

Singapore Government **PRESS RELEASE**

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SPEECH BY MR PHUA BAH LEE, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(DEFENCE) AT THE OPENING OF RAFFLES GIRLS' PRIMARY SCHOOL
AT HOLLAND GROVE ROAD ON FRIDAY, 25 APR. 80 AT 5.30 PM

Most visitors to Singapore express surprise at Singapore's level of development. They are impressed by our housing, our industrialisation and the cleanliness and greenness of our city. They are amazed that a developing country like Singapore could have achieved so much during such a short period of two decades under the present Government.

Perhaps, not so evident to the visitor, but no less remarkable, are our achievements in:

- (a) creating a national identity; and
- (b) in improving the educational quality of our population.

When Singapore achieved independence, it inherited a population comprising mostly of migrant people and their descendants. They were of different ethnic origins, who felt little or no ties with Singapore. From this hotchpotch our Government has succeeded in creating citizens who identify themselves as Singaporeans and are proud to be known as Singaporeans. That this has been achieved in the relatively short period of about 15 years since independence is even more remarkable.

In the field of education, our achievement is no less remarkable. Our literacy rate has risen appreciably so that today it is the highest in this part of the world. The educational level of the people has also risen. In other words, not only do we have a higher proportion of educated people, but their educational standard is now also much higher. A large proportion of our population, especially among the younger generation, have completed secondary education. We are also producing more and more accountants, architects, engineers, doctors and other University graduates year by year.

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That all these have been possible is because of the large sums of money which the Government spent on buildings, equipment and teachers to provide better and better educational facilities. The new building for this school, which has been constructed at a cost of over \$2,000,000 is an example of what the Government has been doing to continually up-date and improve the educational facilities.

The Government has spent such a large proportion of its budget on education, because it realises the importance of a good education to the people and to the country. I hope that those of you present here who are students realise this as well and will make good use of the time you will spend in this school, so that it will both be fruitful and pleasant.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have pleasure in declaring this building open.

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