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Berita Harian is cheap way to learn Malay, says a union president

TELUK ANSON, Sun. — The new Straits Times publication Berita Harian would go a long way to help people speak Malay, the president of the All-Malayan Estates Staff Union, Mr. Yeoh Guan Leong, said today.

Mr. Yeoh told the first annual meeting of the union's Lower Perak branch: "A proper knowledge of the Malay language, customs and culture will be the key to the new social order of independent Malaya devoid of suspicion,

fear and inter-racial strife.

"Malay will soon permeate all legislatures, councils, public welfare and semi-government bodies and become an essential requirement for all social contacts.

"No one can play his part in civic life without an excellent knowledge of the language.

"Until now Malay has lacked literature of interest to non-Malays. Now the Berita Harian offers a practical and cheap way of learning it."

(Man-On-the-Street column — July 8, 1957)

Language for harmony

IN recent speech at Seminyih, Mr. Ong Yoke Lin asked Malays to learn the Chinese and Indian languages for the sake of racial harmony.

In my opinion this is impracticable. Which of the half-dozen Chinese dialects should a Malay learn? Mandarin is spoken only by about 40 per cent of the Chinese here.

There are three major language groups of Indians in Malaya, plus at least five minority groups. Hindi is understood by barely 10 per cent of the local Indians.

The realistic way to perfect racial understanding must necessarily be through the Malay language, which is the mother tongue of 50 per cent of the existing Malayan population.

WAN FARIDAH.
Teluk Anson

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