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SPEECH BY MR TEO CHONG TEE, PARLIAMENTARY (SOCIAL AFFAIRS),
AT A CHARITY DINNER AND DANCE ORGANISED BY THE INTERNATIONAL
Y'S MEN'S CLUB OF SINGAPORE (ALPHA CHAPTER) AT THE MANDARIN
HOTEL ON SUNDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 1983 AT 7.30 PM

In its short history of one and a half years, members of the International Y's Men's Club of Singapore (Alpha Chapter) has fully lived up to one of its objectives of "supporting, by active service, deserving philanthropic and social movements". Since its inception on 7 April 81, the Club has organised numerous community service projects, the more notable of which include five blood donation sessions, organising picnics and film shows for children, help sell donation draw tickets for the YMCA and a donation of \$8,000 for the Ang Mo Kio Social Service Centre. With more experience, the Club is now able to select projects of a larger scale. The selection of the Methodist Home for the Aged Sick as its charity project for 1983 indicates its members' awareness of a key social issue facing Singapore.

The problems of the aged have received much attention. The government has appointed a committee chaired by the Minister for Health to conduct an in-depth study of the issue, and to propose relevant measures for the consideration of the government. Whatever the final recommendations, one thing is certain. The care of the aged should primarily rest with the family. The community can and should provide supplementary services to a family which has aged members so that they can continue to live in the community as long as possible. Admitting an aged person, even if he is suffering from chronic sickness, to a home should only be a last resort. Organisations managing or planning to operate homes for the aged sick should ensure that the facilities in the homes are not abused. Unfilial children should not be allowed to deposit their chronic sick parents in the homes at a fee without attempting to explore other alternatives. It can be difficult at

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times for children to look after their chronic sick parents in the family home. However, they can call for assistance from the Home Nursing Foundation, concerned relatives and neighbours. This is borne out by a pilot Befriender Service Project which was jointly organised by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the People's Association in Tiong Bahru. Volunteers from the neighbourhood were recruited to visit aged persons living in the constituency to keep them company, to assist in housekeeping and to buy cooked food for them. The Project has so far received encouraging support from the Residents' Committee and the residents. Service organisations can learn from the experience in Tiong Bahru and initiate other imaginative projects along similar line.

Of course there will still be a need for homes for the aged sick to cater to the destitutes and those whose families have genuine difficulty in caring for them at home. The Methodist Church of Singapore deserves to be commended for embarking on a new venture to operate a home for the aged sick after successfully operating a home for the aged in Whampoa. A disused school building will be renovated at a cost of \$300,000 for the purpose. I would like to commend the International Y's Men's Club of Singapore (Alpha Chapter) for organising this charity dinner and dance to help raise part of the required sum.

May I wish you success in the Lunar New Year.
