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SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MR. LIM KIM SAN,  
AT THE OPENING OF THE SEMINAR ON "PHYSICS, MATHEMATICS  
AND ENGINEERING IN THE SERVICE OF SINGAPORE" ORGANISED  
BY THE SINGAPORE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AT THE  
CONFERENCE HALL ON 18TH SEPTEMBER 1970 AT 9.00 A.M.

Mr. Chairman,  
Ladies & Gentlemen,  
Boys and Girls:

Three weeks ago, my Ministry conducted a week-long seminar in this Conference Hall on "Southeast Asia To-day" for Pre-University students which, from all accounts, was an unqualified success. To-day, we are assembled here for another Seminar for Pre-University students organised by the National Academy of Science on the subject of "Physics, Mathematics and Engineering in the Service of Singapore". This preoccupation with Pre-University students is by no means accidental. My Ministry believes that Pre-University students, who in a few years' time will begin to make a contribution to our society in positions of importance, should be given the best education that our Republic can provide. By education we mean not only lessons in the classroom, but also lessons to familiarise them with what is going on around us, with what makes us tick, and with what is expected of them in different vocations.

2. The theme of this Seminar is of direct value to those of you who are in the Pre-University science stream. But it may be of even greater value to those who are not studying Physics, Mathematics or Engineering. This is because it is just as important for you to understand the nature of other people's jobs as to understand your own. Team work is essential to the success of any operation, and if you are able to understand what his problems are, you would be in a much better position to make your own contribution to the joint effort. This is true not only of working in an office or a factory, but also of working as citizens in the major task of nation-building.

3. Those of you who are aspiring to be scientists and engineers can expect a bright future, particularly the engineers. In a recent study undertaken by the Economic Research

Centre of the University of Singapore, it has been estimated that we shall need 4,000 engineers by 1980 to man the Republic's rapidly developing industries. To meet this target, it would require an output of 800 professionally trained engineers by 1980. Last year, only 66 engineers graduated. However, the University of Singapore has increased its intake of engineering students this year to 330, and Nanyang University is actively planning for an engineering faculty.

4. The avalanche of applications from our students for admission to the faculties of engineering and science in the local universities and universities abroad, indicates an appreciation of the opportunities available in these fields.

5. Recent returns in the Ministry of Education showed that 65% of our Secondary II students prefer to continue with their secondary education in the technical stream.

6. This emphasis on and preference for technical education represents a radical change in the attitude of our population and is typical of the flexibility of Singaporeans to adapt themselves to changing circumstances so as to be prepared for coming events.

7. I can, therefore, assure those who have put in a great deal of work into the planning and organisation of this seminar that their labour will not be in vain, for I am confident that the students attending this seminar would take full advantage of the opportunity given to learn from those who have put their knowledge of Physics, Mathematics and Engineering to practical use. I am, indeed, grateful to the experts who have consented to present working papers at this seminar and, on behalf of our student population, may I say: thank you to them and to the National Academy of Science for making a professional seminar of this kind possible.

Ministry of Education  
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