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SPEECH BY MR A. M. MATTAR, PARLIAMENTARY
SECRETARY (EDUCATION) AT THE FOURTH ANNUAL
SPEECH AND PRIZE-GIVING DAY OF UPPER
SERANGOON TECHNICAL SCHOOL, ON SATURDAY
28 SEPTEMBER, 1974, AT 4.30 P.M.
.....

Mr Chairman,
Principal, Staff & Students of
Upper Serangoon Secondary Technical School,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I first express my thanks to the Principal and Staff of Upper Serangoon Secondary Technical School for having so kindly invited my wife and me to the Fourth Annual Speech and Prize-giving Day of the School and also for giving me the opportunity to speak on this happy occasion.

2 It is indeed gratifying to note from the records and also from your Principal's Report that Upper Serangoon Secondary Technical School, since its inception a few years ago, as pioneers in technical education for the Malay-medium students, has chalked up an impressive record of achievements in many fields of pupil endeavour. A significant fact worthy of mention is that, over everything else, the school has consistently maintained a high percentage of passes in the School Certificate examination attaining in 1972 up to 72.5% as against the National percentage of passes of 44.9% for that year. It seems to me that this improvement fairly well reflects the general pattern of improvement discernible at all levels of education amongst Malay students in our schools. Perhaps a few statistical details would be of interest to highlight certain aspects of this encouraging trend.

3 At the lowest level, that is, in the PSLE, the percentage of passes in the Malay stream rose from 45.3% in 1965 to 53.7% in 1969; and in 1973, despite the fact that the Malay-medium pupils had to take, for the first time, Mathematics and Science in English, a very encouraging figure of 60% was achieved.

4 At School Certificate level, from the humble beginning of 19.5% pass in 1963 with the successful students numbering 41, the percentage of pass leapt to 42.4% in 1967 with the number of successful students totalling 353. The highest percentage pass was attained last year, that is 47% and the total number of successful students (those getting 3 or more 'O' level passes) also reached an unprecedented figure of 931. Quality-wise, the 1973 results also showed a marked increase in the number of students obtaining more than 3 'O' level passes (or 3 Credits) as compared to previous years.

5 In the HSC examination, admittedly much still remains to be accomplished in the Malay stream as the first Malay Pre-U classes were started only in 1965. Nevertheless, the 1973 HSC results showed a modest improvement over those of 1972 in that 59 obtained a full certificate in 1973 out of a candidature of 197; while 27 obtained a full certificate in 1972 out of a candidature of 95. Although the exact statistical figures are not immediately available, there is every reason to believe that there has been a corresponding increase in the number of Malay students in the English stream passing in both SC and HSC examinations.

6 In the field of technical education, it is a commendable fact that more and more Malay students are finding places in the Vocational Institutes, the Singapore Technical Institute and the Ngee Ann Technical College. What is most heartening is the increase in enrolment of Malay students, taking various technician courses, at the Singapore Polytechnic. From 23 students in 1970, the number jumped to 97 in 1973. At the recent graduation ceremony of the Singapore Polytechnic, a batch

of 35 Malay students received awards of certificates in various courses ranging from Technician Civil Engineering to Technician Mechanical Draughtsmanship courses.

7 Their success truly exemplified the new spirit which, I am pleased to see, is becoming increasingly more apparent amongst students of the present generation - the spirit to accept challenges and the spirit to persevere with single-minded determination in the face of all odds. If this spirit is essential for you to surmount all obstacles in the pursuit of your studies at this juncture of your scholastic career, it will undoubtedly be even more so in the future. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to urge you, at whatever class and in whatever stream you are studying now, to be imbued with this spirit and proceed with the task of equipping yourselves with knowledge, skills and expertise to ensure a better and brighter future for yourselves. By so doing, not only would you derive personal benefit, but you would also be making yourselves into useful and effective digits in your community.

8 To conclude, may I add that clearly the School record of achievements would not have been possible without the drive, devotion to duty and dedication of the Principal and Staff of the School and members of the School Advisory Committee. To every single one of them, I wish to extend my congratulations for the good work that has been done.

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