

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

MC. APR. 31/70 (ECON)

SPEECH BY MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MR. ONG PANG BOON,  
AT THE OPENING OF THE HOME ECONOMICS EXHIBITION -  
VICTORIA MEMORIAL HALL ON 27TH APRIL, 1970 AT 5.15 P.M.

This is the first exhibition of Home Economics to be held in Singapore. It has been organised to show to the general public exactly what is being taught in our schools in this very important subject.

Home Economics today covers a very large and vital field. It is the whole art and science of looking after every aspect of the home and the family. Our girls are taught to cook appetising, economical and well-balanced meals, to make clothes suitable for every occasion, to manage the home, and to look after the welfare of the family generally. These are skills which every girl should acquire. In the old days, they would have been taught by mother at home, but with the increasing tempo of urbanisation and industrialisation in Singapore, this basic training is often neglected in the home. This is because mothers are becoming working mothers in increasing numbers, working not at home but in factories, shops and offices. No doubt by the time our school girls become wives and mothers, the situation will have worsened, but that is the more reason why they should learn how to manage a home even if they cannot devote as much time to it personally as they should.

As our society becomes more technology oriented, there is the danger that human relationships become completely impersonalised. In the West, there are already ominous signs that a major revolt is imminent against too much mechanisation. In the East, we have always treasured the stability of the family as a social unit, and we should do all we can to guard against influences which may lead to a gradual decline in the family structure.

Home Economics is now as much a science as an art. What mother was able to teach at home is now reinforced by science - dietetics, home safety, budgetting, and a host of allied topics. It is also a subject which has ample scope for creativity - in cookery, dress-making and interior decoration. Above all, it will help our women to retain their special charm - their femininity.

I hope our visitors will enjoy this Exhibition, which I now have pleasure in declaring open.

APRIL 27, 1970.