Since my last address to you on a similar occasion in 1964, far-reaching political changes have taken place.

We are now an independent and sovereign nation of 2 million people in a turbulent South-East Asia. Our strategic position is envied by hostile neighbours, but it is also a source of strength in our bid for survival and to be master of our own destiny.

In any newly independent State, the first tasks of the Government must be to ensure the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the nation, and the livelihood of its people. The necessity to allow the existence of foreign military bases in Singapore, for the defence of our tiny nation against external threats, is recognised and accepted by the Afro-Asian world, as evidenced by their recognition of our independence and the warm welcome accorded to our goodwill mission. Our policy of non-alignment has further strengthened our friendship and understanding with the Afro-Asian world, and will stand us in good stead in discouraging any expansionist designs which may be harboured by our not so friendly neighbours.

To feed its 2 million people Singapore must industrialise and trade with all nations. We have the labour and the skill, the enterprise and the will - factors necessary for industrialisation except markets for the products of our industries. With the Common Market off in the foreseeable future, Singapore must look for external markets. Since the survival of Singapore as a democratic state is vital to the security and economic interests of many friendly countries like Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom and U.S.A. because of its strategic position, it is not too difficult for them to realise that the opening of their markets to Singapore goods will be to our mutual advantage.
Thus, given 2 or 3 years, Jurong will see a boom such as never witnessed before and Singapore will take off into the industrial sphere.

During this crucial period, however, an increasing flow of unskilled immigrants from neighbouring territories seeking a living in Singapore will be disastrous. Besides competing for limited employment opportunities with Singapore citizens, they will impose a heavy burden on our expenditure on social services which we can ill-afford. It will be unfair for Singapore citizens to continue shouldering this extra social and economic burden especially when there is no economic co-operation from Malaysia. Therefore, in the interests of our national survival, much as we dislike to do it on our kith and kin, we have to take certain measures in respect of employment opportunities and education facilities at the primary and secondary levels for non-citizens. It is here, I think, that the teacher can do much to dispel the misunderstanding and possible dissatisfaction of certain sections of the people, by explaining to them the reasons and the necessity for taking such action which is as much in their own interests as in those of the citizens at large.

Singapore is to be a multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious society where all peoples enjoy equal status and political rights. There is no place for racial chauvinists and religious obscurantists in our society. The breaking down of the language barrier, inimical to racial unity, must be further intensified to strengthen the foundations of a multi-racial nation. It is in the schools that we must intensify our efforts. Towards this end in view, the Ministry has decided that as from 1966, the study of a second language will be made compulsory in all Government and Government Aided schools in the 4 language streams. All school candidates for the School Certificate examination will be required to offer a second language as from 1969.
This is to ensure that future school leavers shall be proficient in at least 2 languages in order to be better equipped to serve our multi-racial and multi-lingual society. Similarly, all the institutions of higher learning in the State should proceed in earnest to provide facilities for the study of languages, particularly for students who are mono-lingual.

The T.T.C. has a vital role to play in the raising of the standard of the second language in schools, for it is in the T.T.C. that the large number of language teachers must be trained to meet the demand in the schools. Quite apart from training new language teachers, special training courses for over 1,000 existing second language teachers in schools must be undertaken and completed in the next 2 or 3 years, so that the study of a second language which has been traditionally compulsory in the Chinese, Tamil and Malay language medium schools can be made more effective. I have no doubt, the Principal and staff of the T.T.C., with the assistance of language experts from abroad, will be able to meet the challenge successfully.

With today's batch of 1,383 graduands, the College has successfully trained a total of 5,695 teachers since 1959. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate you all on your success, especially those who have gained distinctions or won prizes. I am sure you will play a distinctive role in your capacity as teachers and leaders of the new generation from among whom must come many future leaders of our Nation.

NOVEMBER 12, 1965.