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NMP Thomas Chua's eulogy to Mr Lee Kuan Yew in Parliament

March 26 2015 (Thursday)

Madam Speaker, it is with a tremendously heavy heart with which I represent the Chinese community and the Chinese business community at large to mourn the passing of our founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

Mr Lee Kuan Yew is a statesman extraordinaire who made sterling and defining contributions to Singapore's nation-building and development. Being a tiny nation with no natural resources, Singapore's early years of nation-building had to depend on prudent and far-sighted policies, as well as a pragmatic, diligent work ethic. Mr Lee Kuan Yew was visionary, decisive, seizing opportunities and integrating the thinking of East and West, in developing our economy. Not only did this ensure the survival of Singapore's enterprises, but it helped to sustain the livelihood of all Singaporeans. As the founding Prime Minister, he demonstrated great fortitude and courage to make major decisions at critical junctures, enabling a tiny nation to make its presence felt in Asia, creating an economic miracle, and earning respect in the international arena.

Singapore's economic prosperity is inseparably linked to Mr Lee's steely resolve; even when obstacles surfaced, he never gave up. He adhered strictly to the rule of law and a clean government against all odds, and steered Singapore towards sustainable growth through his far-sightedness and wisdom, and a bold, charismatic personality. In his various positions as Prime Minister or Minister Mentor, while he upheld the policy of equality and harmony in a multi-racial, multi-cultural society, Mr Lee always showed utmost concern for the development of the Chinese community. He built up deep and lasting bonds of trust with the Chinese community and Chinese business community alike, always maintaining good mutual interaction.

Mr Lee Kuan Yew was an ardent believer in promoting bilingual education, and stressed that core cultural and traditional values are to be conveyed through the mother tongue. This has laid the foundations behind establishing a cohesive Chinese society and Chinese business community. He encouraged the Chinese community to pursue renewal and keep pace with the times; he urged local Chinese businesses to develop close links internationally, let Singapore integrate into the global marketplace, and establish extensive avenues of collaboration.

Over these many years, Mr Lee Kuan Yew has always been the prime mover behind Singapore-China cooperation, encouraging local enterprises to invest in China and neighbouring countries, and to build an external wing for Singapore's economy. In order to embrace the opportunities arising from China's economic development, Mr Lee Kuan Yew mooted the setting up of Business China, harnessing the strengths of the public and private sectors and the community at large, grooming bilingual and bi-cultural talent, and promoting mutual economic and cultural networking between Singapore and China.

The most valuable legacy that Mr Lee Kuan Yew has left behind is the nation, system and political ideology that he forged together with his comrades. Although Mr Lee Kuan Yew has already left us, his sterling achievements will endure forever, his impressive beliefs and distinctive style will be immortalised in people's memories, and his spirit will always guide us to move forward with perseverance! Mr Lee, we will always remember you!