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SPEECH BY MR TEH CHEANG WAN, MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR 83 ORGANISED BY GEYLANG WEST ZONE "A" RC AT BLOCK 20 UPPER BOON KENG ROAD ON SATURDAY, 30 JULY 1983 AT 2.30 PM

I am very happy to see so many of you here today for this first Children's Book Fair organised by Geylang West Zone "A" Residents' Committee.

All schools today, whether they are primary or secondary schools, have school libraries.

Some schools even have specific library periods every week for their students to browse and select library books to borrow home for their reading pleasure. In the lower primary classes teachers themselves even distribute library books for their students to take home.

While I am sure schools play their part in encouraging students to read widely, I am not so sure how far this is propagated at home.

Parents today are very much caught up in the paper-chase. It is not uncommon to find them coaxing pre-schoolers to practise writing their alphabet, and their school-going children to do their school work. However, they should also consciously encourage their children to read beyond their school textbooks, take them to the National Library or even buy them books as presents instead of toys.

By reading extensively, they will gain additional knowledge not found within the classroom. And once they have acquired this reading habit, they will naturally carry on reading in their adult life; thereby constantly upgrading their general knowledge.

The book fair today is organised with the aim of encouraging this reading habit among our young. More than 600 books are on exhibit with the assistance of the Marine Parade Branch Library. Parents will be able to see the wide range of reading materials available to children.

The books on display have been specially chosen for primary up to the lower secondary students. While picture books and story books are in English, non-fiction information books are also available in Chinese and Malay.

I hope all of you here, both parents and children will spend the next few hours looking at the display. You may well be surprised how much is available to you at virtually no cost.

Membership to the Government libraries is free. It is up to you to take full advantage of the facilities offered to you by our Government.

I now have the pleasure to declare open this Children's Book Fair organised by the Geylang West Zone "A" Residents Committee.

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