

ntendo kes ized

BY AUGUSTINE PANG

ABOUT \$96,000 worth of counterfeit computer game cartridges were seized by private investigators from nine shops on Wednesday afternoon.

And that is just the tip of the iceberg, said Mr Christopher D'Cruz, 40, an official of the distributors, Upron Computer.

The investigators confiscated about 1,200 copies of Nintendo game-cartridges. Titles include Terminator II, Street Fighter II, Robocop and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

The operation involved 16 employees from Commercial Private Investigation and Security (CPIS).

Armed with warrants from a subordinate court, they raided wholesale and retail outlets at Lucky Plaza, Serene Centre, People's Park Centre, High Street Plaza and Holland Road Shopping Centre, said CPIS manager Vincent Tan.

Police supervised the raids. The investigators were engaged by Nintendo of Japan, through its sole agent in Singapore, Upron Computer.

Nintendo games are popular among young people. They are commonly played with



Picture/ KENNETH KOH

Fake: A private investigator holds a few of the counterfeit cartridges seized in the raid.

cartridges inserted into a palm-sized Nintendo machine called Game Boy.

The cartridges can also be inserted into larger machines such as the Family Computer, Super Famicom and Nintendo Entertainment System. These machines are plugged into television sets.

COMPANY 'LOST MILLIONS'

Mr D'Cruz said counterfeit Nintendo cartridges have flooded the market during the past three years and are sold in more than 100 shops here.

He said: "The company has lost millions over the three years. It has affected Nintendo's sales here. That is why we have to take action.

"The raids on these nine shops are just a

tip of the iceberg. They are meant as a lesson to all the other shops not to sell such counterfeit products again."

He said genuine Nintendo games have only one game per cartridge costing \$35 to \$50 each.

Counterfeits are multiple cartridges with up to 1,000 games each. They sell for \$80 to \$150 a piece.

Mr D' Cruz claimed that only a few games in counterfeit cartridges work and they jam the Nintendo machines.

This could not be independently verified.

He said his company will press charges against the dealers whose shops were raided.

He believed some of the cartridges are counterfeited locally while others were imported from Hongkong and Taiwan.