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SPEECH BY MR HO KAH LEONG, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(EDUCATION), AT THE VICTORIA SCHOOL SPEECH AND PRIZE-GIVING
DAY ON WEDNESDAY, 3 AUGUST 1983 AT 10.30 AM

It is indeed a privilege and honour to be invited to speak in an institution which has behind it a long and glorious past, steeped in tradition and a future which is expected to be likewise. This school was established on 2 Aug in the year 1890 at Kampong Glam Malay School and later was moved to Kota Rajah Malay School. Only in 1933 did the school move into the present location and took on the name, Victoria School. This school has been the spawning ground for great Singaporeans, among whom is our President, Mr Devan Nair, who visited your school last year. I am sure many more illustrious Singaporeans will emerge from this fertile ground.

Victoria School has been maintaining its position as one of the top schools and this is due to the quality of pupils entering at secondary one every year, the group of dedicated teachers, the leadership provided by past and present principals and the support given by members of the School Advisory Committee (SAC).

The pupil input into Victoria consists mainly of pupils from the top 10 per cent and this paves the way for all round excellence. It is expected of this cohort of pupils to make full use of all opportunities available to them and make a mark in life. On the other hand it is expected of the teachers and the principal to provide, both in and outside the classrooms, the environment that will

allow the pupils to develop to their fullest potential. The expectations have been fulfilled in the past and we can rest assured that they will continue to be met in the future.

Because of its age, maturity and past performance, because of pupil input, because of a group of dedicated teachers led by a principal with vision and because of the existence of an energetic School Advisory Committee, Victoria School has been selected as one of the three secondary schools for a unique pilot project - the implementation of the School Executive Committee (SEC). A carefully selected group of people from all walks of life have been given the task of providing professional and administrative input into the school system to further enhance the leadership currently available. This Executive Committee will conform to general policies laid down by the Ministry of Education but will develop strategies on their own for the implementation of the policies. The principal and a few selected members of the staff will join the group to plan progressive strategies on a collective basis. Since the Chairman and the majority of the members of the School Executive Committee will be from professions not connected with education, they will provide a wider spectrum of experience in life which is deemed useful in school management. In the final analysis, if the desired results are achieved then the concept of the School Executive Committee will be considered for wider application.

The formation of the School Executive Committee will in no way minimise the importance and functions of the School Advisory Committee. In fact the SAC will have to be more involved in helping the Executive Committee in the implementation of new strategies. Furthermore, I have to re-state the fact that one of the reasons for choosing this school for the pilot project was the support given by the SAC to all school activities.

The staff may have to re-orientate their stand on teaching strategies and the school may have to obtain adequate and sophisticated teaching materials to supplement and complement classroom instruction. Furthermore, added emphasis may have to be placed on pupil participation in ECA. Hence, we expect the formation of the School Executive Committee to bring about gradual changes in school life.

I am sure you are also aware that Victoria School has been selected as one of the elective art schools because your school has a strong inclination in art. The main objective of the elective art scheme is to provide a balanced and enriched art programme for the academically abler pupils so that when they are successful in life they can make contributions towards the general artistic environment of Singapore. The elective art schools will be provided with the best facilities and teaching staff. I am sure pupils of Victoria School will benefit from this programme when it is implemented in 1985.

Finally, I am confident that pupils, staff and members of the SAC and SEC will work together to make Victoria School second to none in the years to come.

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