

# 'Discipline got S'pore into the First World'

■ BY ZAKIR HUSSAIN

LAUGHTER rippled around a ballroom last night as Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew drew on a recent security breach at an MRT train depot to illustrate how Singapore keeps itself free of litter, vandalism and graffiti.

"We had graffiti experts from Switzerland and from England who came here to show that they can break our laws," he said to chuckles at a dialogue with delegates at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel.

"Well, we caught one of them and he

has to pay the penalty.

"It's harsh, but that's the way to keep it as it is," he replied to a question from a visiting don.

Swiss national Oliver Fricker, an IT consultant working in Singapore, was convicted last Friday of breaking into SMRT's Changi depot last month and spray-painting a train.

He was sentenced to five months' jail and three strokes of the cane.

His accomplice, Briton Dane Alexander Lloyd, is still at large.

The question posed to MM Lee came from water management expert Asit

Biswas, a visiting professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School (LKY School) of Public Policy.

He had asked the Minister Mentor what his most difficult problem was in taking Singapore from Third World to First World and how he solved it.

Mr Lee said: "The problem is to get your people to support the policies which you have implemented.

"The technology is there, you can buy it, you can do it yourself, but if your people do not cooperate and fit into the First World structure, it will not succeed.

"It depends on the amount of disci-

pline they are prepared to observe."

He noted that Singapore used to be a very untidy city, with "litter, filth, people urinating in the streets".

"To stop all that, to have a litter-free city and no vandalism, no graffiti, you need discipline."

Earlier, LKY School dean Kishore Mahubani, who chaired the dialogue, asked Mr Lee what the key policies were that made Singapore a developed country.

Mr Lee said he set out to create a First World oasis in a Third World region.

Building infrastructure was not as difficult as changing behaviour, he added.

"When you move people from a shanty where they have a hole in the ground for a toilet, to a high-rise with a toilet and a flush, it takes some time to get them not to bring their chickens and ducks with them," he said.

"But we succeeded, partly by education through their children, TV, exhortations from the leaders and they knew that unless we behave like a First World nation... we would perish," he added.

But the most difficult thing, he said, was to industrialise without polluting the island.

Careful attention to the environment, growth in industry, services and logistics, and a resilient population which responded to the challenge of the day got Singapore to where it is today, he added.

See Home Pages B4-5 and Review Page A23