

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

10/FEB/10/77(S.A.)

EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY

Acc. No.	NARC
77 0060	14

Speech by Encik Othman Wok, Minister for Social Affairs and MP for Pasir Panjang at the Pasir Panjang Youth Sub-Committee Meeting on Wednesday, 9 Feb 77 at 8 pm at the Pasir Panjang Community Centre

The Youth Group of Pasir Panjang Community Centre was formed on 7 Feb 75. Since then the Group has been actively involved in a number of activities which has contributed to the realisation of its objectives. I am particularly impressed with the enthusiasm of the youths in the Group and am following the activities very closely.

2 It is important for the Youth Group to maintain the interest of the members who are already in the Group and at the same time to encourage more youths in the constituency to participate in its activities. For this to be achieved there will have to be good leaders who will be able to stimulate and maintain interest in the activities. New ideas for projects will have to be thought up. The rejuvenation process will have to be a continuing one otherwise the interest of members may wane.

3 I am quite happy with the activities of the Youth Group so far and I would like to suggest certain areas which you may wish to explore further.

4 Our constituency is still semi-rural in nature although this is changing with the new developments coming up. As such, we have a relatively low incidence of crime, delinquency and drug abuse compared to other areas in Singapore. Another factor in our favour with this semi-rural background is that community and family ties are strong. This is one factor which we should try and strengthen.

5 with the advent of HDB flats and industrial development the social problems may increase unless the community is sufficiently acquainted with the problems that may arise in their day-to-day lives. The Youth Group can monitor changes that occur in our constituency and think of measures to counteract the possible ill effects of such changes. For example, there are only about 15 drug abusers who are under rehabilitation in our constituency and 31 cases on probation for various offences. The figures indicate that the situation is still not that serious. The Youth Group can actively participate in activities which can contain this problem. Perhaps participation in the Volunteer Probation Service or the activities of the Volunteer Social Service Bureau of the Ministry of Social Affairs will provide the opportunity for the members to assist in the welfare problems of the constituency.

6 The Volunteer Social Service Bureau has recently been set up with the objective of harnessing volunteer manpower to assist in voluntary work in the social service areas. Individual members as well as the Youth Group as a collective body can perhaps offer their services to the Bureau to participate in voluntary welfare work. This can be in the form of welfare work in the constituency with probationers, drug cases or assisting wayward youths to keep them from straying into crime and delinquency.

7 There is also a project of a fire fighting service in the constituency. In the past there were kampong volunteer fire fighting parties in our semi-rural areas. The equipments for such fire fighting parties are still around. The older kampong folks have been contributing their services for many years and there is a need for younger volunteers who live within the kampongs and semi-rural areas to be involved in these fire fighting parties for the protection of their own kampongs. A scheme is being worked out by a member of our CCC who is also in the Singapore Fire Brigade. When the plans are finalised the youth members can actively participate in the programme to provide basic fire fighting services to their kampongs.

8 I am hopeful that in the New Year the Youth Group will grow from strength to strength and its activities will be more varied and interesting. I am sure that the Youth Group will be able to recruit more members to participate in its programmes. I wish you all the best.

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