

# SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

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77-088-15

MC/SEP/6/77 (Labour)

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SPEECH BY MR ONG PANG BOON, MINISTER FOR LABOUR IN  
PARLIAMENT FOR THE 2ND READING OF THE SINGAPORE  
LABOUR FOUNDATION BILL ON 2 SEPTEMBER 1977

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The Bill seeks to establish a body corporate to be called the Singapore Labour Foundation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the trade union movement in Singapore has expanded from the traditional role of bargaining for improved terms and conditions of service and fringe benefits to cover a wide range of activities in the social, economic and educational fields. These include the operation of co-operatives in areas like supermarkets, books, life insurance, dental care and home furnishings. The establishment of the Singapore Labour Foundation will further the development of these activities of the trade union movement.

The object of the Foundation is the promotion of the welfare of members of trade unions and their families. The Foundation will also participate, aid and assist in social, economic or educational programmes and undertakings relating to the development of the trade union movement in the Republic. It will establish and maintain industrial rehabilitation centres as well as construct and run suitable premises for the use of trade unions and co-operative societies managed by the trade unions. The Foundation will also assist by way of grants, donations or otherwise any charitable, educational or other work, object or endeavour which will further the interest of the trade union or co-operative movement, not only in Singapore, but elsewhere.

On the educational front, the Foundation will provide bursaries, scholarships and fellowships to children of members of trade unions which are affiliates or associate affiliates of the National Trades Union Congress. These awards will also be given to workers from the Republic and elsewhere who study or undergo training in Singapore in fields relevant to trade unions. It will grant fellowships and awards in institutions of higher learning for research into matters relating to the trade union movement.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the salient features of the Foundation are already summarised in the Explanatory Statement to this Bill. Let me touch on some of the important provisions relating to the Foundation. Clause 5 of the Bill sets out the powers of the Board of Directors for the purpose of carrying out the objects of the Foundation. These include the acceptance of gifts, the obtaining of funds through contributions, subscriptions and fund raising, the borrowing of money and the investment of the Foundation's monies. The Board is also empowered to sell or purchase, take on lease or hire and lease out or mortgage property.

Under Clause 6 of the Bill, the Foundation is to consist of such number of members as the Board may from time to time admit to membership of the Foundation. Membership of the Foundation will be open to affiliate trade unions and co-operatives of the National Trades Union Congress. Individual donors, companies or associations who or which are benefactors of the Foundation will also be eligible for membership. The Board of Directors has the power to terminate the membership of any member for such reason as it deems just or proper. NTUC affiliates and associate affiliates will lose their membership in the Foundation if they cease to be affiliated to NTUC.

Clause 7 of the Bill provides that the affairs of the Foundation will be managed by a seven-men Board of Directors. The Directors are to hold re-appointment. Three of the directors will be appointed by the Minister on the advice of the National Trades Union Congress, two others will be appointed by the Minister and the remaining two will be elected at the Foundation's annual general meeting. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman are elected inter se. Provision exists for one of the directors to exercise general administrative control over the Foundation's activities.

Clause 12 of the Bill provides that the Foundation shall hold an annual general meeting once a year. Under Clause 13, an extraordinary general meeting may be requisitioned by at least 100 members or one-quarter of the total membership, whichever is less. Such a meeting may also be called at any time that the Board of Directors deems necessary.

Sir, the income of the Foundation will be derived from entrance fees, annual subscriptions, contributions and donations. Under Clause 19 of the Bill, the income and property of the Foundation shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the objects of the Foundation as set out in

Clause 4 of the Bill and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus, profit or otherwise to members or directors.

Finally, under Clause 22, the Board is required, as soon as practicable after the close of the financial year, to submit to the Minister an annual report on the activities of the Foundation during that year and the Minister shall present that copy to Parliament.

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