

STATEMENT BY MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MR. ONG PAHNG BOON,
AT OFFICIAL OPENING OF SEMINAR ON THE TEACHING OF ART
AND CRAFTS AT T.T.C. AT 10.00 A.M. ON MONDAY, 16TH
AUGUST, 1965.

A good teacher is an educationist who is alive to the happenings around him in our country, and in the world. Besides his professional duties, he is fully interested in the social and economical implications resulting from his work in the light of changing conditions resulting from the upsurge of nationalism and independence. He is able to adapt and adopt new ideas to suit these conditions, to review his work all the time, and to clarify his objectives. Careful thought and planning are given to his teaching programme.

Recent political developments leading to Singapore becoming an independent State mean that Singaporeans, including all teachers, must face the new situation with reality and courage. Our outlook must be re-adjusted to this new situation where our major consideration must necessarily be our survival. Within the limits of 224 sq. miles, almost two million Singaporeans must work and live to survive. Although twice in a generation Singapore has been artificially separated from the mainland, reunification of Singapore with the mainland is a natural development which will come about as a matter of course. Yet in the meantime we have to carry on as an independent people.

If it is necessary, therefore, that teachers, more than ever before, will have to instill the spirit of self-reliance, diligence and discipline into those under their charge. We cannot foretell the future and the eventual reunification of Singapore and Malaysia. But what we can do today is to lay greater stress on the impressionable minds of young Singaporeans the idea that to progress and prosper they have to learn not to depend on others. Above all, our children have to learn that their future career is what they make it out to be.

The fact, however, remains that Singapore is^a multi-racial society. The role teachers and students play to nurture the growth of love, understanding and unity among Singaporeans of various races, religions and languages remain valid even today. As a matter of fact this goal of inter-racial unity has become more important than ever before. We have to show by example to our neighbours in Malaysia that a multi-racial society based on equality and justice for all can still succeed and there need not be intolerance and bigotry.

Education should, as far as possible, prepare our pupils for life after school. It should help them to develop their potentialities to the full for their own well-being, and enable them to take their places in society. If our children are educated only with a view to passing some form of school-leaving examination, then, after leaving school, they will find difficulty in adjusting themselves to the complexities of the adult working world.