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SPEECH BY THE SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (DEFENCE), MR. PHUA
BAH LEE, AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE METALLING OF TWO EARTH TRACKS
OFF ELIAS ROAD BY GOTONG ROYONG ON SUNDAY, JAN. 8, 1978 AT 8 A.M.

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I am very glad indeed to see gather here this morning so many people, especially our young national servicemen and the school children, to undertake this praiseworthy community service project of metalling two laterite tracks for the benefit of the villagers, in particular, the housewives and the school-going children. The significance of such community project which involve the local residents and our young soldiers are manifold. Firstly, it will make our citizens, especially the young ones, to realise that good things does not just come by itself. We have to work for it and contribute our little share towards its realisation and after toiling for it we will feel a certain attachment and pride for it and will all the more take good care of it. For our national servicemen, I am told that all of you are from the new HSC intake for this year. You will learn through your active participation in this community effort the important lesson of community service, the actual condition of those not so fortunate people who live in the rural area and how essential a good road is to these folks. For those who come from the well-to-do family and who have all along enjoy the best of living condition at home, I hope their two days involvement in the construction of these kampong earth tracks will bring them nearer to the hard reality of life. Apart from earning to work with your fellow citizens as a team for the common good of all, this occasion should provide you, our young men in green, a valuable experience. Many of you may not know the process involved in road building or are interested to learn it. You may be living in pleasant private housing estates or HDB housing estates, and take for granted the many excellent amenities such as fine roads, good drainage and bright street lightings as part and parcel of life.

Well, today2/-

Well, today you see that this is not so as such amenities are not readily available in the rural areas. All of you have come forward voluntarily to help improve these roads and I think this is a magnificent gesture and a very meaningful way to spend our weekend. You will find out what community effort can achieve and at the same time gain at first hand the knowledge and experience by actively participating in the building of a metalled road. Finally, this gotong royong project, I am confident will bring the local people and our young soldiers closer together and also they will realise that though the Singapore Armed Forces are primarily concerned with the defence and internal security of the country but their officers and men are as much interested in the welfare of the people and are always ready and willing to lend a helping hand in any praiseworthy community projects and services.

JANUARY 8, 1978.