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FORWARDED UNTIL DELIVERY.

Speech of Guest-of-Honour Mr. L. P. Rodrigo, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs at the ASEAN YOUTH FORUM at the Singapore Conference Hall at 7.15 p.m., 22nd July, 1971.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am thankful for the opportunity to say a few words on this occasion.

2. I am glad to note that this Competition which is now entitled the ASEAN Youth Forum is a development of the elocution contest which the Junior Chamber of Commerce has been successfully organising in recent years.

3. I think this Competition has thereby achieved a major improvement in that it now aims not only to promote the eloquence and articulateness of youth leadership but also to cultivate a commitment of such leadership to the interest and aspirations of ASEAN.

4. Regional issues would ordinarily tend to appear remote to a youthful population which is intensely pre-occupied with the business of bursting into adulthood and a promising employment market.

5. Twenty-five years ago, a generation of youth in our country and West Malaysia became acutely conscious of the region now known as ASEAN and its problems after a major war in the Asia-Pacific area disrupted the political scene and underlined certain political and economic realities affecting the countries in the region. Some of the more politically-motivated individuals in this generation are now leaders in our country and are striving to achieve economic and social cooperation on a regional basis through ASEAN.

6. Our youth of today is spared the cataclysm of a war, but it has nevertheless to perceive and appreciate just as cogently the possibilities of effective cooperation in ASEAN and promote constructive thinking on the subject with economic and social benefit for the ASEAN members as a frame of reference.

7. Thus the ASEAN Youth Forum offers a process by which the idealism and intellectuality of our youth may find relevance with the ideals of ASEAN, and moral commitment and contribution towards the realisation of a modern concept of regionalism in South-East Asia.

8. The Junior Chamber of Commerce must be commended for the initiative in this venture which I am confident will succeed.

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22nd July, 1971.