

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MR. ONG PANG BOON, AT THE OPENING OF THE SINGAPORE EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION SERVICE AT ETV STUDIOS, TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE, ON SAT., JANUARY 28, 1967, AT 7.30 P.M.

EMBARGOED TILL 8 P.M.
PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

At 8.30 a.m., on next Monday, January 30, a television programme will be broadcast over TV Singapura's Channel 8. The programme will last for 20 minutes; it is in a series called the "World of Mathematics"; and it is called "Mathematics - a New Beginning".

The title is an appropriate one. For this is the first educational television programme to be prepared and produced by the Singapore Educational TV Service, and it does indeed represent a "new beginning" for this Ministry.

I am sure that many of you will have seen and read, the two issues already published of the ETV Service's journal 'etv Singapura'. In that magazine's first issue, published last September, I contributed a foreword, one paragraph of which read as follows:-

"During the past seven years, education in Singapore has undergone a major revolution. From the inadequacies of the past we have built up a modern educational system which matches that of the developed countries of the world. We have achieved free universal primary education without compulsion, and every child is assured of at least 10 years in school. Out of a population of 1.9 million, half a million are now in school, including 130,000 in secondary schools. Having made this quantitative achievement, we can now turn our attention to the qualitative aspects of education. Educational television is one of the means by which we hope to improve the quality of teaching and learning in our schools in all the four language streams".

Now ETV is almost with us, and in a few months' time we shall have the chance to assess how useful it may be, in helping us achieve that qualitative improvement in our educational system when we are so anxious to secure. The ETV Service has been built up in a remarkably short space of time, because we felt that, for schools to benefit properly from its resources, programmes should begin at the beginning of the school year, with new classes and a new curriculum. You can see around you the physical creations, the apparatus and technical facilities of a television studio. But far more has had to be achieved over the last six months than simply to build and equip a studio. Producers and technical assistants have been selected and trained; the ETV curriculum has been prepared by a number of specialist Programme Committees; teachers have been prepared for ETV in an extensive series.

of utilisation courses; scripts and "Teachers' Notes" have been written, printed and circulated to the schools. A system of programme evaluation has been created, to help assess the impact of programmes in these crucial early stages, and to point out areas for modification and improvement. It has not been an easy task.

But by now all secondary schools - both Government and Government-aided - have been provided by the Singapore Government with a television set, and are ready to receive programmes. As you will know from the Press and from the ETV magazine, the first programmes will be directed to the Secondary I and II levels. There will be programmes on General Science, on Mathematics, on English Language and Literature in English medium; programmes in Malay for National Language classes; programmes on Geography and Civics for Chinese medium schools. There will be three terms of ETV programmes a year, with each term lasting for 10 weeks. Every programme will be repeated six times weekly, so that TV Singapore's Channel 8 will be devoting the bulk of its daylight transmission hours to educational television. This is of course only a beginning. Later, we hope to extend the area of ETV transmissions higher into the Secondary Schools and down into the Primary Schools. We are anxious to enlarge our range of subjects and to originate programmes in more languages.

Those of you who have read the ETV magazine, or have had experience of educational television in other countries, will be aware of the significant contribution which ETV is making to many educational systems throughout the world. It is a way, not only of making highly-skilled and professional teachers available to an undreamed of

number of classes, but a means of drawing together a wealth of audio-visual resources to treat a whole range of classroom subjects in a new and illuminating way. It can be a means of introducing new ideas and new approaches in education, not only to students, but also to teachers.

As you will know from the proceedings of our recent Seminar on education, held only a few weeks ago, this Ministry is vitally concerned to introduce a new dynamism into education. ETV can help us to do this. But it cannot do so without help. If I may quote once again from my foreword to the first "etv" magazine:-

"The success or failure of our educational television service will depend primarily on the quality of the programme and their utilisation in the classroom. A service of a high standard, efficiently maintained, entails sound planning, adequate training, smooth operation and continuous evaluation. In other words, there must be co-ordinated effort on the part of the planners, the administrators, the specialists, the producers, the script-writers, the technicians, the designers, the broadcasters, the teachers and the pupils."

ETV is a co-operative enterprise - like all forms of teaching - and at its heart lies the teacher. There is no attempt in educational television to oust or replace the teacher. Rather, ETV is another teaching aid, but an aid with extreme potential. It is for this reason that all recent conferences in this region on educational development have included in their discussions the future development of educational broadcasting. The Asian Conference of UNESCO on "Broadcasting in the Service of Education and Development" last year, the recent meetings of the South-East Asian Ministers of Education Secretariat: in all such discussions the possibilities and potential of ETV have been realised and brought to the fore.

We are proud in Singapore to be involved in the beginnings of Educational Television in the region. We hope that our experiences will be of value not only to ourselves but the whole of South-East Asia. And we are grateful for all the help we have received from CETF and from a vast variety of other sources, in establishing an ETV Service with our own funds. We hope that this help and co-operation will be continued, to give the Service a chance to grow, to prosper and to develop.

I have very great pleasure in officially inaugurating the Singapore Educational Television Service. I am sure that it will very quickly justify itself as a unique educational aid in Singapore.