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TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MR. CHEW SWEE KEE, AT THE OPENING OF THE FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE SINGAPORE COUNCIL FOR ADULT EDUCATION AT 2.30 P.M. ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1957.

It gives me much pleasure to be here this afternoon to open this conference. The Singapore Council for Adult Education has been in existence for some years now, and it is gratifying to see that it has grown from strength to strength. That the Council is what it is today is due mainly to the efforts of the voluntary organisations, guided by their conscientious leaders, in the adult education movement.

Education, be it of adult or of children, is fundamentally the training of discipline. Ignorance is the breeding ground of anti-social germs which eat into the heart of what may appear to be a perfectly healthy state. Government has spent much time and money in producing healthy minds in healthy bodies, and thanks to such voluntary organisations as those interested in adult education we are able to forge ahead, and today stands this cultural centre from which should radiate all activities which aim at enlightenment of the human mind. But it will not be sufficient for the Council alone to radiate its activities from this building. Activities must converge here from other bodies and I should like to see the fullest use being made of the facilities offered here. In fact, I understand that a large number of activities are already being carried on here regularly. I therefore wish to congratulate those who have taken the initiative to make use of this centre.

Adult education is very necessary in Singapore where facilities for education in the past have not been what we have all wished for. This is not a complaint, but a fair statement of truth. No country in the world has all the educational facilities. The school curricula here are already overcrowded. The Adult Education Council therefore has a vital role to play in providing that little extra for young men and women who are keen to learn also that little extra after their normal school hours. There are also those who have left school, indeed also those who have never been to school. These people also require something either in addition to what they already have or to make up for their deficiencies. In fact, the need of those who have not been to school should be the greatest in the eyes of the Adult Education Council. I hope, therefore, that the Council in planning its programme will bear this in mind.

I do not wish to hold up the proceedings this afternoon as you have important functions to perform and an important agenda to go through. I only want to say how glad I am to be here to open this conference, and to see the Singapore Council for Adult Education having grown to this healthy state. I now have the greatest pleasure to declare the conference open.

DECEMBER 7, 1957.

(Time issued at 1745 hours)

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