

A NOSTALGIC REVIEW

SIEU IN 'LABOUR WARD'

Dear Friends,

25th October, 1955.

UNION IS STRENGTH

We appeal to you to spare a few minutes and think over the following. You all know that our brethren the manual and other working classes, who have formed unions, have benefitted thereby and raised their standard of living. You all know that we, insurance workers who are toiling day in and day out, year in and year out, do not even know what we may expect from our employment. When we are stricken with serious illness or when lady clerks are pregnant most of us know not whether our employers will bear the medical expenses or give us confinement leave with pay respectively.

Even in a good many firms, employers do not observe:

- (a) The decent working hours of their employees - which should be from 9 to 4.30 p.m. on week days and from 9 to 12.30 p.m. on Saturdays;
- (b) Public holidays as gazetted by the Government;
- (c) Two weeks annual leave and three weeks annual leave every third year of employment.

Every year we are held in suspense hoping that we may get good increases. Yet Government and City Council workers do not have to worry about this. So why should we tolerate the above and many other injustices?

In our old age when we retire most of us do not even know whether we will get our promised gratuity. There are many firms which stipulate that gratuity will be paid at the discretion of the Directors, etc., etc. What may we say is the meaning of this "strangulation clause?" Why should we allow ourselves to be bound by such vague promise?

Before we work we have a common right to know what we may expect from our employment, and we definitely cannot afford to trust the empty promises of employers. We are sure you have all come across cases where the employers promise you this and that, and when you are old and prospects are dim, and when you are in their clutches you realize in vain that they do not intend to fulfill their promises. All Government and City Council workers know what they can expect from their employment, but can we say that in our case? The answer is a definite NO!

Don't you think that it is about time that we put a stop to all these injustices and the suspense of hoping in vain? Certainly!

Can we achieve our legitimate and just aims and not allow ourselves to be treated like animals or machines? Yes!

We suggest that all employees of Insurance Companies, form a union and demand our legitimate and just rights. It would be superfluous for us to reiterate the benefits to be derived from such a union.

If you agree with our suggestion, we shall, with the help of 2 or 3 capable union leaders, arrange for the first meeting - the date and place of which will be announced later. If you are interested please have the perforated sheet duly completed, signed and returned to the undersigned on or before the 31st October, 1955.

Sincerely yours,
Mr. Ang Kim Thye,
33, Kovan Road,
Singapore, 19.

Mr Lim Eng Cheok,
846, East Coast Road,
Singapore, 15.