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SPEECH BY MR. LIM KIM SAN, MINISTER FOR  
EDUCATION AT THE TEACHERS' TRAINING COLLEGE  
GRADUATION CEREMONY ON 14TH NOVEMBER, 1970  
AT 8.50 A.M. AT PATERSON ROAD, SINGAPORE  
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The Principal, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is, indeed, a great pleasure on my first visit to the Teachers' Training College as Minister for Education, to learn of the many achievements of the College in the past year as outlined by the Principal in his report. By all accounts, it has been a most successful year, and I would like to congratulate the staff and students for the verve and vitality with which they carried out their various educational, cultural, social, civic and sporting activities both in and out of the College campus.

The last decade saw a remarkable progress in education in Singapore. On looking back we must admit that there have been setbacks and disappointments in some areas. In spite of our difficulties we have managed to establish a sound national system of education that has surpassed most of the target figures set by the Karachi Plan for developing countries. The Plan recommended a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:35, a lecturer-trainee ratio of 1:15 and a 250% increase in educational expenditure over a period of 10 years from 1960. It also recommended universal, free and compulsory education for seven years for every child in the country. While education is not compulsory here, we are providing up to eight years of free primary schooling for each child.

In the implementation of our educational programmes, the T.T.C. has more than fulfilled its role as a training institute for teachers during a time of rapid educational expansion. It has adapted itself to the requirements of

multi-lingualism/...

multi-lingualism and has helped in retraining teachers for teaching vocational and technical subjects. In addition, it has organised in-service courses for teachers to keep abreast of modern educational thought and practice, and thus helped upgrade their professional skills. It has shown itself to be a most viable institution, and has adapted itself well to the changing needs of a developing nation.

When and if the history of education in Singapore is written, the T.T.C. surely has earned itself honourable mention for its service to the community.

The T.T.C. has grown and matured with the years, and the time has now come to vest it with more responsibility and authority, and give it the independence to assume its proper role as an institution of tertiary education. Hence the establishment of the Institute of Education which will take over the whole programme of teacher education in Singapore. We can now look forward to an institution which will retain the good qualities of the present college, but with better facilities for training and educational research. When the Institute is set up, the knowledge and experience of the T.T.C. teaching staff will not be lost. As I mentioned in Parliament, no one will be out of a job. Those who are not recruited into the Institute's teaching staff will still be needed in the Education Service.

Coming back to the subject of teacher-training, let me remind those of you who are graduating to-day that you are passing out as professionals. Teaching is not a job in the usual sense of the word. It is a profession and a noble one at that. From time immemorial, the teacher has been held in high esteem. He was the purveyor of knowledge and the repository of wisdom. To him came the villagers, young and old, for

advice and guidance. He was a most respected member of the community.

The position to-day is the same. A good teacher is still a very respected member of the community. He is a valuable digit, so let me repeat that those of you who are graduating to-day are joining a very noble profession, and I expect each and everyone of you to maintain the dedication to service and the integrity and dignity of character which are the hallmarks of the teaching service.

You have each received a certificate or diploma which testifies that you have successfully learned how to teach. It shows that you have the know-how but it does not mean that you are a good teacher. Whether you will be a good teacher or not depends very much upon how you apply yourself in the classrooms. Apart from the technical know-how, to my mind, the most important factor in becoming good at your job is to be interested in it. You must think about it, ponder it and not gloss over it as something which has to be done.

Teaching has one advantage over other professions in that teachers have been pupils, so they all have experienced the other side of the coin. They have been at the receiving end of both dull and interesting lessons. I suggest all of you do a little reviewing of your past experience as students in the classrooms. Approach it with a critical mind so that when you enter the classrooms, this time to teach, you will know what to do to arouse the curiosity and maintain the interest and attention of your students.

You will soon be entrusted with the heavy responsibility of educating our young, and of preparing them for the

role as responsible citizens of Singapore. The certificate you have earned to-day testifies that you have the ability and the capacity to be both mentor and friend to our young citizens. It is now up to you through your initiative, intelligence and dedication to inspire our students to tread the path of knowledge and equip themselves to be worthy citizens of our city state. I know it is in many of you to realize the potential that lies within you and may I wish you all every success in your noble endeavour to become good teachers and citizens.