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SPEECH BY MR. TANG SEE CHIM, PARLIAMENTARY
SECRETARY TO THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, AT THE
NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY CENTRE'S SECOND ANNUAL
CERTIFICATE PRESENTATION DINNER AT EASTERN
PALACE ON 22.1.70 AT 7.30 P.M.

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I wish to welcome you to our second certificate presentation dinner. It was scarcely more than a year ago that I addressed a similar occasion. During that time, I said that the National Productivity Centre would do its best to propagate greater productivity consciousness in Singapore. Our efforts have been tangibly rewarded. Demands for our consultancy services have far exceeded our expectation. The number of participants to our training courses, including the trade union education programme jointly organised with the assistance of the National Trades Union Congress, have tripled. For the first time, we have also been able to develop and initiate training programmes in Mandarin. These vernacular programmes, in particular, have been most popular with the medium and small firms. All these are good indications of the growing awareness of the need for higher productivity.

No productivity movement can be successful without the active support of the employers and the workers. In Singapore, that this support is forthcoming is evidenced by the presence here to-night of representatives from both the employers and the workers.

While employers and workers may not agree on the measurement of productivity and how the benefits resulting from higher productivity should be shared, there is no denying that higher productivity will benefit us all.

I think the productivity movement has a bright future. I come to this conclusion by the inexorable logic of our situation.

Ours is an open economy. We have a small domestic market. For our industries to survive and prosper, we must export and compete in the international market. Protection, even given, is no long-term solution. It can only mean a temporary phase to help an infant industry on its feet. Our industries' long-term future lies in the international market, in being able to produce the right quality goods at the right price. This requires entrepreneurial acumen and production skill.

While entrepreneurial acumen cannot be taught, production skill can be. And here is where the concept of productivity comes in. I am not attempting to give a definition of productivity, but, to my mind,

productivity means a certain output resulting from a given combination of input. Our aim is to so arrange this given combination of input that it results in a higher output. And this we can normally do, by acquiring greater skill, by adaptation of modern techniques of production, by simply eliminating waste, or by some other means.

It is the task of the National Productivity Centre to spearhead the productivity movement. To promote this effort further, the National Productivity Centre joined the Asian Productivity Organisation in October last year. The Asian Productivity Organisation with international status is composed of 14 member countries. The objective of this Organisation is to give adequate impetus to the productivity movement in Asia, and thereby accelerate the pace of economic development in the region. We feel that our association with the Asian Productivity Organisation will enable us to exchange views and ideas of the region's efforts in the productivity movement with beneficial results to us.

Finally, allow me to congratulate those of you who are here to receive your certificates for the successful completion of our training courses. Your presence here to-night reflects the industries' progressive approach to personnel management training which is the right step towards achieving greater productivity and ultimately a prosperous society. I see this as the trend, and I promise that the National Productivity Centre will do its best to help it along.

JANUARY 22, 1970.

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