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SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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SPEECH BY MR. NG YEOW CHONG, ASSEMBLYMAN
FOR MOUNTBATTEN, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING
CEREMONY OF MOUNTBATTEN INTEGRATED SECONDARY
VOCATIONAL SCHOOL ON APRIL 3, 1964.

It is indeed an honour to be asked to open the Mountbatten Integrated Secondary Vocational School this evening and I am glad to say that I am very happy to be present this evening to share with you all this memorable occasion of seeing yet another new school opened.

This is the 40th school which the P.A.P. Government is declaring open. Eleven more new schools have been completed and will be officially opened soon. At a glance, this works out to the rate of 10 schools completed every year or nearly one school every month. This is indeed a record achievement second to none in any South East Asian country and must surely reflect the solid determination and tasks taken by the Government to educate the children of Singapore. The tremendous odds to provide enough schools for a country like Singapore which has one of the highest birth rates in the world must seem impossible and unsurmountable, but this has not deterred the P.A.P. Government from facing the challenge. In fact, under the face of such heavy odds, it has only spurred us ahead to gain more strength and energy to meet the challenge and we have succeeded very well. One of the P.A.P. manifestos during the election before the people of Singapore was to provide more schools and erase illiteracy by making sure every child of school-going age gets a place in school. The opening of this new school is another milestone reached, towards our object of educating all our children regardless of anything. This is the 40th new school to be opened in Singapore. The Mountbatten Constituency is now served with 25 schools.

The policy of integrating schools of the different language streams began in 1959 and since then the enrolment in Integrated Schools has been increasing all the time. The object of integrating schools of the different language streams is to break down the barriers which are dividing the different social, cultural and economic ties which still bind the multi racial society of Singapore and indeed of Malaysia. The students of today and tomorrow in integrated schools will be able not only to read, write and speak the different languages of Malaysia but also to tolerate and understand the problems of a multi-racial population and therefore will live harmoniously with each other as citizens of Malaysia.

This is what education in the colonial days has failed to realise. The colonial system not only did a bad job of creating language discrimination but also failed to turn out trained craftsmen and technicians, because the schools of those days only catered for the white collar jobs. Those days are over and today a new image has come and the country can only progress with more craftsmen, technicians, technologists and members of other professions. The present Educational Policy of this Government does not stop at providing a general education for every child but goes on to develop their talents by training them to become craftsmen, technicians and technologists, to meet the industrial expansion which is going on now at Jurong.

I have pleasure to declare this new Mountbatten Integrated Secondary Vocational School open.

APRIL 3, 1964.

(Time issued: 3.15 pm)
