

SPEECH BY THE CHIEF MINISTER, MR. LIM YEW HOCK, AT
THE CLUB LEADERS' TRAINING COURSE, AT THE QUEEN
STREET BOYS' CLUB AT 7.30 P.M. ON FRIDAY, JULY 18,
1958

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It is with a sense of pride that I address this message to you - the future Club Leaders of Singapore.

For the first time in the history of this Island, Club Leaders' training courses in Malay, Chinese and English are to be conducted simultaneously.

Since the first Chinese-speaking Club Leaders' training course concluded earlier this year, Club leadership is no longer the exclusive preserve of English-speaking young men and women. I trust that these courses mark the beginning of a programme for the training of Club leaders who are most conversant with their mother tongue than with the English language.

In our rise to nationhood, it is right and proper that we concern ourselves with the well-being of the young, particularly as such a high proportion of our population falls within the lower age groups. Youth Clubs under wise leadership are the best antidote to gangsterism.

It is the capability and devotion of Club Leaders, rather than magnificent buildings, which are the main-spring of success in youth work. Through lack of leadership, vitality may be absent from expensively-built club houses whereas more modest halls and shacks adapted for the use of youth clubs may be infused with vigour and life through the influence of a capable leader.

Let us here pause awhile and consider what qualities go to make a capable leader. Perhaps I can best illustrate this point with a little anecdote. There were once three men working on a building and all were asked the same question: "What are you doing?" The first answered "I am shaping these bricks": the second said "I am building this wall": while the third replied "I am building a school: I know for I have seen the plans".

An effective youth leader must be like the third workman with an intelligent overall picture of his work, for without imagination and vision he is akin to a rudderless ship and cannot inspire and instil enthusiasm.

The Chief virtue of a leader is not so much his ability to lead as his capacity to persuade others to follow and to work with him. He must induce the co-operation of those who are to be led.

You as Youth Leaders must consciously strive to harness the natural powers and capabilities of the young people under your charge and constantly ask yourselves: "What kind of a nation - what kind of world will these lads and lasses help make?"

In order to achieve this purpose you must know each member of your class not merely as a number in a register but by his name, must be able to assess his good points and his failings, and his potential contribution to society generally. You must be his guide, philosopher and friend, teaching him not merely to live, but to live the good and useful life.

It gives me great pleasure to give this message this evening at the commencement of the Club Leaders' Training Courses and I pray that every one of you will zealously uphold the great trust and the high hopes that we have in you.