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PHEY QUILTS 3 TOP POSTS

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## 'Under investigation' — Devan

**TRADE UNION leader and MP for Boon Teck, Mr Phey Yew Kok, has resigned from three top union posts because of investigations over the past six months into his activities.**

He has also indicated his intention to quit as chairman of the National Trades Union Congress.

NTUC president, Mr C. V. Devan Nair, yesterday told a press conference that Mr Phey, 45, had tendered his resignation as general secretary of the Singapore Industrial Labour Organisation, the Pioneer Industries Employees' Union and the Singapore Air Transport Workers' Union.

Mr Phey, who looked drawn, remained silent throughout the conference.

### His decision

Explaining Mr Phey's decision, Mr Nair said: "He has done so because, over the last six months, he has been the subject of investigation, and he does not want to be a source of embarrassment to the two unions."

The nature of the investigation was not disclosed by Mr Nair, who added:

"The executive councils of both unions met this afternoon and decided to hold Mr Phey's resignation in abeyance, but agreed to allow him to relinquish his duties for a period of time."

### Acting capacity

Mr Nair has been appointed acting general secretary of Silo and PIEU by their executive councils.

He said: "Mr Phey has also indicated to me his desire to resign as chairman of the central executive committee of the NTUC."

He said he would recommend to the executive committees of Satu and NTUC that these resignations be held

in abeyance. The Satu executive committee meets today to discuss the question.

For the NTUC, Mr Nair said: "It is up to the secretary-general (Mr Lim Chee Onn) to call a meeting of the central committee to discuss Mr Phey's resignation."

Mr Nair said it was probable that at least some employers might take advantage of the situation to cock their snooks at Silo and PIEU.

"If they do, they will have their snooks bloodied, for I happen to be an expert in this field," he added.

"As far as union members are concerned, I give them a solemn assurance that during my tenure of office, I shall not let them down, provided they do not let themselves down.

### A reminder

"I might take this opportunity to remind workers of our commitment to the labour movement's targets as outlined recently in the NTUC seminar on Progress into the 1980s.

"I have directed industrial relations officers of both unions to ensure that branch committees are not bypassed in their dealings with managements."

For the Silo and PIEU supermarkets and other commercial undertakings, it would be

business as usual, Mr Nair said.

"However, I shall deem it a top priority to bring in professional advice relating to the administrative and financial procedures of both unions, and to the managements of their cooperative and other enterprises.

### No questions

"I shall therefore have recourse to the assistance of the NTUC's investment committee."

Mr Phey, a trade unionist of nearly 20 years' standing, sat in silence beside Mr Nair during the press conference. Mr Nair told reporters not to question him.

Asked how long he expected to head Silo and

PIEU, Mr Nair replied: "As soon as I cease to be indispensable, and as you know, I have a genius for making myself

ispensable and kicking myself upstairs."

And as an afterthought, he added: "Nobody is indispensable because the cemeteries are full of indispensable people."

Mr Phey started his career in the labour movement when he became an industrial relations officer with the NTUC in 1964 while working as an accounts clerk in Malaysia-Singapore Airlines, the predecessor of Singapore Airlines.

## Top job

After his promotion to planning officer in the production and planning office of MSA's engineering department, he was appointed a committee member of Satu.

He was made treasurer in 1966 and assumed the presidency of the union three years later at the age of 35.

A year later, he became general secretary of the Singapore Industrial Labour Organisation and the Pioneer Industries Employees' Union — and then president of the NTUC.

In 1972, he was elected MP for Boon Teck in the general election.

## Other posts

In 1975, he was appointed executive chairman of NTUC's Industrial Affairs Council which replaced the former Industrial Disputes Committee.

This year, he became the chairman of NTUC when Mr Nair was made president following Mr Lim Chee Onn's appointment as secretary-general.

Mr Phey is also president of the Asian Air Transport Workers' Confederation, deputy chairman of Welcome's board of directors and chairman of Silo and PIEU's multi-purpose cooperative societies.



*A group of men were seen throughout yesterday's press conference by Mr Devan Nair. — Nanyang Siang Pau picture.*