

Uchapan Y.B. Menteri Pelajaran Merasmikan  
Persidangan Ketua2 Pegawai Pelajaran Yang  
Ke-43, pada 7hb Februari, 1972, di-Dewan  
Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur,  
pada pukul 9.00 pagi

I am indeed very pleased to have this opportunity to address you all once again. I notice from the agenda of the Conference that for the next three days you will be discussing a number of important issues concerning our educational system. I wish you fruitful discussion and I look forward to hearing from you the results of your deliberations.

This morning I would like to touch on the Ministry's plan and programme for the qualitative improvement of education in this country. To my mind the problem of qualitative improvement of education has to be viewed from all angles simultaneously, that is, from the point of view of the pupils, the school curriculum, the school organisation, the teachers and school-community participation.

As you are aware, the Ministry of Education has launched an extensive and an exhaustive study of the problem of school drop-out in order to identify the real causes of school drop-out and to find ways to ensure a higher school enrolment. The school health and applied nutrition programme will help to ensure that our pupils will develop healthier health habits so that they will be in a healthier position to receive the education we plan and provide for them.

While we are going all out to solve the problem of drop-out we should also mount a systematic attack on the problem of slow learners, backward children and general under-achievement among pupils in our schools. Statistically the problem of pupil under-achievement is less spectacular, but it is still a major educational problem. In a system where the pupils move from grade to grade according to their chronological age the effects of under-achievement snowball as the pupils move up

the school system until they meet the L.C.E. examination. We have passed the stage when we have to provide a place for every school going age child. We should now systematically evaluate whether the education that we provide at a particular level at a particular time has been attained by our pupils. I see the need to re-evaluate the level of attainment expected of our pupils at each grade of the school system and to find out the extent to which our pupils have reached that level of attainment. This is also the problem of tailoring the courses of studies provided in our schools to the diverse needs, ability and interests of our pupils.

The Ministry of Education has already instituted a number of curricular projects to make the school courses of studies more relevant to life situations and the needs and capabilities of the children. Curricular improvement projects have been undertaken for Mathematics, Science and the Languages. The other areas in the school curriculum are also being looked into. However, I would

like to see the immediate launching of a systematic and overall review of the school curriculum, beginning with the primary school curriculum. I am happy to announce that the Ministry of Education, with the co-operation of the SEAMEO Regional INNOTECH Centre will be holding a four-day seminar in Kuala Lumpur on the use of INNOTECH Concepts to formulate and evaluate primary school education objectives. The Seminar will be held from the 6th to the 10th March, 1972, and each State will be requested to send representatives to participate in the seminar.

The important task of co-ordinating the work of the various curricular improvement projects currently being undertaken by the Ministry, and more important, the systematic planning and development of all curricular programmes, will henceforth be undertaken by an Educational Development Centre (formerly conceived as the National Science Centre). The nucleus of the E.D.C. has already been set up within the Educational Research and Planning

Division of the Ministry. The World Bank has been approached to finance the building of the Centre which is expected to be completed by 1974.

The Ministry is aware that during the last few years parents have taken increasing interest in providing early educational experiences for their children. This is indicated by the increase in the enrolment in the pre-school centres. Consequently the Ministry of Education has taken action to ensure that pre-school centres will be run in accordance with the right principles of pre-school education. The Education Act is being revised to allow the Ministry to supervise the development of such centres. At the same time a Pre-school unit has been set up in the Schools Division of the Ministry to oversee to the development and organisation of pre-school centres in this country. The Ministry is currently conducting a one-year course in pre-school education for 30 trained teachers who will, at the end of their course, act as pre-school advisers

and key personnel in the various States of Malaysia. I would like to stress here that it is not the intention of the Ministry to take over kindergartens and nursery schools. We believe that the community should play the predominant role in this form of education. The role of the Ministry is purely advisory and supervisory in order to ensure that the facilities and the programmes of activities provided at the pre-school centres are educationally sound.

