

TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE
FINANCE MINISTRY, MR. TANG SEE CHIM, AT THE CLOSING
CEREMONY OF YOUTH WEEK IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY AT THE
CONFERENCE HALL, SHEPPHARD WAY, ON SAT., AUG.17, AT 12.30 P.M.

I consider it a signal honour to be invited here this afternoon to address the closing ceremony of the "Youth Week in Commerce and Industry" jointly organised by the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Singapore and the Vocational Guidance Steering Committee.

I understand the Youth Week is organised annually so as to provide an opportunity to students, who are on the verge of leaving secondary schools, a first-hand experience in both commerce and industry in order to enable them to evaluate their own aptitude for the jobs they choose when they leave school. In the past, equal emphasis was given both to commerce and industry but lately emphasis has shifted to the blue-collar jobs in preference to white-collar jobs.

When I was asked to speak, your chairman very kindly sent me souvenir programmes of the past years and looking through those past programmes, it is interesting to note that your annual project has grown from "Boys' Day in Business" in 1960 to "Youth Week in Commerce and Industry" this year. This change in the title of your annual project is, in a very significant way, reflecting the growth of Singapore.

Traditionally, the Singapore economy depended upon entrepot trade, and Singapore grew from a fishing village to become the fourth largest port in the world through the courage and skill of its businessmen and the services of its financial institutions.

With the changing pattern in world trade, however, it was found in the late 1950's that our entrepot trade alone was not capable of generating a high enough rate of economic growth to provide sufficient job opportunities for our school-leavers. A bold and unprecedented step was then taken by the PAP Government on its assumption of office in 1959 to embark upon an industrialisation programme to help provide more job opportunities for our people.

Jurong was chosen as the site for the industrial estate, and bulldozers were sent in. Today the Jurong Industrial Estate stands on an area of some 3,650 acres. In it there are 116 factories in production, and 42 under construction. Fortyfour of the factories are still in the planning stage. The number of persons employed by the factories in production is around 12,000. When the factories under construction or planned are in production, an additional 15,000 workers are expected to be employed, making a total of about 27,000. The first phase of the entire development of the Jurong Industrial Estate has been completed and all infra-structure facilities for industries, such as roads, sewerage and2/-

sewerage and bridges, have been amply provided.

With the favourable investment climate now prevailing in Singapore, demand for industrial land is expected to increase. To cope with this expected demand, work has already commenced on the second phase of development which, when completed, will add another 3,800 acres to the Jurong Industrial Estate. In addition, there are other industrial areas outside Jurong, e.g. the Kranji and Sungei Kadut area with an acreage of about 850 acres is now under development. Outside Jurong, light industries employing some 6,000 workers are in production in places like the Kallang Basin, Kallang Park, Kampong Empat, Kampong Tiong Bahru, Redhill, Tanglin Halt and Tanjong Rhu Industrial Estates.

In spite of our Herculean efforts, there is still a substantial number of persons unemployed. We have the undesirable phenomenon of having some industries having vacancies for skilled craftsmen unfilled, while a great number of our people remains unemployed. This is the result of our colonial past, when the education system was geared to providing only white-collar jobs - clerks in commercial houses and Government departments, etc. With our industrialisation programme, the traditional education system has to be revised. Emphasis is now on technical education and the Government is in the course of gearing the education system to provide skilled craftsmen and workers for the manufacturing industries.

Our task is made more difficult, however, by the impending withdrawal of the British military bases in Singapore. The withdrawal of the British bases will not only throw some 30,000 persons now employed in the bases out of work, but will divert a substantial part of our annual expenditure from economic productive activities into defence which is non-productive economically.

This is a severe challenge to us - a challenge to our ability to survive. It is a challenge we have no alternative but to accept. The Government has announced its plans on how this challenge could be met. In his two speeches over the air and television recently, the Finance Minister has given a detailed analysis of how the recession expected to result from the British withdrawal could be cushioned. I would not bore you with the details of these plans. In short, the Government proposes to pump into the economy some \$1,000 million in order to counter the spending that is expected to be withdrawn. This pump-priming will have to continue beyond 1971 until such time our growth rate equals the extra expenditure that is being withdrawn.

The population3/-

The population has been prepared for the heavy and daunting task ahead. The labour movement in Singapore has accepted amended Labour legislation designed to attract foreign investment. The people have taken up arms, ready to defend our nation.

Singapore is a very young nation. She is faced with the struggle for survival at her very young and tender age. We are lucky, however, to have within our nation organisations like the Jaycees which are prepared to do their part in our national effort to survive and to prosper.

In the building of a nation, every organisation has its part to play. The Jaycee, in organising Youth Week, is playing a part in accustoming our youths to a blue-collar job instead of the traditional white-collar one. In 1967, its effort in publicising the excellent opportunities the Armed Forces offered to future school-leavers, was met with good response. It is the spirit and the service like the ones you have shown that will see us through our difficult years ahead. And in organising this Youth Week, the Jaycees are not only true to their creed that "service to humanity is the best work of life" but in so doing will help to build a stable and prosperous Singapore.

AUGUST 17, 1968.

(Time issued: 1915 hours)
