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TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MR. ONG SOO
GUAN, AT THE 7TH INSTALLATION DINNER OF THE LIONS
CLUB OF SINGAPORE, JURONG, HELD AT THE GATEWAY
RESTAURANT ON SATURDAY, JULY 20, 1974 AT 8 P.M.

I was wondering what and how long I should talk on such an occasion. I have to decide very quickly now. Should I deliver a prolonged, torrential and monotonous speech to spoil the pleasure of a satisfying menu? Or should I, if having nothing much to say, force myself to say something merely to fill any void in the minds of the audience?

But today's crises-ridden world does not permit us to indulge in such frivolous talks. We have gathered here tonight for a worthy cause and this is yet another testimony that the better endowed citizens of Singapore have not divorced themselves from the interests of the community.

Fiftyseven years ago, the founders of the Lions Club were imbued with a determination to serve the community - to create and foster generous considerations amongst the peoples of the world through a study of the problems of international relationships; promote the theory and practice of the principle of good government and good citizenship; take an active interest in civic, commercial and moral welfare of the community; and unite members in bonds of good friendship, fellowship and mutual understanding.

It is heartening to note that the Lions have continued to play this enlightened role, but I am confident that I would not be asking for the impossible to call upon the Lions Club and other similar organised groups to come out more strongly than ever for community services to stimulate others into action.

The debilitating effects of the international monetary and energy crises have seeped into Singapore and we must brace ourselves to face this challenge. If verbal exhortations cannot move our citizens to play an active role in our national effort to meet this challenge, we may soon have a disaster on our hands and it will then be able too late to regret or react.

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It is necessary for me to emphasise that the active participation of every citizen is crucial to the success of such a national effort, because, finally, it is this participation that will decide the outcome of the well-conceived plans of the Government to develop our country. The success of Jurong is an exciting example of the willingness and determination of both the people and Government working for the common good. I need not have to burden you with a detailed description of the swampland and mangrove forest that Jurong was.

Constant calls have been made on Singaporeans to be industrious, disciplined, and to subordinate their individual group interests to the national interests. It is the practice of such qualities that has made Singapore what it is today and there must never be any let-up in our efforts to build such a happy and prosperous Singapore. But, first, more and more Singaporeans should come out from their shell and be actively engaged not only in their personal advancement but also in community services which will help build the Singapore that we desire.

The continued prosperity and happiness of Singapore depends on the presence of an enlightened leadership at every stratum of the society, and this again depends on the youth of Singapore and their succeeding generation to provide such leadership.

The youth today have not gone through the rough and tumble their elders have experienced, but this does not mean that they are soft and indulgent. Our youth need not have to go through the gruelling conditions only because their elders had been responsible enough to ensure that the fruits of their toil and sweat will be a happy and prosperous Singapore. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the youth today to prepare themselves adequately not only to maintain but also to improve on life in Singapore.

The youth should not meet the challenges of difficult times with dope and long hair. They should not find expression of their youthful abundance in the form of ill-afford luxuries. They should, instead, engage themselves in activities that are beneficial not only to themselves but also to the nation.

JULY 20, 1974.
