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Speech by Dr. Lee Chiaw Meng, Minister of State for Education at the L.G.P.D. Awards and Presentation Ceremony to be held on Tuesday, 22nd September, 1970 at the Cultural Centre at 7.30 p.m.

The Lembaga Gerakan Pelajaran Dewasa, or Adult Education Board as it is better known, recently completed 10 years of its existence without much fuss or ado, despite its spectacular growth and achievements.

2. Over the last decade, the Adult Education Board has come a long way since its very modest inception with one Assistant Inspector of School seconded from the Ministry of Education, operating from a small office which was originally meant as garages at the Cultural Centre. The programme which was limited to literacy classes in 1960 now encompasses such activities as language studies, general education, vocational and technical training, professional training, further education and other courses catering to a total student population in the region of 50,000 at some 80 centres. The achievements of the Board in the field of adult education, as reported by the Chairman, must be considered impressive by any standard. It is even more amazing to note that all these are achieved by a small band of organisational and planning staff, the majority of them are seconded from the Ministry of Education without any specialist training in adult education.

3. The Board's commendable achievements indicate the acceptance of the concept that education is a life-long continuous process. Adult education is a permanent national necessity as it is inseparable from the needs of citizenship and it should be both universal and continuous.

4. I observed that about a third of the Board's activities are engaged in courses having a character of formal education for the working population and over-aged students. With adequate provision within the formal education system, the Board's operation in the field of general education has reached an optimum level. The Board should now give serious consideration to its long-term function and to the future role of adult education in the context of national development.

5. The purpose of adult education should involve the preparation of the individual to play an effective role as a member of the community which is itself undergoing change and development. The individual is largely instrumental in bringing about such change and in direction considered necessary and desirable in the interest

of the community. He will need to be suitably equipped with the necessary knowledge, skill and attitude to enable him to play a more effective role. It is only in this way that the people will be able to understand the social, economic and political issues of the day and contribute to its progress. It is in this direction that the Board should be looking for its role among the educational institutions of our Republic. The Board will thus have to consider the social and political developments and to deal with them in an appropriate manner to provide creative and enlightening opportunities for people to put their talents to wise and fruitful use.

6. With this emerging character of permanence, and with greater responsibility, the Board cannot continue to play an effective role unless it has its own career officers with appropriate staff development programme. The Board as well as other agencies involved in providing adult education should be able to offer challenging and worthwhile careers in their organisations for an increasing number of professionals whose concern is adult education. The Board, in particular, should reconsider its staff and administrative structure and shift away immediately from its previous dependence on teachers seconded from the Ministry of Education to man its senior planning and organisational positions. I am very pleased to note that a start was already made in the recruitment of full-time professional officers. I hope in the near future the Board will be completely independent from the Ministry in respect of the supply of full-time staffs.

7. The Adult Education Board is a shining example of what can be achieved by a group of dedicated, creative and hard-working people, even with the shoe-string budget on an annual Government grant of just over \$1 million.

8. I would like to place on record my appreciation for the dedicated service and good work of members of the Board and its various committees without which the achievements of the Board would not have been possible.

9. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the prize winners for their outstanding performance in the various examinations, competitions and games conducted by the Board.

Thank you.

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