

FULL TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE CHIEF MINISTER, MR. LIM YEW HOCK, MOVING THE FEDERATION OF MALAYA MERDEKA MOTION WHICH WAS UNANIMOUSLY PASSED IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 1957

I must confess that it is with pride and happiness that I move this motion.

In a matter of days the Federation of Malaya will emerge as an independent sovereign State. In a matter of days a new nation, fulfilling its own inevitable destiny, will take its proud and rightful place among the great, the small, yet the ever-growing freedom loving nations of the world. In this part of the world a new flag will fly and the boundaries of free Asia will be further enlarged.

I am not unmindful of the honour and privilege bestowed on me as the mover of this historic motion, nor must I forget to acknowledge in this Assembly the assurance of whole-hearted and spontaneous support which members of the Opposition were quick to extend in this, a matter not only of moment but also of deep and abiding significance to Singapore.

Two years ago, almost to a day today, this Assembly agreed, nem. con. as the official report has it, to a message of greetings being conveyed by your, Sir, to Mr. Speaker of the Federal Legislative Council. With your permission, Sir, I will read the full text of that message:

That Mr. Speaker do convey to Mr. Speaker of the Federal Legislative Council the following message of greetings and good wishes for the inaugural meeting of the Federal Legislative Council: "On this historic occasion, the Singapore Legislative Assembly on behalf of the people of Singapore sends fraternal greetings and good wishes to the Federal Legislative Council and the people of the Federation. In the dawn of this new era in the political history of the separated parts of this Malayan territory we of the Singapore Legislative Assembly look forward to the closest co-operation and co-ordination with the Federal Legislative Councillors in building up a Malayan outlook and loyalty and in the achievement of our common aims for freedom, economic security and social welfare of the peoples of this territory, and extend to our brothers across the Straits our good wishes for their success in the way ahead."

That first message was, in the main, a message of hope and good wishes for the future, at that time, still in the balance.

That message too pledged our full and unstinting support for there were negotiations ahead and, as we know so well to our cost, negotiations sometimes have a habit of taking an unexpected turn. But that was two years ago. In the life and the history of a people two years represent but a fleeting moment. Yet within that small compass of time the Federation of Malaya achieved Merdeka. The manner in which this was accomplished is worth recollecting.

Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Chief Minister of the Federation of Malaya, is a close and sincere friend of mine. I have always admired him for his sincerity - a quality at once apparent even at a first meeting. Members of the Opposition in this Assembly have also paid tribute to this most valuable asset possessed by the Tunku.

Two years.....2/-

Two years ago the Member for Tanjong Pagar described the Tunku as a "gentleman in every sense of the word." An apt and happy description.

It was Tunku Abdul Rahman, by a combination of patience, perseverance and, that most important ingredient, inspiring leadership, and with a sense of dedication, who first created an atmosphere of unity in his country and cordiality in the conference hall - prerequisites of the success rightly his due. Here was a display of Statesmanship at once magnificent and masterly.

Here was a man building success on the surest of foundations - sincerity. It was this quality which generated goodwill and we know that there are men in London as in other parts of the world who will respond readily to goodwill. It was this quality of the Tunku which made the High Commissioner of the Federation his ally and this fact the Tunku himself has admitted a few days ago.

The road the Federation will take is now known. A nation assembled in proud array is ready for its destiny and the greatest adventure of all - to march into the Merdeka Highway, a path which their leader is pointing out with pride and confidence.

The future the Federation will make will be glorious. They have a just man as leader; they have unity and purpose as their driving force; they have friends and allies, tested and true, whose aid they have but to invoke, but most important of all, they have themselves - the people of Malaya - ardent in their wish to take the difficult uphill road of freedom and glory and nationhood.

On this day with joy and pride, and yet with humility, we greet the people and Government of the Federation of Malaya with but one word "Merdeka" - for other words are inadequate and empty, inappropriate and meaningless.

I now come to the last part of my motion. Here is our testament of faith, hope and charity. Faith: that one day soon Singapore will be united with the Federation; Hope: that Singapore and the Federation as one unit, one country, one nation will contribute jointly to the good and the strength of the whole; and Charity: that the tolerance and goodwill, the help and support each has given to the other in the past will sustain us in the future and remain the basis of our relations in the new and changed circumstances.

I have no reason to look to the future with doubt or misgivings. We too shall know a change next year. We in Singapore shall have self-government and with it the responsibility for the management of our internal affairs and our trade. In the one we already have the assurance of Federation assistance; in the other we look forward for the continuance of their co-operation. To me the future holds both promise and challenge so long as we keep faith with ourselves and our destiny which is inevitably and inextricably bound with the Federation. And now, Sir, I would like to make the following announcements:-

The Government, in order to ensure that the people of this Island may be able to participate as they desire and as fully and as spontaneously as possible in the Merdeka celebrations commencing in the Federation on 30th August has already announced that it has appointed Saturday, 31st August a public holiday in addition to the public holidays appointed for this year.

Ships will be dressed on Saturday, 31st August.

Guns will.....3/-

Guns will be fired at 10 a.m. on Monday, 2nd September, to mark the installation of His Majesty the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong.

The Government has offered the Federation Government a gift which will take the form of meeting the cost of furnishing completely a committee room in the new Parliament Building to be erected in Kuala Lumpur. The Federation Government has been pleased to signify its gracious acceptance. Hon. Members approved this expenditure earlier today.

An interim gift from Singapore of a grandfather clock which will be placed in a committee room in the Federal Legislative Council will be sent to Kuala Lumpur this week. I have arranged for this clock, which has been suitably engraved, to be put on view in the foyer to my office for the convenience of members who may wish to see it. I am sure these arrangements will receive the whole-hearted approval of this Assembly.

Finally, I would like to announce that the Government of the Federation has extended to me an invitation to attend as the representative of the Singapore Government the Merdeka celebrations in Kuala Lumpur from 30th August to 3rd September. My wife has also been included in this invitation. Ministers and, I understand, you, Sir, have been invited separately.

I shall convey to His Majesty the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong and the Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaya, on behalf of the people and the Government of Singapore, our felicitations and good wishes, and our assurance of continued support and promise of continued co-operation and goodwill.

AUGUST 21, 1957.

(Time issued 1415 hours)