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Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY DR WAN SOON BEE, MINISTER OF STATE,
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AT THE AMALGAMATED UNION OF PUBLIC
EMPLOYEES' (AUPE) AND THE SINGAPORE URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
WORKERS' UNION'S (SURAWU) DINNER AND DANCE TO CELEBRATE
SINGAPORE'S NATIONAL DAY AND 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF SURAWU
ON SATURDAY, 12 OCT 85 AT 8.15 P.M. AT THE ROYAL PAVILION
BALLROOM OF THE PAVILION INTER-CONTINENTAL HOTEL

Singapore can pride itself in having an efficient Civil Service that has helped to make Singapore what it is today.

It is the Civil Service that gives a whole country its order and system. Step foot on any foreign soil and you will know straightaway if the civil service of that country is functioning smoothly or not.

The ordinary citizens are to a large extent influenced by the political and social philosophies of the government and by the government through its civil servants. Citizens are frustrated or encouraged, aggrieved or redressed by the way the civil servant deals with them.

The more efficient and well-administered is the civil service the better is the society that it serves.

As largely employees of the Government and its statutory bodies you are all charged with the task of keeping the machinery of the entire country working and in order. In fact, you service the entire population. This is a gigantic task.

The country can come to a grinding halt if the civil service is not up to its tasks. The whole nation suffers.

Since independence the Singapore Government has not spared any efforts in providing an efficient and honest administration to the citizens of Singapore. It is because of people like you that this has been possible. The civil service sets the tone for the whole country. If the government servants are inefficient and corrupt their bad influence can easily seep into the fabric of the whole society. The whole economy thrives or flounders depending on the way the civil service functions.

We have heard so much recently about the hard economic times. Fortunately for people in the civil service, the effects of the economic downturn have so far not adversely affected your job security and earnings. While most of our workers, including many of you, have decided to forgo NWC pay increases for this year, none in the public sector have had to be retrenched or laid off because of the economic problems.

As you know, the workers in the private sector especially in manufacturing and shipbuilding are going through hard times. Some 8,000 workers have been retrenched and are finding difficulty in being re-employed because the poor business prospects have brought about the closure of several companies.

While you may have been somewhat insulated from the worst that is possible in bad economic times you must not for a moment be deluded into believing that the public sector is immune from the adversities that can befall the workers in the private sector.

You must remember that our fortunes are inter-related. If the private sector is badly affected the effect would soon reach and hurt the public sector.

No doubt, our excellent political leadership working with an efficient and honest administration have brought about prosperity to all. But in an economic downturn everyone's well-being is affected. If the private sector suffers the public sector will also invariably suffer.

When the private sector prospers so too does the public sector. The public and private sectors must complement each other. This partnership is vital for our success and we have to maintain at all costs the economic success and prosperity that we have been able to create so far for Singaporeans by working together.

I would urge the civil service as the largest employer in Singapore, a consumer of a large portion of public funds and an institution which plays such a significant and important role in almost every facet of Singaporeans' life, to constantly review its effectiveness and efficiency. A good civil service benefits all. And as employees in the public sector all of you have the task of keeping the whole nation in good working order. With order comes success and prosperity and a better future for all Singaporeans.
