

Welcoming address of Inche Hussein Onn, Minister of Education, to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth on the occasion of her visit to Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Kampong Batu, Kuala Lumpur, on Friday, 25th February, 1972 at 12.00 noon.

Your Majesty.

1. On behalf of the Ministry of Education, I wish to extend to Your Majesty and Her Royal Highness Princess Anne a very warm welcome. Although Your Majesty's visit to this school is a short one, nevertheless it is a great honour, not only to the pupils and teachers of the school, but also to the people of this area. They have indeed been looking forward to Your Majesty's visit with great enthusiasm.

2. Since the end of the Second World War, there has been a tremendous demand for education in Malaysia, not only from the people in the towns but more so from the people in the rural areas. The Malaysian Government has spared neither efforts nor money to meet this demand.

3. The total population of Malaysia is about 10.4 million. Of these, 2.5 million are in schools at various levels. ^{Primary education is free.} Over the years, Parliament has provided for operating expenses for education between 20% and 22% of the national budget. According to the statistics compiled by the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Malaysia spent 5% of her Gross National Product (G.N.P.) for the years 1960 to 1970 on education. This was the highest in Asia. Japan for the same period spent 4.2% of her G.N.P., Phillipines 2.8% and Thailand 2.8%.

4. Under the Second Malaysia Plan for the years 1971 to 1975, a sum of M\$448.48 million has been allocated for the further development of education. This year, out of the total operating budget of M\$2,014 million, M\$607 million are allocated for education.

5. Your Majesty, the figures which I have mentioned are intended to give some idea of the importance and urgency which the people of this country give to education. We are determined to reduce and eventually eradicate poverty and ignorance. The Malaysian Nation has dedicated itself:

- (a) to achieving a greater unity of all her peoples;
- (b) to maintaining a democratic way of life;
- (c) to creating a just society in which the wealth of the nation shall be equitably shared;
- (d) to ensuring a liberal approach to her rich and diverse cultural traditions;

(e) to building a progressive society which shall be orientat^{ed}~~ated~~ to modern science and technology.

6. We realise that the keys to our economic development are science and technology. Consequently, a great emphasis has been made in these fields in our schools and higher institutions of learning. We start providing science education in the primary schools, not only those in towns but also those in the rural areas. We are providing additional vocational and technical schools. Our Polytechnic and Technical College are being enlarged to accommodate more and more students. Since 1969, two more universities have been established. There are at present three universities — the National University, the University of Malaya and the Penang University. Next year, an Agricultural University will be established.

7. National unity is the over-riding objective of the country. Indeed, on this depends the survival of the Malaysian nation and the peace, stability and prosperity of the country. In this, education and the educational system have played, are playing and will continue to play a very vital part.

8. Your Majesty, what I have just indicated are some of the heavy tasks which Parliament, the Government and people of this country have set and dedicated themselves to do. With God's guidance and help, we shall succeed.

9. Heavy though are our responsibilities and tasks, we are comforted by the fact that we do not lack friends. Among them are the British people and your Majesty's Government. In the march towards educational progress, Malaysia is grateful for the encouragement and assistance which she has continuously been receiving from Your Majesty's Government. In fact, education in Malaysia has had a long and happy

association with Britain. Two of our earliest Teachers' Training Colleges started in Britain — one at Kirby, near Liverpool, in 1952 and the other at Brinsford Lodge, near Wolverhampton, in 195⁵. About 2000 of our teachers were trained at these two colleges.

10. Your Majesty, my Ministry has always been given the fullest cooperation by the British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur. Your Majesty's Government has provided scholarships and bursaries for the training of officers and teachers through the Commonwealth Education Plan Fellowships. The British Council has given gifts of books, educational equipment, scholarships and visitorships to the United Kingdom, in addition to providing expert personnel. The British Overseas Development and Administration and the Centre for Education Development Overseas have given Malaysia invaluable assistance in her efforts to improve the

quality of education. ^A ~~Quite~~ A number of British experts and volunteers have served and are still serving in our schools and other institutions of learning. A team of British educators from C.E.D.O. and the Scottish Department of Education are currently assisting us in the renewal of science and mathematics syllabuses for secondary schools. We are also receiving aid for the improvement of English and science through the Aid to Commonwealth English and the Aid to Commonwealth Teaching of Science respectively.

11. Your Majesty, there are about 24,000 Malaysian students overseas. Almost all ^{of them} are in the Commonwealth countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and India. A very large number of them are in the United Kingdom.

12. Lastly, may I say again how greatly honoured we all are by Your Majesty's and Her Royal Highness' visit to this school. We trust that the visit, not only to this school but also to our country, has been a happy and memorable one.



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