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**SPEECH BY DR YEO NING HONG, ACTING MINISTER FOR
COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE, AT
THE DISTRIBUTION OF HONG BAOS AND GIFTS AT THE KIM SENG
COMMUNITY CENTRE ON SUNDAY, 22 JANUARY 1984 AT 9 AM**

Each year just before we celebrate the Lunar New Year, the people of Kim Seng come together under the leadership of its community leaders, to make presentation of hong baos and food hampers to our senior citizens and those less fortunate than ourselves. This simple act of sharing with others is but an example of what they do throughout the whole year, when they give of their time, effort and money, to help everyone in Kim Seng have a better life. The many organisations and clubs that we have in Kim Seng are only possible, through the dedication and effort of all these people.

In spite of the fact that we in Kim Seng come from the lower and middle income level the public spiritedness of our residents and community leaders have made it possible for us to provide recreation facilities for senior citizens, a community clinic that provides inexpensive medical care for our people, a boys' club that provides healthy and wholesome activities for our young boys, BEST classes for our workers and a whole host of other activities for every sector of our residents.

That such activities are available clearly show that our residents in Kim Seng know that encouragement for all Singaporeans to be self-sufficient and independent is not a call for people to be self-centred and indifferent to the needs of those around them. To be self-sufficient and not to look out for handouts and subsidies is the foundation to our ability to help others. For if we ourselves, either as individuals or as a nation, are flat on our backs, unable to help ourselves, we would be in no position to reach out to help others. To be able to stand on our own two feet goes together with reaching out with our hands and hearts to help others. If we, as individuals develop the habit and attitude of always looking for handouts and subsidies for ourselves, how can the habit and attitude of reaching out and helping others grow? So too with a nation. If a nation is perpetually dependent on foreign aid and assistance how can they be of any real assistance to others.

We do not have to go back to our history books to read of the fate of countries that practise internal policies of subsidies, and external policies of dependence on foreign aid and assistance. In our newspapers each day, we read of the many countries that are totally crippled, going through the various stages of disintegration before our very eyes, with the painful human drama of mass unemployment, widespread starvation and runaway inflation unfolding day by day like a t.v. serial. These countries,

both those faraway in Africa, South and Central America, as well as those countries near to us in Asia and the Pacific clearly demonstrate that no country, no people, no nation is immune to the diseases of subsidies, incompetent and corrupt government. We must inoculate ourselves against such diseases and build up in Singapore a people that is self-sufficient and independent ready to help one another; and wise enough to want to have a competent and incorruptible government that is prepared to implement policies that are good for our people in the long run and not to look for short-term popularity.

In a very small way the people in Kim Seng represent the strength of our nation - a people that has worked itself up, from extreme poverty to a reasonable standard of living, not afraid of hardwork, not looking for subsidies and yet able to reach out to help those around us. By giving of our time, effort and money to help those less fortunate than ourselves, in a very small way, our community leaders and our residents help make Singapore a better place for ourselves, and our children.

I wish all of you a Happy and Prosperous Lunar New Year.
