

EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY

TEXT OF SPEECH BY MR. ONG SCO CHUAN,
POLITICAL SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER FOR
FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND M.P. FOR NEE SOON,
AT THE OPENING OF THE S.A.F. STATIC
DISPLAY AT NEE SOON COMMUNITY CENTRE ON
SUNDAY, 19 DECEMBER, 1971 AT 8.00 P.M.

Many of us will recall the enthusiastic fervour we have created in 1968 when the Defence Fund was launched. It was the beginning of our Defence build-up in which people from all walks of life have so whole-heartedly contributed towards the Fund. Tonight, we are proud to present a cross-section of the "fruits of our labour" from the Defence Fund to which you have so enthusiastically responded. In those days no one would be able to hazard a guess as to the extent and the measure of success we would have so far achieved in this short space of three years. This rapid progress we have achieved so far is in my view mainly attributable to one outstanding quality of our Citizens. It is the human factor, the basic characteristic of our Society i.e. the youthful spirit that has accounted for the successes of our industrial, academic and commercial fields and now we see the realization of our Defence Forces. Such is the quality of our human resources that we see here this evening the insight of our youthful might which will undoubtedly in the not too distant future be capable of withstanding all forms of pressures within or without our Society.

Soldiering as we all know is a very complex and extremely expensive business. There is a well-known

saying which could be appropriately quoted here is that "To maintain an army is to be prepared for any eventuality." Though we are not looking forward to the day when our armed forces will have to be mobilized to safeguard our interest, we will certainly not by default let our efforts and our youthful spirit go by untapped. Such being the mainstay of our society, the talents of our youth are being fully utilized and what we see here tonight is a part-realization of our dream come true.

In recent years we have seen, sad to say, that in certain countries there have been soldiers, who apart from the business of soldiering, are also involved in multifarious activities that are not only unbecoming of a good soldier, but also do not reflect well on a Country's well-being. We in our Country have, not without difficulties constantly strove to prevent the Defenders of our Country from falling into an ill-disciplined and ill-mannered lot whom our own people will not respect let alone uphold the glorious banner of our Country. Young as we may be, we are not lacking in spirit and most important the will to survive. Our Defence Forces, will therefore not only have to be capable of looking after themselves, they have also to bear in mind that they have to safeguard the freedom of all of us. Less we forget, small as we are as a Nation, but what we seem to be deficient in, we will certainly make up in the form of quality thus inspiring even greater confidence in all of us living in this island Republic.

It is my pleasure to present to you the efforts of our Defence Forces which have been built-up in this short space of time, to you for your appreciation. We welcome comments and indeed, criticism on every aspect of this Exhibition and suggestions, if any on the shaping of our defence forces. You are also welcome to enquire into any aspect of army life and if necessary personal information will be provided to elucidate any problems you envisage with regard to the life or other aspects of our Defence Forces.