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SPEECH BY THE SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (DEFENCE), MR
PHUA BAH LEE, AT THE PRESENTATION OF SCHOLARSHIPS AND
BURSARY AWARDS TO SINGAPORE MANUAL AND MERCANTILE WORKERS'
UNION MEMBERS' CHILDREN ON SATURDAY, MAY 19, 1979, AT 2 P.M.

I am pleased to be invited here this afternoon to present scholarships and bursary awards to your members' children. My concept of a trade union was very different before I became associated with the SMMU. As honorary advisor to your union, it is imperative for me to find out more about the union and I must say that I am greatly impressed by the efforts made by your union in providing such a wide range of benefits and services not only to union members but to their families as well.

Singapore, being a small country with no natural resources have to depend on the development of our manpower to sustain and enhance our social and economic development. In this year's awards I note that there is one award for technical education and four for pre-university. Although this is a modest beginning I am informed that it is the union's intention to give more emphasis on technical and vocational education to meet the country's needs for skilled manpower. This is indeed a commendable move. In Singapore, union power is harnessed to provide for better terms and conditions of work for workers and participation in the economic and social development of the country. In some countries, union power is used to disrupt economic and social development in other countries. Under the pretext of keeping down inflation and unemployment rates these foreign unions have resorted to protectionist measures, often with the connivance with their national governments. The antics of the ITF and certain unions in Australia and Western Europe are clear examples.

Unions in Singapore and Asia should rally together and challenge these 'imperialistic' tendencies of these foreign western trade unions. Unions in Singapore should also further promote the spirit of tripartism.

This is2/-

This is one of the pillars of our foundation for social and economic stability. The SMMNU, being one of the largest unions in the private sector has a significant role to play, and I am sure that with your present leadership, you can make this contribution.

In conclusion, I hope that the scholarships awards will provide the stimuli to the recipients for greater endeavours.
