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SPEECH BY MR CHIN HARN TONG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY,  
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONY  
OF THE 9TH CIVIL DEFENCE OFFICERS' COURSE HELD  
ON FRIDAY, 19 JUN 87 AT 7.30 PM AT THE OPAL ROOM,  
CIVIL SERVICE CLUB, TESSENSOHN ROAD

This evening's graduation ceremony marks the conclusion of your officers' training. A total of 16 newly-recruited officers, 12 from the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) and four from the Singapore Fire Service (SFS) attended this course together. This is the second time that officers from the two Forces have trained together. I am sure you have become good friends besides learning something of each other's work, as a result of training together. This is an added benefit of the policy of joint training decided last year. All future training will take this form, except specialist training, as Fire Officers will need to undergo very specialised training in fire subjects, conducted by the Fire Service.

Nowadays, most organisations or companies provide some form of training for their staff to equip them with skills and knowledge to do their work efficiently. Training is essential not only to fit the staff for the job, but also to keep them abreast of new changes and developments taking place in the country. Thus, beside giving the initial training to the new employees, most organisations have a follow-up programme of upgrading courses to improve the standard of their staff.

The Singapore Civil Defence Force and the Singapore Fire Service have equally placed importance on training for their officers and men. Recently, the SCDF in furtherance of this goal, have introduced a third course, the Senior Officers' Staff Course

to provide the officers with a higher level of training in staff work and staff procedures. Their first two courses are the Civil Defence Officers' Basic Course and the Advanced Civil Defence Officers' Course.

In the case of the Singapore Fire Service, they, too, have stepped up their training programme. Since last year, new officers are required to attend a full-time training course for the first time covering such subjects as staff work and procedures, rescue techniques, leadership and instructional methods. This is in addition to the specialist training on fire fighting and fire prevention. The National Servicemen posted to the Fire Service attended a 3-month basic training for the first time together with SCDF National Servicemen at the Basic Training Centre at Jalan Bahar Camp. This full-time training will strengthen the discipline of National Servicemen and give them a strong grounding to cope with their work and further training in the Fire Service. All these training activities will strengthen and improve the SCDF and SFS.

The training you have just received is fairly extensive and should give you a strong foundation to start your work with confidence. You will find that whether you are posted to a staff department at headquarters or in an operational unit or training centre, your training will prepare you for that job. Many of the principles and work methods you have been taught at the course will come in handy when you tackle the day-to-day assignments given to you. However, as you go along, you will meet with new problems or situations which you may not be able to handle on your own because of your limited experience. However, your immediate superior and the more seasoned colleagues are there to help you learn new skills and gain more experience in the course of your work. This is commonly referred to as on-the-job training which is as good a way of training as any other. It is up to you to make the best use of this system to gain as much knowledge and experience in the shortest possible time. The quicker you learn and master the work, the faster you will progress in your career.

During your service, you will find that training is a continuing feature of your career. This has to be so in order to develop you to the fullest and to tap your potential for higher appointments in the service. You will be sent on advanced courses locally or specialist courses abroad. Thus, you can be assured that everything possible will be done in your interest, to give you every opportunity to advance progressively in your career to the highest position in the service. How far you rise ultimately in your career will depend a lot on the efforts you put in your daily work.

On this note, I wish you every success in your career.

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