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SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF STATE (DEFENCE)
MR. WEE TOON BOON, ON THE PASSING OUT PARADE
OF THE THIRD INFANTRY OFFICER CADETS' COURSE
AT PASIR LABA CAMP ON SUNDAY, 17TH NOVEMBER, 1968
at 10 a.m.

I take great pleasure in being present here this morning to review the passing out parade of the 3rd Infantry Officer Cadets' Course. Occasions like these are of great significance not only to you as cadets who have completed the course but to the country as a whole for they symbolise achievements which spell joy and pride to all of us. Disciplined minds and bodies are essential prerequisites in nation-building for they build up qualities and characteristics that instil in our people, whether they be members of the Armed Forces, politicians, professionals, businessmen or workers, a sense of dedicated service to the country and its people who hold their trust in them. The focus in all cases is the nation for it is the nation all of us must build, nurture, and protect at all times. We are a young nation endeavouring to build and develop out of a multi-racial society a coherent and viable nation in the face of great changes that are taking place in and around us. These changes bring about complex and tricky problems and to solve them tolerance and understanding, a keen sense of realism, and high standards are essential.

The training that you have undergone has been tough and challenging. It has combined professional competence with other qualities which will enable you to become true and complete citizens of our country. In your career as Commissioned Officers you will, of course, be primarily concerned with your military duties but as citizens of this country, there must be an awareness of all that is going on around you in the political, economic and social fields;

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it is only then that your contribution towards the building of a strong and viable nation will bring meaningful results.

As Commissioned Officers your service to the nation will be an exacting one, and perhaps the only reward that you will receive is the gratitude and undying pride of your fellow citizens, who look upon you not only for protection against those who endeavour to denude the sovereignty, integrity and honour of our country but also as guides and mentors. It is, therefore, service infused with a sense of national pride and dedication and based on the recognition that only the best should lead. Upon being commissioned, you will be entrusted with many great responsibilities. You will have a very important role to play in the making of our nation's history. .

Today marks the end of your period of training and ushers in a new phase as Officers in the Singapore Armed Forces. There is a long and arduous road ahead of you, for on you will devolve the task of leading, by actual contact, your men, in camp, on the march, in field exercises or even on the battlefield if the occasion should arise. The way your men respond will depend on your leadership, discipline, enthusiasm, dedication and your understanding of their follies and foibles. The high standards that we expect of the Singapore Armed Forces must be maintained and I have no doubt that you will maintain them at a very high and efficient pitch always.

I wish to congratulate all those who have successfully completed this course.