

Ucapan YB Menteri Pelajaran, Datuk Hussein Onn,
Ketika meresmikan Persidangan ke-46, Pengarah-
Pengarah Pelajaran Malaysia, bertempat di Balai
Seminar, Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka pada 26hb. Feb.
1973 jam 10.00 pagi.

We are in the third year of our Second Malaysia Plan. Sometime this year there will be an overall mid-term review of its implementation. As far as the Ministry of Education is concerned, I shall make the closest scrutiny as to the extent of its implementation and any defect or delay must be speedily rectified. I would like to say again what I have said many times before that this Government means business.

or in the State Education Dept.

There is no place either in the Education Ministry/or in the Teaching Service for any one who is not prepared to work and does his best. The Education Ministry cannot afford to carry dead-wood and will not do so.

2. One of the basic challenges in national development is the realisation of the full potential of the vast human resources of the country. Economic expansion is vital in order to provide productive employment for school-leavers. To intensify such absorption and to produce adequate numbers of skilled personnel necessary for the implementation of the new economic policy, the education and training systems are being geared more effectively. The education system is being consolidated so as to make it an efficient and effective ~~vehicle for the achievement of these~~ ~~important objectives of national development.~~ Thus

- (a) the concept of basic education has been extended to include not only the primary cycle, but also three years of lower secondary education,
- (b) the pattern of secondary education has been reorganised with the introduction of comprehensive and post-comprehensive education; and
- (c) the shift towards a better balance between general academic education, on the one hand, and vocational, technical and science education, on the other.

3. Over the years since our country's independence, we have directed all our efforts, energy and financial resources towards

expanding our primary and secondary education and providing places and teachers for them. This year in West Malaysia, there are about 1.532 million children in the primary schools and about 582,000 in the secondary schools, totalling about 2.1 million in West Malaysia alone. This year in East Malaysia, there are about 160,000 children in the primary schools in Sarawak and about 130,000 in Sabah, totalling about 290,000. As regards secondary schools, there are about 31,000 in Sarawak and about 45,000 in Sabah, totalling about 76,000. Thus for the whole of Malaysia, there are about 1.822 million children in the primary schools and about 658,000 in the secondary schools, totalling about 2.48 million.

4. During the last few years, we have started directing our attention, efforts, energy and financial resources towards improving the standard and quality of education in the primary and secondary schools. Under the Second Malaysia Plan, a sum of \$448.48 million has been allocated for the further development and improvement of education. For 1973, a sum of 142,896,800 has been allocated for education development, of which \$113,781,900 are for West Malaysia, \$14,153,900 for Sarawak and \$14,961,000 for Sabah.

5. Operating expenses for education for 1973 amount to \$700,623,989, of which \$629,801,629 are for West Malaysia and \$70,822,360 for East Malaysia. This amount is a big increase over previous years and is a clear evidence of the importance which our people and government attach to education. This places us in the Education Ministry, the State Education Departments and in the Teaching Service in a position of great responsibility and trust. We cannot and shall not fail them.

6. At the state level, you, the Directors of Education and your staff bear the heaviest responsibility. I have the fullest confidence that you will, as you have always done, discharge your duties and responsibilities fully and with dedication. Your position in the state is not an easy one, In addition to your many and varied administrative duties and responsibilities, you have to maintain a close liason and cordial relationship with the government, authorities and personalities in the state. It is in this respect, among others, that you will be severely tested. On my part, I shall do all I can to advise, guide and support you.

7. I would like to remind all concerned, particularly those in the Education Ministry and in the Education Department in the states, that they exist to serve the public. Every effort must be made by them to help and render assistance rather than create difficulties. Red tape must not be made use of to withhold assistance and delay decisions.

8. At this conference, as with other previous conferences, Education Ministry officials, State Directors of Education and others will be discussing many administrative and education matters with the object of improving still further the administrative and organisational machinery and the standard and quality of education in the primary and secondary schools. Included in your study and discussion will be:

- (a) improving the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of languages, especially Bahasa Malaysia and English.
- (b) compensatory education;
- (c) pre-school education;
- (d) teacher training;
- (e) parent-teacher associations;
- (f) administration and management of schools; and
- (g) the new school boards.

9. As you are aware, the Ministry is very concerned with the poor and low standard of English, especially in schools in the rural areas. English is the second compulsory language in our schools. If immediate and effective remedial action is not taken, our children's education, especially those in the rural areas, will undoubtedly suffer and more so when they reach the secondary level. Those studying science and technical subjects will be the worst sufferers. Accordingly, the Ministry will launch a campaign starting from this year to make the children realise that they must study the English language as seriously as Bahasa Malaysia. A Language Unit has been established by the Ministry to co-ordinate and improve the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of Bahasa Malaysia and English.

10. The Ministry, starting from this year, will also be launching a three-year project on Compensatory Education. This project is made possible because of a generous donation of about M\$1,000,000 promised by the Van Leer Foundation of the Netherlands. The Compensatory Education will be directed at the disadvantaged and slow learners and pre-school children. A national workshop and a national seminar on pre-school education will be held in the middle of this year with the assistance of international experts. At the 17th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris last year, I suggested that UNESCO declared 1974 as a "Childhood Education Year". I am glad that UNESCO and Malaysia are paying increasing attention to the education of children of pre-school age, particularly those who come from the disadvantaged and handicapped groups and who suffer from malnutrition. These children if not saved early, will suffer irreparable brain damage.

11. To ensure proper supervision and control of kindergartens and nursery schools which have been mushrooming all over the country, rules known as the Education (Kindergarten and Nursery School) (Registration) Rules, 1972, have been made and gazetted on 28th December, 1972. At this conference, you will be discussing the implementation of the rules. You will also be discussing the drafts of the School and Educational Institution Boards Rules and the Parent-Teacher Association Rules. I need hardly stress the importance of these two sets of draft rules.

12. As you know, Standard III Tests in Bahasa Malaysia, Bahasa Inggeris, Bahasa China, Bahasa Tamil and Ilmu Hisab will be held starting from this year. You will be discussing their implementation.

13. There are 62,662 teachers in the Government Teaching Service and 830 in the Non-Government Unified Teaching Service and other Teaching Schemes. I am glad to know that there are only about 228 teachers who have not yet been paid their arrears of salary. I have been informed that this is due to a number of unavoidable reasons. We are paying particular attention to our teacher training, not only in respect of increasing the numbers but also in its standard and quality. We will still face shortage of graduate teachers for sometime to come, especially in science, mathematics and technical subjects. Until we overcome this problem, we will recruit as many as we can from overseas. To improve the administration and management of schools, starting from April this year, the Ministry will conduct in-service courses for headteachers of primary and secondary schools specially for this purpose.

14. To ensure that there is a fair rotation of teachers to and from urban and rural areas, the Ministry has set up the necessary machinery to look after, among others, the transfer of teachers. Similar machinery will be set up at the state level.

15. Lastly, I would like to mention about the school dropout problem. Although there has been no further increase in the number of dropouts this year, the number is still high and will continue to cause us great concern. We anticipate that the preliminary report of our investigation into this problem will be completed at the end of this month. I am informed that the investigation has informed us quite a lot and as a result, we hope that more effective actions could be taken to greatly reduce the number of dropouts.



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