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SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR LABOUR AND MP FOR
UPPER SERANGOON, MR. SIA KAH HUI, AT THE LAYING OF
FOUNDATION STONE OF UPPER SERANGOON COMMUNITY CENTRE
(SURIN AVENUE) ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1978, AT 3.30 P.M.

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Today is a significant milestone in the development of Upper Serangoon constituency. The building of this new up-to-date community centre when completed is sure to have a very important impact on the lives of the people of the constituency especially the younger generation. The new community centre will have a big hall on the top floor with a stage complete with public address system where concerts, plays and parties can be held. There is space for two badminton courts which may be used for sepak takraw as well. On the first floor, there are half a dozen rooms for kindergarten classes, a sound proofed air-conditioned music room where music lessons like playing the piano can be conducted. At the annexe to the main building (we cannot see it today because construction work has yet to begin) there will be a squash court and on top of which there will be rooms for youth group activities. In the open space besides parking lots there will be a basketball court.

It is expected that together with furnishings, etc., the total cost will come close to a million dollars nearly half of which will be a grant from the People's Association. For the last few years, the members of the management committee have worked very hard, some harder than others as is to be expected, to make this building project possible. I must say we have not approached people who do not live in the constituency or have no connections with the constituency for direct donations. I have all along advocated this policy because I want the residents of Upper Serangoon to be proud of the fact that it is through their own concerted efforts that the new community centre is built. May I take this opportunity to thank all of you who have a hand in this project, for your very

generous donations ...2/-

generous donations which, by the way, your names may be inscribed on a plaque to be put up on the wall of the community centre. I am sure all of us will be proud when the day comes for the opening of this community centre in a few months' time.

Several years ago at one of the annual dinners of the Charlton Park Residents' Association I announced that government had set aside a piece of land (2.9 acres) for a new Upper Serangoon community centre and a swimming pool. I received a couple of days later a cheque of \$2,000 being a spontaneous donation towards the swimming pool building fund from Mr. Chua, a resident of Charlton Park. Mind you, this was without any prompting or request on my part and I do not know the gentleman personally. This shows clearly how the need for the swimming pool in this area is keenly felt by the residents and their willingness to pitch in to push the project along. Days and in fact years have gone by since then. There is still no sign of a swimming pool which is to be just next door to this community centre. Do not imagine that I have not been doing anything about it. As a government bench member I cannot raise any questions in Parliament but I was able on many occasions to get our neighbour, the MP for Punggol, Mr. Ng Kah Ting, to raise the question as to when the proposed swimming pool will be built. I had personally talked to the Finance Minister and the chairman of the Singapore Sports Council. The main question of course was where should the money come from. Who is to pay for the swimming pool? Government had ceased building public swimming pools a long while ago. The Housing and Development Board builds public swimming pools only in its housing estates. Finally it was to the Sports Council that I had to turn. After a lot of arguments regarding the pros and cons of building a swimming pool in this locality immediately, I am very glad to tell you that the matter has finally been resolved. I am sure there are thousands of students in the schools nearby who will be glad and their parents too for when the pool is ready they will not have to go all the way to Toa Payoh or Farrer Park to have a swim or have lessons. In fact many of them can just walk here because the pool will be within easy walking distance from their homes. I am reliably informed that piling work will begin3/-

will begin in February, barely two months away, and this will go on right up to May. Construction is expected to follow immediately. There will be a wading pool for the kiddies, a training pool and a competition pool plus a two-storey complex. The construction may take about 14 months to complete. Let us keep our fingers crossed that there will be no more delays for there were many prior to this.

DECEMBER 10, 1978
