

SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ON THE MOTION OF THE GOVERNMENT CLERICAL EXAMINATIONS IN THE DEWAN RAKYAT ON 3RD MARCH, 1965

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for Batu¹ suggested that there has been delay in announcing the examination results for the Clerical Service. He has also admitted that there has been some improvement in the last several months and I can assure him there will continue to be improvements in the next few months. However, Sir, the Establishment Office is facing a number of practical difficulties in regard to these examinations. There are difficulties in getting these examination papers marked. In the last examination held in August, 1964, there were as many as 4,586 candidates sitting for the Clerical Examination. There were four types of examination: there was the General Clerical Examination, the General Clerical Probationer Examination, the Lower Clerical Examination and the Lower Clerical Probationer Examination. Now, the Honourable Member will appreciate that the examiners for these examinations are Government servants and they have to do their work during spare time, outside office hours. Therefore, it is my view unfair for Government to ask these examiners to speed up unnecessarily with the marking of these examination papers. Certainly, in view of the large numbers of clerks taking the examination, it will not be possible to have the examination papers marked within a month. Normally, we allow the examiner to take about one-and-a-half months to have these examination papers marked, but owing to the large numbers of candidates invariably the examiners have not been able to keep up to this schedule.

In the last examination, I am advised, Sir - the last examination held in August 1964 — there was a delay in only one part of the General Clerical Examination, that is, the English Language paper. This delay was due to the fact that in the midst of the examination the examiner appointed had to go on study leave and we had to find a new examiner, with the result that there was a slight delay. But I can assure the Honourable Member for Batu that every effort will be made to speed up the work and to reduce the delay and to announce the results as quickly as possible.

As regards documents, books, General Orders and Financial General Orders, these are provided in the Departments and offices, and the clerks can make use of these documents of their respective Departments and Offices. If, however they wish to have these General Orders and

¹ Dr. Tan Chee Khoon.

other documents themselves, the Government will be pleased to have them available for sale to them at Government prices.

Now, as regards the Honourable Member's last suggestion that these examinations should be undertaken by the Staff Training Centre, I would like to say that the Staff Training Centre is responsible for in-service training, and the Staff Training Centre is under the Establishment Office. Therefore, Sir, it will not be right for the examinations to be transferred to the Staff Training Centre. Whatever it is, it should be the responsibility of the Establishment Office to undertake these examinations and, as I said, every effort will be made to try and speed up the marking of these papers and the announcement of the results. In addition to that, Sir, I would like also to say that it takes time to mark the papers of so many thousands of candidates and after the papers are marked, the results have to be amplified. It will take time and it generally takes about three months for the papers to be marked and for the results to be compiled. As I said, we will do our best to try and speed it up and, to be fair to the examiners, they have to work in their spare-time, outside office hours, and they have to be careful with their marking so that they will be fair to the candidates who sat for the examinations.

Sir, as I said, generally it is the Government's policy to try and speed this work up within the bounds of possibility and we have speeded it up in the last several months, and I hope that we will be able to speed this up further in the future.