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SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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SPEECH BY PRESIDENT SHEARES AT THE OPENING OF THE SINGAPORE COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE BUILDING ON FRIDAY, 28TH APRIL, 1972 AT 5.30 P.M.

My wife and I are most delighted to be here today to join the Singapore Council of Social Service on this very happy occasion of the opening of its new building.

Having listened to Mr. Ee, I note that the Singapore Council of social service was not only blessed with a pioneering spirit but has been doubly fortunate in having members like the late Dato Lee Kong Chian, Mr. Woon Wah Siang and Mr. Ee, whose unwaivering dedication and persistent endeavours guided the council through infancy to what it is today - a well-established institution in our community carrying out the very important task of co-ordination of voluntary social welfare work of which we are all very proud.

Co-existence through co-operation and co-ordination is the greatest need of our times. The state can provide general social services like education, health, housing, eradication of diseases and other social evils but co-operation is needed from the voluntary sector for certain kinds of services where personal attention and individual treatment are especially required such as services for the handicapped who require special training, for problem children who require intensive counselling, for the old who require special nursing and the sick who require convalescent care. Lack of co-ordination creates a variety of problems and would only add to the deprivation of those for whom the social services exist. In a small country like Singapore, co-ordination is also necessary between government and the voluntary social agencies and between the voluntary agencies themselves to maintain the most efficient and effective services for the people. It is incumbent therefore that the community of Singapore with its long established tradition for voluntary social work should need the services of an organisation such as the Singapore Council of Social Service to assist and guide its social agencies, to prevent overlapping or duplication in their work, to provide a forum for them to discuss their difficulties and problems and to act as intermediary between government and other bodies with like interests.

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The well-being of a community does not rest on material wealth alone. What is significant and important is the satisfaction of minimum wants which are the social, psychological, spiritual and cultural needs of man. If these minimum needs of people are adequately met, many of the social problems would be solved.

I therefore urge all social service organisations to continue their very important and valuable work even though I realise that they have a most difficult task ahead. It is the zeal of an evangelist that is required to conquer the challenges and find new ways and means to improve unsatisfactory conditions. This was the quality that the early pioneers of social service work in Singapore displayed in righting the social wrongs. I also appeal to all citizens to continue ardently in active participation in social services for the continued social well-being of our community.

Lastly my hearty congratulations to Mr. Eo and members of the board of management of the Singapore Council of Social Service for a job well done, and my abiding good wishes for greater achievements in Singapore's welfare in the years ahead.

I now have great pleasure in declaring The Singapore Council of Social Service Building open.

Date: 28th April, 1972.

Time Issued: 1130 Hours.

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