At the last Conference held in June last year I pointed out that our school system will have to gear itself more effectively to preparing and assisting our school leavers in getting employment. This implies that the product of the Vocational Schools should, on leaving the schools, be skilled enough in the particular trade or course that they have undergone in the Vocational Secondary Schools. Consequently, the teaching of vocational subjects in Vocational Secondary Schools are being intensified and lengthened, especially in the practical work, so

as to enable the pupils to acquire as much skill as possible in a particular trade in the given time. The problem that we are facing now is that the type of practical training we provide should be in keeping with the skills that are required by government bodies and industrial establishments. As such the Ministry of Education has taken action to liase with bodies that are familiar with such skill requirement. The co-operation and assistance of such bodies in the public and private sectors are essential. In the public sectors the co-operation of such departments as the J.K.R., Jabatan Talikom, Lembaga Letrik Negara, Kementerian Pertanian, Kementerian Buroh and Keretapi Tanah Melayu are being sought. The private sectors too should open their workshops to allow our pupils to familiarise themselves with actual working conditions and practices. I would therefore like to appeal to all concerned to give every co-operation and assistance to our efforts in this particular field of educationa endeavour.

I would like now to suggest that we take a closer look at our school organisation. The Educational Amendment Bill now being discussed in Parliament envisages a change in the management of the schools. I would like all Chief Education Officers to study the implications of the Amendment Act so that you will be able to clarify the implications to heads of schools in your States.

From the point of school administration and organisation we need to find ways to assist our head teachers to be more efficient in the way they administer and organise their schools.

School organisation has much to do with the success of the educational programme laid out by the Ministry. I would like the Conference to consider what the Ministry could do to help our head teachers in schools of different sizes in different locations manage their schools such that the atmosphere would be conducive to greater achievement by our pupils. The task of a head teacher is a very responsible one. His

job responsibilities range from the purely administrative matters like the preparation of paysheets, record keeping and book-keeping, to such complex professional role as the leader and pillar of inspiration to all the teachers and pupils in the schools, besides being a counsellor and advisor to parents and pupils. In other words we expect our head teachers to be a competent administrator as well as a professional of a high calibre. On him the success of the educational programme depends. Therefore, I feel that we should consider:-

- (a) The criteria for the selection of head teachers in which seniority or length of service should not be the main criteria; rather such personal qualities as drive, dedication to education, desire and the ability to keep up with advancement in education should be given greater emphasis;

- (b) preparation for headship: prior to being posted as heads of schools, and
- (c) the preparation of a manual for head teachers to ensure that certain administrative procedures are standardized for overall efficiency.

The small school is likely to remain a feature of our school system for some time to come as our policy is to bring education to where the pupils are, especially during the early years of schooling. In such schools, because of the small number of pupils in each age group, multiple class teaching becomes a necessity. Multiple class teaching organisation is a feature by itself and therefore require methods and organisation which are not applicable in larger schools. I am glad that the Conference will be deliberating this particular problem and I would urge you to come up with practical solutions as soon as possible.

With the implementation of the recommendations of the Aziz Commission we hope to be able to deploy teachers so that there will be a more equitable distribution of teachers in all our schools. The Conference will have to work out a fair and a practical system of teacher deployment. I am aware that the mechanics of a system of teacher deployment is not an easy one to formulate. Besides the administrative and financial factors that will govern such a system, the human factor need to be given prime consideration as well.

I have often emphasise the importance of upgrading the quality of teachers. We need to keep under constant review the academic and professional competence of our teachers and to assist them to achieve a higher level of competency in both areas. A survey (as on 30.6.71) revealed that there are a total of 16,355 primary school teachers who are underqualified which means that they do

not have L.C.E./S.R.P. qualifications. Steps should be taken to help them to improve their educational levels and their abilities to teach the curriculum.

