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MC. JUL. 23/77 (HEALTH) National Archives and
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TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, DR. TAN CHIN CHYE, 23 JUL 1977
AT THE OPENING OF THE ROCHORE KONGSI FOR THE AGED AT BLOCK
3, ROCHORE SHOPPING CENTRE, ON SUNDAY, JULY 17, 1977 AT 6 P.M.

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Security in old age and during sickness have always been the major anxieties of individuals. In the absence of a collective responsibility for social security the Asian begets a large family in the belief that his children will be an insurance for the future. It is this faith that has been responsible for the population explosion in so many Asian countries. But the population explosion generates more serious economic and social problems. The needs for housing, food, the demands for jobs, cannot be satisfied so that in the end there is widespread poverty instead of security.

In Singapore we have to be reconciled with the fact that there are limits to population growth and the norm is the two-child family. We have to accept that attitudes and affectations of young people change with each generation. We have to conclude that social security is therefore best based on the cultivation of community responsibility. This project to look after the indigent aged is to sow the seeds of community responsibility. The project is being underwritten by members of the citizens' consultative committee, members of youth groups in the four community centres of Kampong Kapur, Rochore, Manila and Stamford, volunteer nurses from the Singapore Trained Nurses' Association and many well-wishers who have donated in cash or kind to start up the project.

"Kongsi" means ...2/..

"Kongsi" means sharing together and for the aged residents there is the lesson that pooling together the allowances they get from the Social Welfare Department and through mutual help they can exist better than each by himself. However, I do not want to create the impression that the public assistance the residents are receiving is adequate to run the Kongsi. It is not and so the C.C.C. will have to find ways and means to raise money to keep the Kongsi running as a continuing project. In the case of the Mandai Home for the Aged the costs of maintaining one person are \$70 per month but this is possible only because the Home receives donations of food and the six nuns who run the Home are not paid any salary. In the case of the Ang Mo Kio Old People's Community Home the costs are \$58 per person per month but no food is provided.

The Rochore Kongsi for the Aged with 24 beds is a pilot project. For the HDB it is an experiment in converting part of playdecks into dormitories for the aged or classrooms for kindergarten children such as we have next door. The medical care of these residents can be looked after by the Home Nursing Foundation while the Social Welfare Department will

attend to the ...

attend to the procedures when a resident passes away.

Over and above the aged no longer need to feel that just because they are in the autumn of their lives they will be put away in an institution alienated from and forgotten by the rest of the world. The biggest satisfaction that we all derive is that so many people with different backgrounds and different ages have been brought together to undertake a project that helps to foster a sense of community responsibility.
