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Ucapan oleh Y.B. Inche Hussein Onn,  
Menteri Pelajaran Malaysia, melanchar-  
kan HARI GURU2 Yang Pertama pada 16hb.  
Mei, 1972 melalui Radio dan T.V. pada  
jam 9.15 malam bersamaan 15.5.72

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THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN SOCIETY.

*Parents, teachers, children, ladies & gentlemen.*

This year we celebrate TEACHERS DAY for the first time on a national scale. It is an important step in the process of the recognition of the teachers' role in society. To mark the occasion, the teachers throughout the country have been celebrating it with seminars, conferences and rallies, spread over a whole week in certain places. Such activities will not only bring all teachers closer to <sup>one another,</sup> ~~each other~~ but also help to raise the quality of teaching through self-evaluation.

2. May 16th was selected as Teachers Day because on that day in 1956, the Federal Legislative Council formally

adopted the recommendations of the Report of the Education Review Committee, (better known as the Razak Report), as the basis of the national education policy. This was the first time ever in the history of this country that an education policy embracing the whole country was adopted. With the passage of time, expediency has dictated certain necessary modifications or additions, but in the main, the recommendations of that report continue as the bedrock of our national education policy. TEACHERS DAY will help to perpetuate May 16th. in the annals of Malaysian education.

3. It is a happy coincidence that we celebrate the FIRST TEACHERS DAY during 1972, which has also been

declared by the United Nations as the International

Book Year. This is a happy <sup>auspicious</sup> augury because teachers and books are inseparable.

4. The word "TEACHER" conjures different images in our minds, both pleasant and unpleasant, both favourable and unfavourable. Regardless of the images projected for us as individuals, teachers have one thing in common, that is, they are professionally engaged by society to transmit a certain stock of knowledge, skills and values to the next generation.

5. Teachers as a professional group are the direct result of the introduction of formal mass education. At one stage, the role of the educator was to teach children

to read, write and solve simple mathematical problems.

As society became more sophisticated, the content and quality of education had to be broadened, and to-day includes such areas as Physical and Health Education, Mathematics and Science, History, Geography, ~~and~~ Civics, Technical and Vocational subjects, ~~and~~ Music, and Art and Crafts. These subjects demand specialised skills which only professional persons can provide.

6. Because of the nature of the demands made upon the teacher, it has become necessary to ensure that the quality of the individual going into the teaching profession is of such a calibre that the person concerned can function effectively within the given framework at a

given time. The content of teacher training courses helps to ensure that the persons entrusted with the education of the young are properly equipped. Changing circumstances make it necessary that teachers are put through in-service retraining courses to up-date them.

7. Not infrequently, one hears such comment as "ANY ONE CAN TEACH!" If this were a fact, then we would not have complaints from parents about teachers, or even a shortage of teachers in such areas as <sup>m</sup>Mathe-  
matics and science. Let me reiterate <sup>re-it-e-rate</sup> here that teaching is a highly specialised skill, and, if the quality of education is to be improved in this country, we must have teachers with high academic and professional

qualifications, coupled with a high sense of dedication to the job.

8. In a certain sense, however, every single individual is a teacher, because education is not confined to what transpires within the four walls of the classroom. A person keeps learning from the day he is born to the day he dies, ~~unless he is mentally deficient~~. Such learning may be structured or unstructured, and consequently, the impact of the home and society cannot be under-estimated. After all a child spends only about five to six hours out of every twenty-four in a day for about one hundred and ninety days a year in school.

9. In a country such as Malaysia, education

is considered as an instrument for change. The changes initiated in school have the greatest chance of success because they are introduced during the formative years of the children and will have the longest span of time for being rooted deeply. In an emerging country such as ours, what the children learn in school permeates the homes and so prepares the ground for change.

10. Malaysia has emerged as a nation, but she has a long way to go to take her rightful place in the comity of nations. This can be achieved by the successful implementation of the various development plans, including the Second Malaysia Plan, which aims to remove economic imbalances associated with ethnic or geographical

factors, to eliminate poverty, and to restructure Malaysian society as a whole. The realisation of these goals is dependent on the attitudes and skills the people possess.

