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SPEECH BY MR YATIMAN YUSOF, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(FOREIGN AFFAIRS), AT THE HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD
DAILY-RATED EMPLOYEES' UNION'S PRODUCTIVITY SPECIAL MEETING
AT THE NTUC CLUB UNION HALL
ON THURSDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 1988 AT 10.30 AM

Productivity drive, for many daily-rated workers, has always had special significance. Being at the lower-rung of the skill-ladder, such movement means not only upgrading one's skill, achieving better teamwork, introduction of machines, more systematic approach to work and creation of more and more productivity-improvement schemes or groups but also improving one's ability to absorb a web of new concepts in one's day-to-day involvement with work.

Efforts towards this end had been started by raising the general education of the workers, such as the introduction of BEST and other similar education-upgrading schemes.

Through such additional knowledge, workers are able to understand new principles involved in relation to the workings of some machines, gain greater confidence in expressing their ideas and enhance their ability to communicate with one another.

In short for productivity to be successfully improved over a long time, sustained efforts must be made in improving the quality of our workers.

However, there is special need for us to understand the constraints facing our workers. Age, nature of experience, language and type of works performed by our workers tend to place severe restriction to their ability to attain rapid improvement in their general education.

Because of the specialised nature of their work, attempts to improve their understanding on matters relating to their work must be tackled in two ways. While there is a need to improve the standard of their general education, special effort must be made to focus on certain specific areas that are related to their work.

While teaching simple physics (through the teaching of science) can broaden their understanding on the workings of some machines, for those involved in disposal work additional knowledge on law of gravity, corrosive chemicals and their hazards and friction can be extremely useful.

Similarly, those involved in tending the plants need to know, in addition to general knowledge in botany, additional knowledge on soil, soil formation and essential chemicals for plant-treatment and growth.

The objective of such exercise is to create a pool of workers who, in their own way, are "expert" in their field. This, in turn, will help them to be more innovative in searching for new and better ways of doing things.

In planning our future productivity drive, may be it is worth to explore this area.

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