

ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE OFFICIAL
OPENING OF THE NATIONAL JUNIOR COLLEGE
ON 14TH MAY, 1970

The opening of the National Junior College formally marks a significant phase in the progress of our educational system. In the next few years, we shall have another 6 to 8 junior colleges for Pre-U students. One will be by the Methodist mission, another by the Anglican- Presbyterian missions jointly, one by the Catholic mission, one adjacent to the Chinese High School by the Chinese clan associations, and about four by the Education Ministry.

They will be sited where transport will be convenient, and where full use can be made of the large number of playing fields, gymnasia, tennis courts, swimming pools, and other facilities, which the British armed services will hand

over in the latter half of 1971¹.

National Archives of Singapore

¹ 25 swimming pools, 10 squash courts, 115 tennis courts, 7 golf courses, 13 gymnasia, 93 sports fields, 31 basket-ball courts, and 39 badminton courts.

Junior colleges have several advantages over Pre-U classes in secondary schools. First, they are better equipped to teach our 10,000 Pre-U students² and offer them better opportunities for learning and practising two languages. Second, they have only one session, making possible a better spread in the timetable for lectures, tutorials, and ECA (extra-curricular activities). Third, they give our young men and women a more gradual transition from the pupillage of classrooms and form masters, to the greater independence and learning on their own in the universities.

As Pre-U classes come out of secondary schools, we shall convert about a dozen of our best secondary schools back to one-session schools. This has become possible because of successful family planning, successful except for the lowest income group. And eventually even this group must keep down their families if they are to give their children better health, and better education. The quality of our education will improve as dramatically as the births have gone down from 62,495 in 1958 to 44,738 in 1969.

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	<u>Pre-U I</u>	<u>Pre-U II</u>	<u>Total</u>
English stream	3,043	2,346	5,389
Chinese stream	2,668	2,021	4,689
Malay stream	<u>64</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>131</u>
Total	<u>5,775</u>	<u>4,434</u>	<u>10,209</u>

We can now afford to be more generous and liberal in admitting students from ASEAN countries to our schools and junior colleges. Those who show that they cannot afford economic fees, will be allowed half subsidised fees. We shall also award more ASEAN scholarships for secondary schools, junior colleges, Polytechnic and universities.

Several ASEAN scholars at the National Junior College and in the University of Singapore, though not in the University of Nanyang, have had difficulty finding lodgings. We are converting one whole new Housing & Development Board block of flats in the new Outram Park Complex into a hostel. This hostel will be ready by September 1970. One of the Roman Catholic missions have said they are willing to manage this hostel. This hostel block is centrally situated, between the Polytechnic and Outram Road General Hospital, University of Singapore and National Junior College. A room in this hostel will cost about \$30 per month. Meals will be at cost.

One of the best equipped schools in Southeast Asia, the British armed services' St. John's School at Dover Road, will be handed over to a trust to run a secondary school for the children of the British community. I understand the trust intends to provide optional teaching of Malay and Chinese for Asian students.

But the standards of teaching, scholarship and extra-curricular activities in our best secondary schools and junior colleges must, and will, be as good as any in this part of the world.

As Singapore's first junior college, you have staked your claim to be the National Junior College. When the other junior colleges are opened, they will contest your pre-eminence.

A good education is one that brings out the best in a student, and develops his capacity to meet problems and challenges of life. Good schooling helps the home to inculcate into students habits of work, exercise and recreation.

Bright students, tutored by experienced and dedicated teachers in junior colleges, should achieve a rounded development. A robust constitution and a keen intellect are two qualities for a productive and worthwhile career. Given that extra strength of character which makes for leadership, the verve and dynamism of our society will surge upwards to new heights of achievement.