

XinMSN News Online; 27 September 2011; Losing one GRC not “disaster” for S’pore: Lee Kuan Yew

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SINGAPORE: Singapore’s former prime minister Lee Kuan Yew does not think a more populist form of government would have to emerge as a result of the general election in May.

Replying to questions on Singapore’s political scene at the Russia—Singapore Business Forum on Tuesday, Mr Lee said losing one Group Representation Constituency (GRC) is not a disaster for the country.

He believes it’s a change in mood among the electorate and much will depend on the performance of the opposition.

Mr Lee said the electorate has decided to bring competition to the political scene and unless the competition is good, he does not think the trend would continue.

He said an opposition victory in an area is not a given, and it would depend on how the opposition behaves and how the government responds.

On another question to relax conditions to give permanent resident status, Mr Lee said for the time being the government has to go slow on this, because Singaporeans don’t want to find strange faces around them.

But he feels the situation may change when Singaporeans grow older and need people to look after them, like nurses, and that’s when views of admitting foreigners would change.

World markets have been jittery lately, with the US and European economies slowing down. The dialogue also assessed the state of the global economy, with Mr Lee giving his take.

"I think it is quite clear that European leaders would hate to admit failure, so they would do the utmost to prevent the break—up of the Euro," said Mr Lee.

Mr Lee turned 88 less than two weeks ago and he was also asked about his plans for the future.

Mr Lee said he has no "burning ambition" to change the world or Singapore.

"I don’t think I have the time or the energy to do that. That’s the job of the younger generation," said Mr Lee.