

# SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR, MR ONG PANG BOON,  
AT THE NATIONAL DAY PARADE AT THE TIONG BAHRU SECONDARY  
SCHOOL PARADE CENTRE ON TUESDAY, 9 AUGUST '77 AT 9.00 A.M.

13 AUG 1977

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To-day we celebrate the 12th anniversary of our independence.

With each succeeding year, more Singaporeans will grow up accepting an independent Singapore as an ordinary fact of life. The great challenge ahead for this emerging generation and political leadership is to make our independence last.

The past 12 years have been prosperous. This is because we have collectively as Singaporeans overcome the various crises during this period. We have accepted the challenge posed by the separation, the British pull-out and the world economic recession. We took the necessary action undaunted by uncertainties and difficulties.

During this period we have also laid the foundation of our nationhood. We have sought deliberately through national service, education, housing, mass media, games and other ways to build a sense of commitment and identity. Yet in our nation building we have maintained perspective. There is an absence of xenophobia in our trade and industry. In sports we have shown sportsmanship when foreign teams were better. In politics we have only made it clear that it is exclusively for Singaporeans.

Progress has been made in developing a shared loyalty to the Republic. As a nation we are only 12 years old. The task of building commitment to and identification with Singapore is a continuing one.

Our commitment to national economic success in the past was part of our nation building. For the individual this commitment may be only to economic opportunities. It is an identification with Singapore only if he is also at the same time committed to its territory and bound up with its evolving multi-racial society. This is a state of mind. It is an intellectual and emotional tie

to a territory and its society with its political, economic and other values. This commitment and identification are constant though events and solutions to problems change. If we are clear about this identification, we can share prosperity and adversity as Singaporeans with the same equanimity and dignity.

So on this auspicious occasion we should be thankful for the past good years and pledge ourselves to work for continued prosperity. Let us also dedicate ourselves fully to the continuing task of nation building.

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