

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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SPEECH BY TUAN HAJI YAKOUB MOHAMED, MINISTER OF STATE FOR PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND M.P. FOR KG. UBI CONSTITUENCY, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF GOYLANG SERAI VOCATIONAL INSTITUTE ON FRIDAY, 26TH MAY, 1972 AT 7.30 P.M.

I am glad to be associated with the opening ceremony of the Goylang Serai Vocational Institute this evening.

When the P.A.P. Government first took office in 1959, it realised that our commercial and trading activities would not be able to sustain economic growth to meet the needs of the growing population in the years ahead. We decided to embark on industrialisation to ensure the survival of our economy and to provide jobs for our growing labour force.

First, the emphasis on education was shifted from the academic to the technical resulting in the establishment of the technical education department. The provision for Ministry of Education has been increased from \$191.03 million for 1971/72 to \$209.7 million for the financial year 1972/73. The main changes of significance are the restructuring of the education service. The expansion of the technical stream of education continues, there is a sizeable increase of \$18.7 million for the current financial year. We are entering the fifth year of technical education which is being given priority from all quarters. This must of necessity be so if we are to ensure that an adequate number of craftsmen and technicians are produced in future years to meet the manpower needs of the accelerated industrialisation programme.

A National Industrial Training Council was formed in 1968 to spearhead the development of technical education and industrial training. Tremendous progress and expansion in the field of technical education and industrial training have taken place during the last four years.

Student enrolment in the Singapore Polytechnic increased of leaps and bounds. Some 600 students had to be moved in August 1971 to the Dover Road Complex.

I therefore urge all parents, especially the Malays, to be technical biased when choosing education for their children. In an industrialised Singapore, blue-collar workers can be easily absorbed by our factories and industries. For the academic school-leavers white-collar jobs are on the decrease.

The Geylang Serai Vocational Institute started as a vocational school in 1965. To meet the needs of the new industries with their increasing technological sophistication, Geylang Serai Vocational School was converted into a vocational institute. As an industrial training centre, this institute has produced and is still producing semi-skilled and skilled workers. At the present moment there are 828 students learning the various trades in Geylang Serai Vocational Institute. I am happy and proud that of this figure, 478 are Malays of which 456 are doing fulltime and 22 are in part-time courses. It is gratifying to note that this institute has produced students who are making useful contributions to the nation's economy and stability. The quality of the work produced can be seen in the exhibits displayed this evening.

Gone are the days when the public tended to think of technical and industrial training as being fit only for those "unable to study". Our present industrial training programmes bear no association with past efforts intended to provide training for drop-outs to be employable in semi-skilled and operative work. In a modern industrialised economy, it requires not only mechanical skills but also technological knowledge and expertise to undertake specialised work. Parents and pupils now fully realise the dignity and pride that go with skilled work and that better prospects lie in the future for the blue-collared man.

In conclusion, may I on behalf of the Government express our gratitude to all concerned for their technical assistance in establishing this institute and to all the staff, Government officials, Colombo Plan experts and voluntary workers who have made the Geylang Serai Vocational Institute what it is today.

Date: 26.5.72.