

HER RIGHTS ARE WRONG

Kuan Yew regrets giving equal rights to women

SYDNEY, Tues — Former Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew told a business conference that he regrets giving women equal education and employment rights because that has made it harder for them to find husbands.

"The Asian male does not like to have a wife who is seen to be his equal at work who may be earning as much if not more than he does," Lee said yesterday. "He is not wearing the pants. That is an enormous loss of face."

Lee led Singapore for 31 years before retiring in 1991, transforming the tiny city state through hardline economic policies and social engineering which critics said often reduced the importance of individ-

ual rights.

Lee said his Government had been "young, ignorant and idealistic" when it gave men and women equal employment and education opportunities after it first took office.

He told a conference of Australian business people he now realises there are "limits to the manipulation of human behaviour."

"You cannot change deeply rooted values and behaviour and standards, patterns of conduct," he said.

After the change, the number of university graduates doubled and the

economy improved.

However, Lee said he discovered in 1981 that about 63 per cent of Singapore's female graduates remained unmarried and that many male graduates were taking brides with less education.

Although this has improved recently — Lee said now 54 per cent of women graduates marry males of equal status — many educated women still "either marry down or stay unmarried."

He favoured a Japanese system where many "attractive and intelligent young ladies went to finishing colleges where they learned modern languages and all the social graces which would make them marvellous helpers of their husband's career," he said.

"You may snigger but I think they have produced a better generation of workers," Lee added. — AP



Lee: Men no longer wear the pants. It's a huge loss of face