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SPEECH BY MR TEO CHONG TEE, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
(ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS), AT THE GUINNESS STOUT  
EFFORT AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY AT THE CHANGI COMMUNITY  
CENTRE, 696 UPPER CHANGI ROAD EAST ON MONDAY  
28 MAY 1984 AT 8.00 PM

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I am pleased to be here this evening to officiate at this Guinness Stout Effort Award Presentation ceremony. Tonight the award goes to a very special person who, despite his disability, has displayed great resolution and resilience in overcoming his handicap to earn a living for himself. In according recognition to Mr Lim Swee Yong, I do not want to depict the ordinary efforts of many disabled people as some extraordinary feat as if they are not capable of ordinary and normal living. What Mr Lim Swee Yong has shown the non-disabled people is that there is a reservoir of talent and residual ability among disabled people, and, given the goodwill and opportunity, they too can take their rightful place in society as equal partners with the rest of us. Indeed, his efforts in trying to establish himself in society as a socially useful and productive citizen reflect the hopes, aspirations and actions of many disabled people in Singapore.

There is no doubt that gainful employment is a crucial factor in the integration of the disabled people in society but, of equal importance is the fact that it provides the person with a deep sense of self worth and dignity. A recent study of the employment status of 6945 disabled people, aged 14 years and above, registered with the Central Registry of Disabled People of the Ministry of Social Affairs showed that 2377 or 34.2 per cent are gainfully employed. The remaining 4568 or 65.8 per cent are presumably unemployed.

In the latest study on the "Profile of Disabled People Awaiting to be Placed in Employment", it was found that there are only 291 disabled people awaiting to be placed in employment. They are registered with the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs and six voluntary organisations which provide job placement services as part of their overall rehabilitation programme for the disabled people. When compared to the 4568 disabled people who are not in gainful employment, this number of 291 disabled people, who have registered for open employment, is not a large number. Nevertheless, there could be a sizeable number of disabled people who may not fit into ordinary open employment because of the nature and severity of their disabilities. For them, it might be necessary to find other alternatives of employment like sheltered workshops or home-bound work. However, one should have the courage to accept that there will always be some severely disabled people who may not fit into any type of employment.

My Ministry will soon bring together various voluntary organisations and Government agencies dealing with the disabled to a workshop in order to seek their views on the employment problems and needs of the disabled people. It is hoped that the workshop will draw up concrete proposals for an effective employment programme for the disabled.

The majority of employers in Singapore are kind and concerned with the problems and needs of disabled people and a few of them had taken into their workforce some disabled people. But employers who have not had the opportunity of taking in disabled people into their workforce may wish to consider the potential and residual abilities of disabled people.

The Government, in wanting to promote the greater employment of disabled people, administers two incentive

schemes for employers to facilitate the placement of disabled people in suitable jobs. These are:

- (i) the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry Fund Scheme; and
- (ii) the Disablement Resettlement Scheme.

The Ministry of Social Affairs administers the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce & Industry Fund Scheme. Under the Scheme, the Ministry reimburses the employer the initial six weeks' salary paid out to the disabled employee. The six-week period also gives the employer an opportunity to assess the suitability of the disabled employee. The Ministry of Labour manages the Disablement Resettlement Scheme. This Scheme assists disabled persons to gain economic independence through on-the-job training. During the period of training, they receive a monthly allowance of \$60/- from the Ministry of Labour up to a maximum of \$150/- per month. I would encourage employers to take advantage of these two schemes.

It gives me great pleasure now to congratulate Mr Lim Swee Yong for being awarded the prestigious Guinness Stout Effort Award.

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