denmark.

When therefore the Parliamentary system comes to Singapore, you don't seem to like the politician any more, and when some sigh for the more dignified days before there were Chief Ministers and By-elections, we wonder whether they would equally sigh for the passing of the politician in Britain. I make no apology for the politician. We of the hustings seek no pedestal: but I would only suggest that if Britain achieved greatness in spite of the politicians of Westminster, give us too the benefit of the doubt that Singapore can achieve greatness in spite of us. And at least, allow us to claim that we are as essential to, and typical of, the democratic method, as the Commissar is to the Communist regime allegations to the contrary, we are not members of the Steamrollers Union!

May I also say this? Nation-building has always been a turbulent process - internally turbulent in building new political systems on wider and newly-enfranchised electorates: and internationally turbulent in the achieving of some kind of balance and harmony between newly-created nations. May I as an Asian say this to a European Association - that we feel that you both forget your past and take it for granted. You have had your times of internal stress and strife - and have learned from them: if you remember them, you will see in better perspective the events in Asia at a time of revolutionary changes. That need not imply violence.

The Parliamentary and Industrial Revolution which started in Britain transformed the world. The industrial techniques and political ideas involved in this turbulent time for Asia are still, many of them, of European origin. They give expression to the new needs of Asia and put political and industrial methods in our hands to work out our own salvation.

You have a history to be proud of. And here today we are making history on our small stage and, when first we take over our own reins of power, it should be for us a time of excitement. People who would have their own words for a son who funked the difficulties of growing up, yet criticise us for welcoming the growing responsibilities which are ours and facing the difficulties which are inevitable to them. And when you sometimes suggest that there is nothing to get excited about - it's all happened before - let us remember that for each nation, like every individual, growing up is a new experience to be lived through and to be used as a test of its abilities. Honeymoons will never lose their interest as long as there are young lovers - and that's as long as the Martians leave us humans in charge of the world.

And I make these points to you because if you appreciate them, if they reflect the attitude of your Association - as I am sure they do - you can make a welcome contribution to a Singapore to which I hope more of all nations will want to come, and in which they will be happy to mix with us in this market-place of

If you come with the same liberal outlook, with the same enthusiasm for nation-building, the same partnership of skills and commerce which you gave to other Continents while they were finding themselves, you will find yourselves welcome; you will show that British strength and delight lies in the prosperity, dignity and independence of her neighbours: and that, therefore, you are the friends in need who are friends in deed. Nations like individuals when finding their own feet need more understanding and more help than established nations.

The old Colonial relationship was an easy one for you. The new democratic relationship is a challenge to you as much as to us: and in responding to the toast so generously proposed and supported, you have expressed your determination to meet that challenge and go forward with us as close friends if not as citizen-brothers into the more difficult and turbulent but more satisfying and creative years ahead.

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(Time issued 1715 hours).