11. Development and other changes originate in the minds of the people. For plans to be translated into reality, the nation must be psychologically attuned to accept those changes, in other words, such changes must be meaningful in the local context, and this involves the education of the people. The country will need certain specific skills not only for the short-term implementation of the plans, but also for the long-term maintenance of the projects. This is where the educational institutions of the country must play an important role. For the successful implementation of such plans, education must be geared to

the needs of the country.

12. Changing needs demand that the content of education should be examined periodically and up-dated to avoid wastage of resources, whether human, economic or material. Any changes in this respect must involve simultaneous adjustments in the relative roles of the teachers.

13. A school is the reflector of the society in which it is found, in that it embodies the traditions, the norms and hopes of that society. It is the burden of the teacher to transmit these to the new generation as effectively as possible. Like a good farmer, it is the teacher's duty to sow the best selected seeds in the minds of children, so that they will bring forth good fruit.

14. The focal point of education is the child, whom the parents have entrusted to the teacher. While the child is in school, therefore, the teacher becomes a parent-substitute and he can fulfill this role most effectively if there is the closest of liaison between home and school.

15. It is a misconception that all other aspects of a teacher's performance are subordinate to his ability to produce outstanding examination results. The teachers' task is to help each child to develop his potential talents to the fullest extent, and so live a full and useful life.

16. A person might not go to a university, but if he displays high moral standards, a high sense of

responsibility and integrity, and other qualities, which society holds in esteem then such a person is deemed to be educated.

17. Society expects the teacher to provide the model and to that extent he is constantly under the public eye. Behaviour, which is condoned among other members of society, is frowned upon when manifested among teachers. Hence, a teacher must exist under rather strict social constraints.

18. The teachers' job is an exacting one. He cannot afford to take his task lightly, because he deals with the lives of future citizens. Whereas, other people's mistakes can be buried, a teacher's mistakes

thrive as a social liability. The inherent quality of the pupils may vary, but somehow society expects the teacher to produce identical results during the same period of time. A teacher functions under intense social and official pressures and a conscientious teacher's work, extends round the clock; that is to say, that a teacher does not <sup>cease to be a</sup> ~~become an un~~teacher when he steps out of the school building; he still remains a teacher.

19. The teacher's role is a complex one. In addition to teaching, <sup>he</sup> has to organise and run various extra-mural activities, act as guidance counsellor to the children in connection with their studies and future careers, as well as participate in numerous civic activities. In spite of

the arduous nature of his work and the numerous constraints he functions under, the teacher has remained the unsung hero of our society. TEACHERS DAY is a form of recognition of the invaluable but invisible contribution our teachers have made.

20. On this Teachers Day, pupils all over the country will be paying homage to their teachers. I sincerely hope that all pupils will constantly remember the debt they owe their teachers and the community for the education they are receiving, and that they will strive to build a strong and progressive nation by co-operating with their teachers.

21. Sometimes parents have castigated teachers as a result of unconfirmed reports. Instead of ~~using the~~ <sup>criticising the</sup>

harrassed teachers, ~~for target practice~~ I would like to appeal to parents to be sympathetic towards those who are trying to educate our children. I wonder how many parents have gone up to a school to thank the teachers for the excellent performance or character of their children. Teachers Day provides us with that opportunity we have been waiting for. I would like to appeal to parents to make the best use of this opportunity to thank the teachers who act as foster parents to our children.

22. Teachers exist in response to the social and cultural needs of society. They are, therefore, the purveyors of the accomplishments and hopes of our society to those entrusted to their care during the

highly formative years of their lives. The degree to which they can infuse children with the positive attitudes desirable, will determine the success of our cherished personal and national goals. The creation of a dynamic society devoid of past prejudices, and dedicated to the achievement of the national goals is an immense task for the teachers. The teachers can discharge the trust society reposes in them by sinking their differences *on this TEACHERS' DAY* and rededicating themselves to the noble task ahead of them ~~on this TEACHERS' DAY.~~



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