

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ON THE
SUPPLEMENTARY SUPPLY BILL, HEADS S. 60 AND S.
78 AT DEWAN RAKYAT ON 19 NOVEMBER, 1965

Mr. Chairman, Sir I would like to intervene in this debate because, as the Honourable Minister of Local Government and Housing¹ has said, during the last few days so much had been said about this industrialized housing system; and I feel that the Members of the Opposition have not been fair to the Honourable Minister and the Ministry of Local Government and Housing on some of the criticisms that they have made. The Minister, when he answered an oral question on this subject, had given a full and adequate explanation, but despite that various criticisms continued to be made, allegations made, and these allegations are of a general nature with no specific evidence and without foundation. I must say, Sir, that we in the Government resent such a tactic employed by Members of the Opposition. We are responsible to this House, and we are subject to question, to criticism, but I must ask the Honourable Members of the Opposition that, if they want to criticise the Government, they must do so fairly and in accordance with the true democratic traditions and not make wild and generalised allegations and, as my honourable colleague has said, vicious character assassinations.

Well, Sir, on this subject of industrialised housing system, this matter had been gone through very carefully at various levels by the Commissioner of the Federal Capital and his staff, by the Ministry of Local Government and Housing, by the Treasury, by the National Planning Development Committee and, ultimately, by the Cabinet. We had gone into this very, very carefully, and we agreed that in principle this system deserved a trial, because it is our policy, our intention, to build as many houses as we can for our people, who need these houses and at lower cost and with greater speed — and this is our intention. Quite obviously, unless we are prepared to embark on new methods, on new systems, it is not possible for us to make progress.

Also, Sir, as the Minister of Local Government and Housing had already explained, the contract had not yet been finalised; negotiations are still going on and we have appointed a Cabinet Committee under the chairmanship of my colleague, the Minister of Finance², with the Minister of Works, Post and Telecommunications³ and the

¹Encik Khaw Kai Boh.

²Encik Tan Siew Sin.

³Datuk V.T. Sambanthan.

Minister of Local Government and Housing as Members. The negotiations for this contract are under the supervision of this Cabinet Committee. As the Minister of Local Government and Housing has also explained, the Commissioner of the Federal Capital has the power and the authority to enter into this contract, but, because this is a matter of importance, the Minister decided that the whole thing should go to the Cabinet, should have the blessing and the authority of the Cabinet. So, we have gone into this very carefully, and we have taken a decision after, as I said, very careful investigation and consideration at various levels, and I am satisfied that this matter has been carried out properly and in accordance with the proper procedure. I do hope that Honourable Members of the Opposition will now appreciate that this has been done properly and that if, in future, should Honourable Members of the Opposition wish to criticise the Government - of course, they are free to do so — I hope they do follow the practice of parliamentary democracy and make criticisms when they have sufficient facts and evidence before them and not make wild allegations, and smearing character assassination, against members of the Government.