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SPEECH BY INOHE' MOHD. GHAZALI ISMAIL, PARLIAMENTARY
SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, AT THE
OPENING OF ALJUNIED PRIMARY SCHOOL, ON FRIDAY,
12TH MAY, 1972 AT 7.30 P.M.

Tonight, I would like first of all to address a few remarks to the Principal and teachers of this school. In a way, a new school like yours is in an enviable position. You start off with an entirely clean slate. No doubt you do not have any past successes to look back upon, but on the other hand, neither are there any past mistakes and failures to regret, nor unfavourable pre-conceived notions in the minds of the public to overcome. The reputation of your school is in your hands to mould, without hindrance from the past.

It is all the more because of this unblemished start that you all have an especial responsibility to strive to create a good name for this school. You should not bemoan the fact that your new school has no traditions to be proud of; traditions do not spring up overnight. Eventually, the kind of discipline you impose day by day over yourselves and the children in your care, the quality of leadership the Principal and senior teachers provide and your dedication and willingness to work together for the good of your school, even at the expense of putting personal interests temporarily aside; these are the things which will give your school its particular identity. The other adjuncts of success which the public looks for in a school - pupils doing well in all kinds of inter-school activities, good examination results - these will all find their proper place once the basic tone of the school is set.

But those of you here tonight who are parents of children in this school also have your part to play. The state has provided this school and the teachers for the education of your young. The teachers certainly have their own particular responsibilities. But amid all this let us not lose sight of the fact that education begins in the home, and it is in the home that the main process of education will continue, for your child is in school only part of the day, and for the rest of the day he is exposed to influences over which even the most dedicated of his teachers can have little, if any control. It is up to you to take a close interest in all aspects of the development of your child and to see that conditions at

home are conducive to his happiness and healthy growth. The child must learn at home the basic precepts of right and wrong, from the teachings and actions of his parents and those around him. The schools will do their best to give a child a good moral grounding, but the responsibility cannot be wholly theirs. If the home environment is not right, even the best educational facilities and teachers will not be able to foster in the child the stability of character he will need in his adult life. So I would urge all of you who are parents to take more interest in what your child does at home and in school.

The school, too, would benefit if you were to take an interest in it. There is much scope for you, particularly those who live within this district, to become involved in the welfare of the pupils. This school will no doubt, like other Government schools, be forming its School Advisory Committee soon. These School Advisory Committees all over Singapore have been doing a lot of good work in undertaking projects to promote the well-being of the students in the respective schools to which they are attached. I am sure the Principal of this school would be very pleased if those of you who live or work in this constituency would approach him and offer to serve as members of the School Advisory Committee.

I hope that between your efforts and those of the Principal and teachers of this school your children will grow up equipped to face the challenges of life and ready to make their contribution to the good of society. And I hope, too, that your children will leave this school with such good memories of it that when they grow up they will want to return to serve it in various ways.

DATED: MAY 12, 1972.

TIME ISSUED: 1600 HOURS.

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