

**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. LEE KUAN YEW,**  
**AT THE COMMISSIONING CEREMONY AT SAFTI -**  
**TUESDAY, 18TH AUGUST, 1970**

In the first five years, the emphasis was on speed in the build-up of the army. In the next five years, the emphasis will be on the quality and maturity of officers, particularly for staff and command. Planning and strategy require more than just military knowledge. They require subtle, imaginative and creative minds. However tough and doughty our soldiers are, poor leadership by officers in the field will lower morale and performance. But however good the field officers, keeping their men in high morale and discipline, poor staff work can lead to disaster.

Schemes of service will be worked out in order to make a career in staff and command equivalent to what a very good graduate can get in the Civil Service, or in commerce and industry. Career opportunities will be worked out, so that a first-class officer will find it worth his while to take up a regular commission. And when he leaves on retirement either at 45, 50 or 55, he would have had enough managerial training and leadership experience to enable him to go straight into top management in the private sector, or into any of the growing

number of enterprises the government has a share in. Further, because our armed forces are young, and expanding rapidly, promotion prospects are better in the services than in the Civil Service, or in commerce and industry.

Those of you who have confidence that you have got what it takes to make the grade, will not regret serving on as a regular service officer. We have no tradition to ensure a continuous supply of officers. Making a career in the armed forces is something new. But we can put together that mix of challenge, incentives, and status, to ensure that we recruit an officer cadre as good as that we have produced in the Civil Service, or in the professions. There are several characteristics common in men in top positions: strength of character and a mind able to take in the details and complexities of a problem quickly, seize hold of the essential elements, and act decisively to tackle the problem.

I am sure there are a number amongst you with these qualities. With the introduction of all HSC and university graduates, there will be more officers with the potential for staff and command responsibilities.

Finally, may I wish you well in your careers. What you have learned will stand you in good stead, in or out of the army.