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**SPEECH BY DR WAN SOON BEE, MINISTER OF STATE  
(PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE), AT THE FOOD, DRINKS AND  
ALLIED WORKERS' UNION 21ST ANNIVERSARY DINNER AND DANCE  
AT THE GOLDEN PHOENIX SICHUAN RESTAURANT (WTC)  
ON FRIDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 1985 AT 7.30 PM**

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We are gathered to-night, in a joyous mood and in comfortable surroundings, to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the Food, Drinks and Allied Workers' Union. The FDAWU is one of the oldest and more established trade unions in Singapore and it is a union whose leaders and members have been through good times and bad times.

Your union struggled in its early days to keep itself together and worked hard to organise union branches and negotiated with employers for a better deal for its members.

Today it is one of the biggest unions in Singapore that is responsible and gained the respect of both its members and managements.

You should continue to support your union and help it to grow from strength to strength by getting your non-unionised friends and colleagues to join the union.

A union must not only be responsible and enlightened to gain respect and credibility but also should have strength in numbers.

That is why the NTUC has launched a year-long membership campaign aimed at getting more of our workers to join the union fold.

A responsible trade union movement has been one of the contributing factors for Singapore's success and progress. Coupled with other internal factors like good political leadership and an efficient civil service, Singapore has seen many years of good economic growth.

Today, our people enjoy a standard of living second only to that of Japan's in Asia.

But for the first time in many years, we are also feeling the rumblings of bad economic times. Several industries have been hit and companies have wound up or slowed down their business activities.

Quite naturally, our workers are also affected and the fear of losing jobs is quite real.

The service sector, though not as badly affected as the shipbuilding, shiprepairing and manufacturing industries, has not been spared from the effects of a recession.

As businesses generally slow down during a recession there is more austerity and less spending. People entertain less and spend less at hotels and restaurants. Even tourists are spending less and coming in lesser numbers.

Such austerity has a direct bearing on the establishments that most of you work for in the food and drinks industry, be they hotels, restaurants or private clubs.

But as employees in the service sector you yourself represent the most crucial factor in a service industry.

Unlike other industries which depend to a large extent on technologies and raw materials, the service industry can thrive on a well-disciplined, trained and highly motivated staff who with their efficient service and high productivity can keep a company going even when other external factors are not so favourable.

You come in contact with people in your daily lives who patronise your establishments. You are in a people industry and the quality of your service will contribute greatly to the success of your establishments.

Slipshod work, discourtesy and inefficiency will not earn you new customers but only drive them away. Always remember that an unhappy customer is the worst type of advertisement that a service establishment can get. Your company and in the final analysis the employees will be the ultimate losers.

You can help ensure that your company does not become a casualty in a recession by working hard and smart. With higher productivity you help your company maintain its profit margin and competitive edge. This in turn helps you to ensure your job security and livelihood.

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