

Singapore Government

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Information Division, Ministry of Culture, City Hall, Singapore 0617 • TEL: 3378191 ext 352, 353, 354 / 3362207 / 3362271

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SPEECH BY MR TEH CHEANG WAN, MINISTER FOR
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF
THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RECREATION CLUB (MNDRC)
CLUBHOUSE AT THE SOCIAL FUNCTION HALL, ND ANNEXE BUILDING
ON SATURDAY, 26 MARCH 1983 AT 7.30 PM

It is a pleasure for my wife and I to be here tonight for the official opening of MNDRC's new clubhouse.

I believe all of you here, except for the invited guests, are members of MNDRC.

You are one of the more fortunate civil service clubs to have club premises at your doorstep. MNDRC is also unique in that it is not just a departmental club but is meant for staff from all the Ministry's departments, statutory boards and the MND Holdings' group of companies. It is my hope that club activities will foster closer relations and better understanding among our departments and statutory boards. Already in the setting up of your Club there has been considerable inter-departmental interaction.

It was timely that the Club's search for premises coincided with the construction of ND's Annexe Building. This roof-top location of the Club is ideal without competing with our much-needed office space in the new building. I am told this is the first time the social function hall is being used and the first time that air-conditioning is switched on. I am glad to note that to save energy, the Club will only switch on the air-conditioning in the hall for special events.

Recent press headlines have been highlighting the drop in oil price and predicting electricity rates will go down. While this is welcome news in contrast to erratic price hikes, I sincerely hope that such news will not lead to false optimism. We must not forget that petroleum is a limited asset and price notwithstanding, we have to be thrifty in our oil consumption.

As a step towards conserving energy used in commercial buildings, the Ministry had in 1979 prescribed an OTTV standard of 45 watts per square metre for all new buildings. In addition, all existing buildings were required to upgrade their buildings to comply with the OTTV standard.

Existing buildings were given until January 1982 to take steps to make their buildings permanently energy-efficient. To provide the needed impetus, the Income Tax (Amendment) Act 1982 and Property Tax (Amendment) Act 1982 were enacted to allow owners to recover part of their expenses incurred through tax claims. On the other hand, owners who did not comply would be required to pay a 20% surcharge for their electricity consumption.

I am happy to note that out of 233 large commercial buildings, only 20 have not complied with the OTTV requirement. The owners of these 20 buildings appear to be quite happy paying the 20 per cent surcharge. I would like to give them this advice - upgrade now or suffer more severe penalties later. Our Ministry is fully committed to the objective of energy conservation in buildings through OTTV improvement. If more than 200 establishments can make the effort to help achieve energy-savings, it would be ironical for the 20 who do not bother to do so, to be allowed to frustrate our energy-conservation efforts.

It now gives me great pleasure to declare this Clubhouse open.