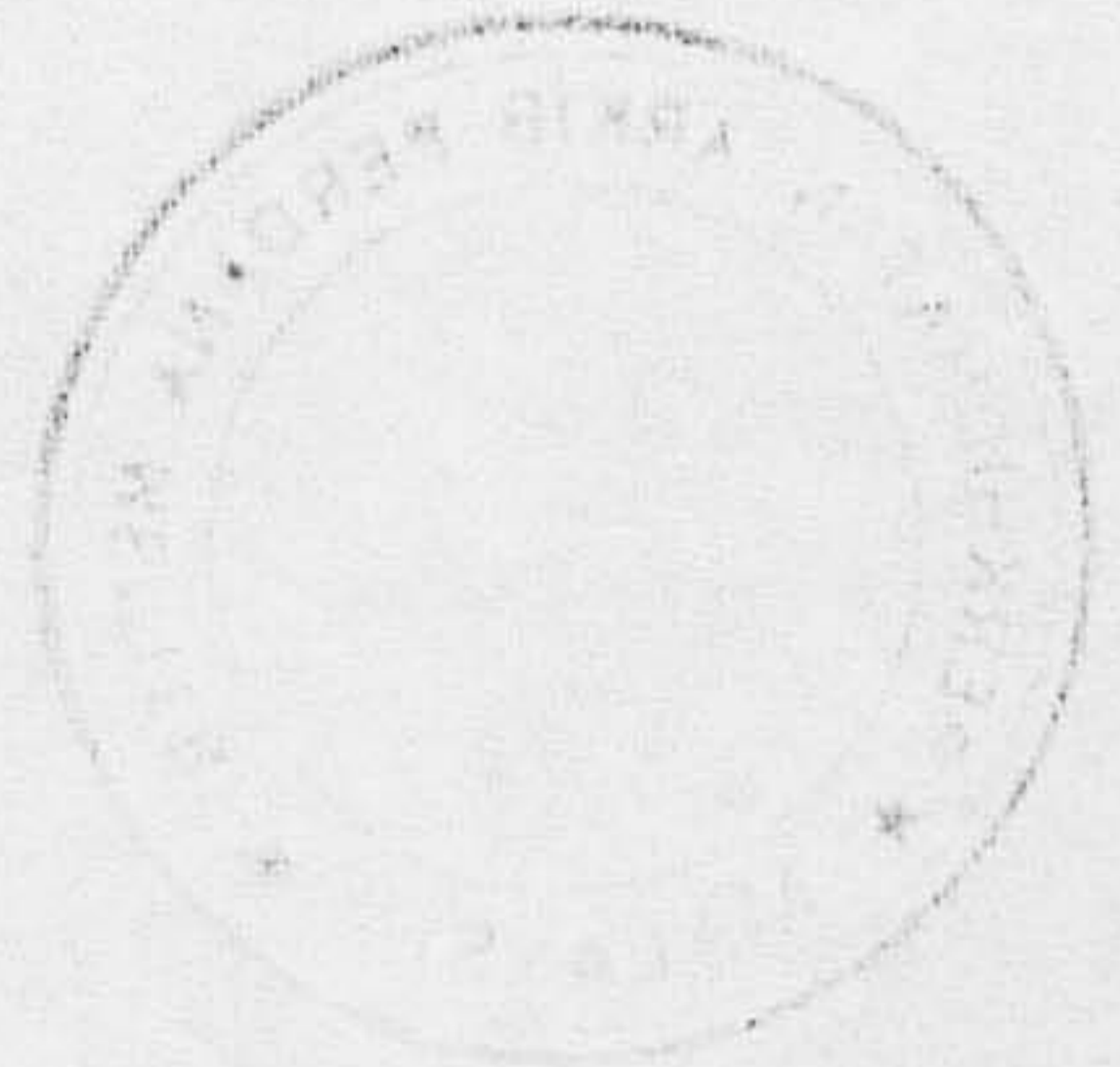
The pre-service teacher training programme is now being reviewed in order that our teachers will be better able to serve the nation. A total of \$2,704,070/- has been allocated for the conduct of 43 in-service courses in 1972. However, it must be stressed that the Ministry's resources are limited and teachers themselves must take it upon themselves to keep abreast with the advancement in knowledge. It might be necessary for us to consider building into the teaching service a system of periodic refresher courses to update and upgrade teachers.

The school as a social institution needs to develop closer ties with the community it serves. What the school teaches need to be relevant to the needs of the community. In a world characterised by rapid changes in knowledge and institutions, our pupils need to be prepared not only for the world of the immediate future

but also for the decades ahead. It will be a sad day indeed if the school should choose to be divorced from the aspirations of the society. The school exists not only to inculcate in the young the heritage of the society but to develop them as agents of change so that the society will develop and progress with time. As such the school as an institution cannot remain isolated from the community it serves. We need to provide avenues for communication between the school and the community. The Parent Teacher Association is one such avenue. Community service, plan for and carried out by the staff and pupils of the school, will also serve to bring the school and the homes together. It will also serve to develop in the pupils early in their lives the concern for their fellowmen. The Ministry is at present preparing a guide for the use by teachers on how the school can promote school-community participation in the nation's educational endeavour.

I have attempted to outline what I consider as the main approaches to upgrading the quality of education

provided by our schools. I am well aware that the problems are many and we need time and resources to carry them out successfully. However, we must tackle the problems of qualitative improvement in a systematic manner taking into consideration our resources and limitations. Once again, may I assure you of my wholehearted support and backing for your proposals.



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