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SPEECH BY THE CHIEF MINISTER, MR. LIM YEW HOCK,
AT THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS' ASSOCIATION
LUNCH AT 1 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6,
1958

I am grateful for the invitation from the Foreign Correspondents' Association of South-East Asia to meet you all.

The subject on which you have asked me to speak could not have been better timed for it was last Friday that the Queen signed the State of Singapore Bill which ends the Colonial link with the United Kingdom and gives us for the first time in our history unreserved power in our own internal affairs.

No one is foolish or unimaginative enough to believe that this is the end of our problems. It merely transfers the responsibility for their solution fairly and squarely on to our own shoulders. That, I think, is fully realised and that is in itself a measure of our maturity under the hard lessons of partial self-government since 1955. But I am not so sure that we have equally realised the nature of our problems and with all the political argument we tend to forget the major things on which we are united.

We have moved far since 1955. We have doubled the size of our family of full citizenship: we have made "we" and "our" words of significance and emotional satisfaction. We have ended the Colonial form of Government.

Our Civil Service has been rapidly Malayanised and has adjusted itself to the new pattern. We have, as I need hardly remind you, a fully elected City Council and will soon have predominantly elected District Councils. We have a new system of Singapore education with equality of languages and of financial assistance. We have provided education for 93,000 more children, and direct one out of every four dollars of our budget to education.

We are one of Asia's healthiest cities. Our Health Services provided $\frac{1}{3}$ more hospital beds than they did in 1955, and our decentralised Health Services in the rural areas have won international recognition. This year we are building over 4,000 houses and 1,035 shops - on Government loans and $\frac{1}{10}$ of the population now live in Singapore Improvement Trust houses, rents for which go as low as \$20 per month. According to the economic survey, our standard of living is of the highest in Asia, is rising, with rising levels of wages by 12% since 1954 and reduced hours of work for manual workers extended to clerks and shop assistants by new Ordinances.

With the assistance and advice of our Ministry of Commerce and Industry, we are nearly self-supporting in pigs, poultry, eggs, three essential ingredients of our diet. Life is better than three years ago: the dynamic of our progress has increased and not relaxed. And the climate of orderliness we have created has not been achieved at the expense of progress: in fact, it has assured our progress in spite of threats of economic turbulence for political aims. We have not stood still. It is dangerous to define the issue as between static and dynamic government. Excess of heat becomes fever, and sudden change of direction can neutralise speed by the friction it generates. To continue this progress we need unity: but it seems that we are divided in what unity means. What do I mean by unity? As I have said before and after the Constitutional talks, unity has brought us political advance, as the unity of the Congress movement brought unity to India under the leadership of Nehru and his Socialistic policy.

The other way of civil war has failed in the Federation although the M.C.F. in their latest manifesto claim that the Civil war they started and still maintain against the Federation Government produced the fruit of Merdeka which the Tengku has stolen. The M.C.F. who also attack the Tengku for delaying merger with Singapore, which they see as a Malayan Kerala, are delaying our independence: and they make me the more determined that we shall not become a Communist Trojan Horse to be towed into the Federation.

This way of civil strife whether by word or by deed, has also been scotched in Singapore, although there are still those who seek the satisfactions of fratricide even in our small and compact family.

We have achieved in agreement on the form of our future constitution, and on the future path through merger to a Merdeka in a Malayan mould.

All parties are agreed too that Singapore must achieve maximum economic prosperity through trade but prosperity for all. We are agreed on the need for the Welfare State -- that is social justice through a greater re-distribution of income by better standards of wages, and by taxation to provide a basic minimum of health, housing and education for all our citizens. We are too small to afford glaring contrasts of wealth and poverty.

I think too we are agreed that this is the only practical definition of Socialism in Singapore, for a highly-g geared capitalist institution such as the international market of Singapore cannot be nationalised, for the necessary funds and goods will not come from overseas if the direct control of their use and profitability is to be taken over by the state.

We can lay down conditions by legislation and taxation but they must be such as do not drive goods and funds away. Trade must, like the rubber tree, be cultivated and tapped, but not slaughtered.

Yet on these three points there are differences of application. If ours is to be a parliamentary system, political parties must play the rules of the system. There is a danger when loyalty to party rivals loyalty to the community. It is the menace of the totalitarian parties, that loyalty to the party becomes in the minds of the members synonymous with loyalty to the State and therefore opposition to the Party is treated as opposition to the state, and deserving the same range of punishment by extra-legal means if necessary.

Again, if merger with the Federation is our aim, we must now and daily acclimatise ourselves to, and contribute actively to, a Malayan way of thought. 'Chinese Chauvinism' or Communist ideology, or a heady blend of the two, is no Merdeka cocktail.

And on the third point, if we see the need of capital and the need for capital to accept our Singapore social and economic climate, those who operate our capital and industry, must form part of our unity. They must not be treated as slaves in reverse: nor, must some be invited to be favourite slaves or "people's capitalists" while others are kept at a distance.

How then do I see unity when I suggest a United Socialist Front? First our area of agreement among ourselves is larger than our area of disagreement. Secondly, unity, is as essential, and as likely to be realised, for making our economic pattern as it has

been in making our political pattern. Thirdly I see unity as complete and not partial.

I see no path to unity by emphasising linguistic and economic differences beyond reconciliation. Chinese and English-speaking, Tamil and Malay, old citizens and new, merchant and mechanic, employer and workers - all have a part to play in our planned nation-building. The only group with which I cannot see unity is the Communists because they are so honestly dishonest when they speak of a united front, and because their method is victory for the party no matter at what cost in damage to the community.

Their loyalty is not to Singapore, but to their ideology for which they will sacrifice everything. I too would like the luxury of declaring myself non-Communist, but I cannot be negative against a constant and aggressive threat to the democratic vitals of our community.

My loyalty is to my fellow-men and women of Singapore and their security and welfare. I believe that a Socialistic pattern of society is the wish of our people -- that the analogy of the family and the home which is the basis of our Citizenship law, is a true guide.

I seek unity as a means -- to the end of the welfare state. I seek unity for action, because I believe the friction of disunity will hobble our progress and limit the range of our ambitions. I seek unity because of the major economic problems of providing the good living our first Singapore-born generation deserve, and can, with their skill and enthusiasm, create under loyal and intelligent leadership.

And, to look at the other side, the subversive, alien-orientated forces in our midst seek our disunity. The Communist policy now is to divide and rule -- to divide to gain power, and to maintain a myth of division to continue in power. Our democratic aim must be to close the divisions which come from looking back and to achieve the democratic unity which is called for by the prospect ahead.

That, Gentlemen of the Press, is my approach to unity. Within this broad definition of loyal democratic unity, there is scope for debate and difference.

But only in this way can I see prosperity ahead and that full maturing of Singapore's rich resources, which it is my happy duty as a loyal Malayan to seek and strive for.

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(Time issued 1600 hours).