

TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO
THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, INCHE ABDUL RAHIM BIN
ISHAK, AT THE OPENING OF THE EXTENSION TO SEMBAWANG
MALAY SCHOOL ON SATURDAY, JUNE 27, AT 7.30 P.M.

School opening ceremonies are now common occurrences in the State of Singapore. This is because the rate of completion of new schools and extensions to existing schools under the P.A.P. Government has assumed a tempo never before attained. Since 1960, 49 schools and seven major extensions to existing schools have been completed and occupied. This number works out to an average of over 12 schools and major extensions a year, i.e. at least one school or major extension every month.

The extension to this school is necessitated by a greater demand for places in the Malay stream in this area. In accordance with the policy of the Government to provide school accommodation to children as near their homes as possible; the Ministry of Education has built these classrooms to accommodate more Malay pupils in the Sembawang area.

In the last three months or so, there are people who have been carrying out a campaign of hatred for the Singapore Government. Unfortunately they do not seem to realise that this campaign of hatred against the Government could cause considerable damage and racial tension leading even to violence. They also do not seem to understand that what they are doing is exactly what the Indonesian confrontationists want them to do and that is to inflame the feelings of the Malays against the Chinese. Do they know that in playing into the hands of the Indonesian confrontationists they are actually helping to break up Malaysia? Do they realise that any advance or victory for the Indonesians in Singapore will affect the whole of Malaysia? Do they realise that from what they are doing they can at best win votes and that the Indonesians on the other hand are seeking much bigger long term gains like crushing Malaysia and finally taking over Singapore and Malaysia? These people had better think again before they continue with their senseless line of playing one community against another in this country. Now that the Summit meeting has not been very fruitful let us achieve internal unity and strength. Let us continue to build our defences against outside interference and aggression. Our defences on the home front is just as important as those on the borders.

There are irresponsible people who pass groundless remarks that Malay schools are not built in sufficient numbers to cope with the demand. I must state that the people who spread these malicious rumours have sinister motives. They aim to rouse communal feelings and dissatisfaction among the Malays so that there would be an opportunity for their evil seeds to nurture in grounds which they have found out to be unfavourable for such growth so far. If everybody is aware of the facts, their lies would be nailed and the sinister motives would be exposed.

Let me acquaint you with the facts. All children of school-going age are given places in primary schools. Those who pass the Primary School Leaving Examination proceed to Secondary Schools. Those who fail the examination will repeat if they are not excessively overage. Those who have never failed from Primary I to Primary V can sit for the Primary School Leaving Examination four times. Then even those who still fail and are over 14 years old are given places in vocational schools for a two-year course. On completion of the course they may seek admission to the Singapore Vocational

Institute. This2/-

Institute. This means that the school children in Singapore are guaranteed education until they are 16 plus years of age or 18 plus as the case may be. Some people, who without first making investigations regarding the facts of education in Singapore and demand that the Primary School Leaving Examination be scrapped, might not realise that it is no use scrapping this examination if there are no places in school for our children after that.

You all know that Malay students are accorded free education from primary level to university level. In addition, many of them are awarded bursaries or given other forms of assistance like free textbooks and free spectacles. In this connection, Government has recently revised the conditions for the award of all types of bursaries to Malay pupils. In future, all students of Malay origin, who are Singapore citizens or children of Singapore citizens qualifying for admission into secondary schools, pre-University classes, vocational institutes, the Polytechnic and the Universities of Singapore and Malaya, will automatically be eligible for bursary awards and the amount of the award will be decided solely on their financial circumstances. It is expected that, under these circumstances, many more Malay students will be awarded bursaries this year.

To enable more Malays to enjoy the benefits of higher education I am also pleased to announce that as from January 1965 Pre-University Arts classes in the Malay medium will be started to prepare pupils in the Malay stream for the Cambridge Higher School Certificate Examination. Plans for opening this Higher School Certificate Class were made several months ago. Pupils admitted to such classes will be able to offer Malay and Islamic studies at principal level in the Malay medium. Initially certain subjects will have to be offered in the English medium at principal or subsidiary level. These subjects include English, General Paper, History, Geography and Economics. The Ministry of Education is negotiating with the Cambridge Syndicate for more subjects in the Malay medium to be included in the H.S.C. examination. At a later stage, therefore, more subjects in the Malay medium will become available and pupils will also be prepared for the Entrance Examination to the University of Malaya in both Arts and Science.

Full advantage must be taken of these facilities and concessions. The pupils who enjoy these benefits must do their very best to attain better results. Parents and guardians will I am sure play their part well to ensure that the progress of their children is steady and satisfactory. In order to do this, there must be consistent and proper supervision of the children's studies and activities outside school hours. It is useful to have Report Cards closely scrutinised. The principals and teachers of the schools should be consulted on the best possible ways of improving the children's weaker subjects. I am sure many parents will agree that monthly, weekly and daily supervision of the children's school work is necessary.

You may be aware that some of the existing Malay medium schools are amongst the oldest schools in Singapore. A scheme is being planned to demolish these schools and build modern ones with better facilities on the sites. The present character and names of these schools will be retained.

As you know, Singapore has autonomy in education and labour. We must strive to make the best of these opportunities. I therefore appeal to all those who have a part in carrying out the Government's educational policy to do their best to facilitate the fulfilment of our education aims.

I have great pleasure in declaring the extension to the Sembawang Malay School open.

JUNE 27, 1964.

(Time issued: 1430 hours)