ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE SINGAPORE POLYTECHNIC GUILD OF GRADUATES INAUGURAL DINNER, SATURDAY, 8TH APRIL 1972

Of our post-secondary educational institutions, the Polytechnic has been a most worthwhile investment. From 1960 to 1971, it produced a total of 3,729 graduates. 246 were degree graduates in Accountancy and Engineering. The Polytechnic helped start these two faculties which were transferred to the campus of the University of Singapore in 1969. 591 were professional diploma graduates in Accountancy, Architecture, Building, Quantity Surveying, Valuation, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering. 520 were craft graduates. 2,372 were technician graduates, 2,169 diplomas and 203 certificates. Within six years, by the end of the academic year 1976-77, the number of technician graduates from the School of Industrial Technology is expected to rise from 2,372 to 9,783.

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When the present government took charge in June 1959, the Polytechnic was not geared to turn out the professional and technical skills in the numbers required for rapid industrialisation. That it has been able to adapt, expand and

progress, speaks well of the Board of Governors, of the Principal, Mr. Edis, and of the senior staff who supported him.

Students of the Polytechnic, because of the tone set by the Principal and the teaching staff, and because of the nature of their training and disciplines, have had little time or inclination to tilt at windmills. In the 1960's, it was the university student activists from the Humanities who frittered their time away in mock heroic gestures on behalf of university antonomy and academic freedom. They echoed the irrelevant slogans of their teachers, people recruited from a different generation, who were out of touch with the main stream of thought and action, post-independence.

Had it not been for our success in industrialising, there would have been real issues to agitate about, as unemployment steamed up unrest and frustration. As it was, these student activists have to thank the graduates of the Polytechnic for helping to make a success of our industrialisation, thereby creating the spin-off in jobs for graduates in the Humanities, in an expanding economy.

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The cost of training students in the vocational stream is more than twice that of students in academic streams: academic stream $380 per student per annum, vocational stream $960 per student per annum. The average cost of a Polytechnic student per annum is $2,300. However, these are investments which we must make if we are to bring up our population to higher levels of skills, and improve our total performance.

Graduates of the Polytechnic have had no difficulty in getting jobs suitable to their training and skills. Among the committee members of the Guild are Architects, Quantity Surveyors, Planners, Engineers and Technical Assistants. They reflect the important roles played by Polytechnic graduates in our economy.

I am sure the expansion of the Polytechnic will be more than justified. Your Guild of Graduates should have an ever growing membership, as over 1,300 graduates per year with Diplomas and Certificates join your ranks between now and 1977.

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