

SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE
ON THE EXPENDITURE FOR FEDERATION
ARMED FORCES AT DEWAN RAKYAT, ON
27TH JANUARY, 1962

Mr Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that expenditure amounting to \$20,751,835 for Head 114, Federation Armed Forces, be agreed to.

Sir, most of the projects under the Armed Forces, for which financial provision is sought, are continuation projects and, therefore, I do not wish to deal with the projects in great detail. There are, however, three projects which did not appear in the 1961 Development Estimates and I would like to explain these briefly.

In regard to Sub-head 61, Ferrets Armoured Cars and Spares, a sum of \$2,688,000 is requested under this Sub-head. As I have explained, Sir, in moving the Development (Supplementary) Estimates yesterday, it is necessary to purchase Ferrets armoured cars and spares for our Armed Forces and, although an almost equivalent amount was sought and spent last year, the same amount is required for this year, and it is anticipated that complete purchase will be finalised in 1963.

In regard to Sub-head 62, Artillery Equipment, this is a new item. As Honourable Members will recall, I pointed out when introducing the Ordinary Estimates of Expenditure for 1962 in respect of my Ministry, that the main expansion proposed in the Federation Armed Forces in 1962 was an increase in the artillery resources to produce a full artillery regiment. It is, of course necessary to provide an artillery regiment with equipment and a sum of \$284,000 has been included in this Sub-head for the purchase of the initial portion of the equipment. The full equipment for this regiment will, it is hoped, be provided at the end of 1962.

The only other new item is Sub-head 63, Territorial Army Re-equipment with New Weapons. Again, Sir, Honourable Members will recall that, when I introduced the Ordinary Estimates for the Ministry of Defence, I emphasised the need for re-organising the Territorial Army in order to fulfil the proper role as a reserve

force to our regular Army. Now, if the Territorial Army is to undertake its duty properly, then it is necessary for it to be properly equipped. The complete re-organisation of the Territorial Army including the build-up to the maximum strength, will be a gradual process for a period of at least five years, and it is intended to re-equip it as it re-organises and expands. For this purpose it is estimated that a total of \$15 million will be required, and in the initial stage a sum of \$500,000 has been requested. I hope, Sir, that as the full details of the equipment are worked out by the officers in my Ministry, we will be able to speed up the purchase of equipment and, therefore, Honourable Members must expect me to seek a larger provision in respect of this Sub-head in future years.

Sir, as I mentioned earlier, other Subheads under this Head deal with continuation projects, and I do not wish to dwell at length on them, but I only wish to mention one or two items which are of particular interest.

Now, Honourable Members will see with gratification that in respect of Sub-head 21, Royal Malayan Air Force Expansion, it is hoped to complete the expansion programme by 1962 and that the expenditure over \$5 million will provide all the remaining aircraft now on order and thus provide a complete aircraft for the present expansion in the R.M.A.F.

In respect of Sub-head 60, New Patrol Craft, Honourable Members will see that the sum of \$3,500,000 is requested and that, therefore, by the end of 1962 it is anticipated that half of the full cost of this Patrol Craft will be expended. The building of this aircraft does not, of course, take place simultaneously with the expenditure since considerable preliminary work has to be done before the first craft is launched. However, on the present planning the first craft will be due in January, 1963 and the subsequent aircraft will appear in two monthly intervals.

The only other item for which a large sum is sought is Sub-head 27. Cantonment, Sungei Besi. The total cost of this project exceeds \$22 million and, as Honourable Members are aware, the new Federation Military College, which forms part of this project, was completed and opened by His Majesty in 1961. This main cantonment of the Federation Army is being given priority in our building programme and it is for this reason that a sum of \$4,000,000 is

sought in 1962. As Honourable Members will see from the Printed Estimates, the full cost of the project at Sungei Besi, among others, is being met from the Grant-in-Aid Fund recovered from the United Kingdom. Since the printed Estimates divide the projects for the Armed Forces between Federal Fund and Grant-in-Aid Fund, it is not so apparent at a glance what proportion of the provision is required to be spent on accommodation and what proportion on equipment.

For the benefit of Honourable Members, Sir, I would explain that of the \$20,750,000 odd, approximately \$6,600,000 is required for accommodation project and just over \$14 million for equipment. But the amount spent on equipment is in accordance with the Government's policy on re-equipping the Federation Armed Forces with most modern and suitable weapons. In respect of accommodation, I only wish that I am in a position to ask Honourable Members to approve larger expenditure since I would like to see the reconstruction and new construction for the Federation Armed Forces camps and barracks to be accelerated. However, Sir, my interest as the Minister of Defence here clashes with my interest as the Minister of Rural Development, and so there is only a limited constructional capacity available in the Federation. Accordingly, therefore, where there are certain Federation Armed Forces projects which I would like to see accelerated, it is not possible, in view of the great need for rural development. Nevertheless accommodation project in the Federation Armed Forces will continue, as Honourable Members will see, and in certain cases some of these will be completed in 1962.

Finally, Sir, I only wish to mention one other project and that is the Royal Malayan Naval Base which appears under Sub-head 19 and Sub-head 38. Honourable Members will see that only a sum of \$391,000 sought for in 1962. This sum has been included to continue the survey and other investigation charges for work which has been undertaken at a site selected for the Royal Malayan Naval Base.

Now, as Honourable Members will appreciate, the present planning for Malaysia has resulted in renewed investigation as to the best site for the Royal Malayan Naval Base, and I am sure Honourable Members will appreciate that it may now be necessary to review the original proposal to select the main site within the

present Federation territory. Now, planning such investigation, I am not going to ask the House to grant financial provision at this stage for more than the continuation of the investigation.

Now, Sir, I beg to move that the Estimates under Head 114, Federation Armed Forces, be approved.