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Speech by Mr. L. P. Rodrigo, M.P. for Serangoon Gardens and Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, at the Opening Ceremony of the MICOT Exhibition on 31st December, 1971, at the Singapore Conference Hall at 5.30 p.m.

As a society which is planning to develop its economic resources, we are heavily committed to a technological future. The plan to technologise intensively is not an economic option on our part. It has been dictated by our own economic limitations and the directions of Man's scientific genius at this phase of civilisation which has often been referred to as the Technological Age.

Our economic future lies in our own ingenuity in science and technology.

The Technological Age has arrived and is receding into history. Without natural resources for economic dependence we must not only programme for survival at being able to sell the services and commodities of the New Age, but also exploit its scope through our own ingenuity in technological creativity and innovation.

To technologise intensively and rapidly, there must be prerequisites. Some of these are science graduates, engineers and technicians. For this decade, the Ministry of Science and Technology has planned for a manpower projection of 4,713 science graduates, 2,451 engineers and 21,375 technicians to support the entire range of industries which will emerge in the period. But given these necessary digital prerequisites, our society has, in addition, to achieve the integration of technology in our cultures if we are to modernise in consistency with the Technological Age. In this context I use the term culture to mean a way of life. The process of integration has to be deliberate rather than evolutionary. One way of going about it is to contrive an intimacy between our society and technology. We are doing this through MICOT.

Let me briefly describe the nature of the MICOT Competition and its objects which some of you might have already read in the MICOT brochure.

The MICOT Competition calls for the submission of technological constructions which demonstrate a suitable degree of creativity or innovation in technology.

The name of the competition is ambitious indeed, but the object of the competition at this stage is to generate in our society an interest in technological creativity and innovation. It is our hope that MICOT will eventually succeed in assembling in this competition yearly a wide range of sophisticated exhibits which demonstrate our evolution as a technological society fully adjusted to the future.

I would like to add that the Engineering Faculty of the University of Singapore has been able to arrange their own exhibition alongside the MICOT Exhibition. This gesture is welcome as the exhibition will assist in promoting the objects of MICOT which constitute a national interest.

I hope you will find the exhibition instructive and encouraging.

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30th December, 1971.