

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT.

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SPEECH BY H.E. THE GOVERNOR, SIR ROBERT BLACK TO
MEMBERS OF THE ST. JOHN AMBULANCE BRIGADE AT THE
VICTORIA SCHOOL ON SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 1957, AT 5 P.M.

Mr. Commissioner, members of the St. John Ambulance Brigade:

It gives me great pleasure once more to see the members of the Brigade on parade, and I hope that the people of Singapore will take note of this Annual Parade and of the significance of seeing here today a great body of men and women of all races who have joined the Brigade to give voluntarily, devotedly and with a high public spirit their services to the community. This manifestation of civic sense amongst you all here today augurs well for the future, and you may take pride in the example you are providing with your positive contribution to the welfare and happiness of the community.

I am particularly pleased to see on parade here today a high number of nursing members. As we all know, the nurses gave invaluable help during the recent influenza epidemic and did much to alleviate the burden which was imposed so heavily on hospitals and doctors at that time. In referring to the nursing section of the Brigade, I must refer to an event which has grieved not only all members of St. John in Singapore but her many friends in Singapore, namely, the death of Mrs. Tan Teng Kim, who died last December. She was a loyal member of the Brigade, which she joined in 1938, and in addition to her energetic work she gave wise counsel.

Your Commissioner has described the Brigade as now being organised to spread the influence of the benefits of the St. John movement throughout the urban and rural areas of Singapore. We now have our island divided into four areas under Area Commissioners, and I feel confident that this reorganisation will facilitate the carrying into effect of the ambitious programme which the Brigade has in mind for the future.

No matter how the Brigade is organised on the ground, it must, if it is to meet the many urgent calls which are made upon it, have mobility, and, in addition to vehicles, the Brigade needs in yet greater numbers voluntary drivers both for ambulances and vans. If any who can do so will help, you may rest assured that you will be assisting your units in a very practical way and contributing actively to the efficiency and speed with which the Brigade as a whole can respond in time of need.

There is one further form of assistance to which I would refer. I appeal to you as members of this Venerable Order, which is devoted to the service of mankind, for your help in meeting a vital need which is closely associated with your work in first aid: I mean the donation of blood which so often tips the balance in emergencies between life and death.

I understand that a Challenge Shield for blood donation has been offered to the Brigade by the Blood Transfusion Centre and your Commissioner has already told us how the Kangas Kerbau Hospital Ambulance Division has distinguished itself in this connection. I congratulate Mr. Ali Mohamad and Mr. Shariff and all members of the Division on this evidence of their public spirit, and again I am confident that the other Divisions in the Brigade will be quick to match these efforts.

The discipline and training for which the St. John Ambulance Brigade has such a high reputation has been maintained during the past year, and I appreciate that this has entailed the devotion of much of your spare time to classes and drills, quite apart from duty calls, and I would like to thank you all here not only on my own behalf as your Patron, but also on behalf of the people of Singapore, many of whom have benefited directly because of your unselfishness, your keenness and your conscientiousness. At the same time, I wish you all individually and as members of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, Singapore, the very best of good fortune in the future.

JUNE 23, 1957.

(Time issued 1700 hours)