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Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY MR HO KAH LEONG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION), AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING
OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY JURONG EAST BRANCH
ON MONDAY, 1 AUGUST 1988 AT 6.00 PM

I am pleased to have been invited to officiate at the opening of the National Library's Jurong East Branch.

This eighth full-time branch of the National Library has cost \$5.3 million including \$3.6 million of building costs. It is a very modern library with comfortable seating for reading, listening and viewing. It has 105,000 volumes of books and about 200 titles of periodicals in Malay, Tamil, Chinese and English for home reading as well as for reference. Audio-visual materials are provided for readers' use in the Library.

As a community library, the Jurong East Branch Library will provide facilities for the activities and programmes of grassroots groups. This multi-purpose hall and the two meeting rooms are available free for use by grass roots organisations and government departments. The library will also deal with the information needs of the community through its Community Information Service and Industrial Information Service.

In our complex world, quick access to up-to-date and accurate information has become a must for executives and managers from various industries, trades and professions.

The library can play an important role in assisting such information seekers to locate the needed information. I am sure this new Branch Library would take on this new challenge and become a true community information resource centre in this community. I am also sure that the residents of Jurong and nearby constituencies will fully utilise the Library's many services and facilities.

In keeping with the changing needs of library users, the National Library and its branches would also want to consider the provision of new types of materials and services, e.g., computer software packages, tutorials on floppy disks and personal computers. Computer literacy can be encouraged by forming computer clubs. Members of such clubs can serve their community by developing and maintaining online community information. Such a service is provided by libraries in other parts of the world.

In some other countries, for instance in Britain, libraries also handle toys for children, and prints and paintings. A toy library which lends out toys is an interesting concept. The toys can include educational toys. They are not only fun for children but also encourage skills of observation and analysis. A toy library would therefore be a welcome addition to the library service.

We can promote art appreciation among Singaporeans by having a print-cum-painting library. Libraries, such as the West Glamorgan County Library in the United Kingdom, have already provided this kind of service to their library members. Our local artists can perhaps be encouraged to deposit some of their works at the library and readers can view the paintings as well as borrow them for a couple of months.

These are ideas for the National Library to consider. As in the past, I am sure it will keep up with technological changes and changing needs of library users. In this way it will continue to play a vital role in Singapore's development.

It is now my pleasure to declare open the National Library Jurong East Branch.

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