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OPENING ADDRESS BY DR. LEE CHIAW MENG, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, AT THE FORUM ON "EDUCATION AND INNOVATION" TO BE HELD ON SUNDAY 24TH MAY, 1970 AT 10.00 A.M. AT THE NEW LECTURE THEATRE NO.4, UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

This Forum is a follow-up of the radio course on "Education and Social Change" organised jointly by the Adult Education Board and Radio Singapore. I think it is most appropriate that the subject chosen for this Forum should be "Education and Innovation", for new ways of doing things must be found to cope with rapid changes which are now taking place in the field of education. It is to be hoped that your contribution to the Forum will further lead to new thinking and new strategies which are urgently needed by policy makers who have the responsibility to direct those changes along desirable lines.

Changes are only too obvious in contemporary Singapore. Casual visitors are perhaps more impressed with the physical changes that are currently taking place, such as urban renewal, industrial programmes and social amenities. Indeed, even our own people who have been abroad for only a few months will not fail to return here impressed with what they heard and saw. However, below the surface of these discernible changes, more important and subtle forms of changes are taking place. I refer to the changes in our attitudes, our ways of thinking, our likes and dislikes - in short, our whole philosophy and conception of life itself. I think it is in this context that this particular series of radio course is significant, for when changes are viewed in a broad perspective, it is most desirable that an inter-disciplinary approach be adopted to study them. It is therefore heartening to note that specialists from different disciplines have been invited to contribute to our understanding of such a complex phenomenon. I am sure they have indeed explored deep below the surface and come to grips with the problems in their own distinctive fashion. Although we would not expect them to have workable solution for all problems facing us - for that would be quite impossible - they have nevertheless gone a long way towards calling our attention to important problem areas and pin-pointing the sources of trouble. The discussions that followed their presentations were, to my mind, equally penetrating and lively.

If there is any one common thread that run through the whole series of talks, I think it is this: there must be innovation. Let us therefore look forward to this morning's contribution as a fitting culmination to an exciting and worthy intellectual exercise.

In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to Mr. Gwee Yee Hoon the Co-ordinator, the Speakers of the Radio Course on "Education and Social Change" and the Chairman and panel members of this Forum on "Education and Innovation" for their contributions.

DATE: 23RD MAY, 1970.