

KIM SENG CONSTITUENCY NATIONAL DAY DINNER : SPEECH BY
DR ONG LEONG BOON, M.P. FOR KIM SENG. 12 AUGUST 1974

Today we celebrate our Republic's 9th National Day in great spirit and style. We have come a long way from the bleak uncertain days of 1965. We have confounded the prophets of doom, weathered many storms, forged new friendships and allayed neighbourly anxieties and achieved a level of prosperity and material comfort unparalleled before in our national history. To the people of Singapore and to its dedicated leaders, an occasion such as this must / the fruit of labour and height / signify of satisfaction for in 9 short years, we have shown by collective action and collective sacrifice that problems and challenges can be met and overcome by the application of sound economic planning, political realism and social cohesion.

We know there is no substitute for hardwork and industry. There are no shortcuts to success.

As we move on in our long march to a brave new world we cannot afford to look back and rejoice in gay abandon. For the journey is still unfinished and new perils await us. To lose sight of our destination, to turn soft in body and spirit and to forego vigilance against hidden foes are to court disaster.

The Prime Minister in his National Day Speech has vividly cautioned us against softer options in the face of world wide inflation. In a world of growing interdependence Singapore has hardly any natural insulation against inflation. Our limitations are well-known. With hardly any natural resources, let alone oil, we have to make maximum use of what little we have got. This means prudent planning for further manpower development and taking full advantage of Singapore's geographical location. He re-emphasized the need to upgrade our technical skills and professional standards and above all, sheer hard work and discipline. Let us hope that these timely exhortations will not be lost on deaf ears.

The government will continue to provide leadership to uplift living standards and a cleaner, healthier and greener environment. Universal education is maximally encouraged as education opens up the mind to vast new opportunities. Sound economic planning will continue to consolidate Singapore's place among the world's top commercial and industrial centres. Salary adjustments are made to cushion inflation and enhance living standards yet not too much else we lose our competitiveness on the international market.

The task of government is not easy. While it sets its sights on desirable objectives for the nation as a whole it has to govern not just by popular appeal. No government survives any duration of time if it panders to popular wishes all the time. It is by sheer dedication, honesty and far-sighted policies and the guts to resort to tough decisions in the national interest that it stands the test of time. And the government has done and intends to do no less.

Ultimately the people must decide. Upon each and every individual rests the sacred responsibility to rise to the occasion and on this 9th National Day as Singapore combats universal inflation it is my sincere hope that all Singaporeans will join hands in common effort to work hard and make sacrifices for a brighter, happier and a more prosperous future.