

**TEKS UCAPAN
KETUA PENASIHAT PELAJARAN
ALLAHYARHAM AMINUDDIN BAKI
DALAM MAJLIS PERSIDANGAN
KESATUAN GURU-GURU BERIJAZAH
TANAH MELAYU**

**PADA
28 SEPTEMBER 1963**

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Speech of the Chief Education Adviser, Che Aminuddin bin Baki
at the Opening of the Eleventh Annual Delegates' Conference of the
Malayan Graduate Teachers' Union - Saturday 28th September, 1963, at 11.

Mr. Chairman, Datu Alexander,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

I wonder what I have done to be given this privilege of opening your Annual Delegates' Conference for two years successively. Whatever the reason, I must thank you for giving me this opportunity once again to meet you the graduate teachers, to hear from you and to submit you to a sermon on matters we mutually consider in the best interest of the profession and education in the eleven States of Malaya to discuss.

2. On being asked on the phone by your Chairman to open the Conference I felt very diffident for I was aware that twelve months had hardly passed when I last indicated to you certain measures which the Ministry would take both as the direct results of the expression of concern on your part over certain specific educational problems and also of the implementation of the Ministry's own plan and of the expressions of its own concern over similar or other issues. These twelve months have not been fully fruitful in so far as actions to allay these concerns are concerned; but I can assure you that if final decisions have not yet been reached over certain matters, then it is not because of the lack of efforts or energy on the part of the Ministry but because of the complexity of the problem you have raised, the over-engagement of the Ministry in implementing new programmes and policies, and also its involvement in reorganising itself and reviewing and revising a number of policy programmes.

3. I am fully aware that in the course of carrying out these tasks and responsibilities the Ministry of Education has earned for itself a reputation and that it has become a very "popular" Ministry, one which is given prominence almost daily in the press, criticised for its building

programmes, for its treatment of teachers and no less treatment of pupils by making those pupils sit a number of examinations and thus the critics are wont to say throw them into the streets. Life in the air-conditioned room of Federal House seems to the members of the public to have made the Ministry officials listless and oblivious to events outside. If only the public knows that the Ministry deals with more than 30,000 employees who belong to not less than 20 different categories, deals with matters concerning the future of 1,400,000 children ($\frac{1}{5}$ of the population of the States of Malaya) who are related in one way or other as sons or daughters, nephews or nieces, brothers or sisters of every adult member of the population and thereby makes the Ministry one of the very few, if not the only Ministry whose responsibility extends almost to every home and whose decision for better or for worse affects nearly every one in the whole country, supervise the affairs and welfare of thousands of youth studying overseas by remote control, deals with the affairs of over 5300 schools of various types and have to make about 60,000 individuals who are members of the Board of Managers/Governors contented, has to supervise annually 3 major examinations besides 20 to 30 other minor ones of various levels of education and to deal with an annual recurrent budget of 5230 million (i.e. nearly a quarter of the National budget in 1963) - incidentally the largest for any single Ministry of the Federation of Malaya and has to ensure the construction of classrooms under a development plan costing about 540 million per annum distributed among hundreds of small projects sited right to the remotest areas in the country, is it a wonder therefore that the Ministry of Education - your Ministry and mine - has become so vulnerable?

4. It is not my intention, Mr. Chairman, to overawe this meeting with these figures and statements but merely to impress the magnitude of the problems - its quantitative aspect - which sometimes are forgotten or tend to be taken by many for granted. Nor is it my intention to give excuses for some of the oversight - some of them inevitable oversight

which the Ministry has committed; but I gave these figures with the view to show that our Ministry - your Ministry and mine - I repeat, we who are entrusted with the future of the rising generations of Malaysians - our own

children and through them the future of our beloved country - has undergone a change; ^{an}unprecedented change in the history of education in this country. Only ten years ago in 1953 - the number of pupils was 777094 - today that number has doubled; whereas the number of schools was 4783, today it has risen by about a thousand more, whereas the amount of recurrent spending was 81,873,799, today the expenditure has risen by 2½ times, whereas the capital expenditure was only 513,308,162 today it has risen by 3 times, whereas the number of teachers was 24,333, today it has doubled itself. These changes by leaps and bounds have not only been experienced quantitatively but also in the quality of education provided.

5. As the result of the implementation of the national policy we have launched a programme of educational expansion both vertical and horizontal by providing amongst others :

- Universal free primary education.
- Raising of the school-leaving age to 15.
- Expansion of the Teacher Training programmes.
- Introduction of Educational Guidance Scheme.
- Diversification of Vocation^{al} & Technical Education courses.
- Provision of Special Education for the blind and the deaf.
- Extension of Further Education programme.
- Expansion of Education at the higher professional and technical levels.

All these are based on national educational objectives of -

- (a) providing equal educational opportunities for all;
- (b) diversifying contents of education with the view to cater for technical and economic efficiency at all levels of endeavours;
- (c) establishing a system of education the contents and character of which would truly cater for the social, economic, political and cultural needs and aspirations of our people as a sovereign nation.

6. I notice from amongst the draft resolutions to be adopted by you, concern has been expressed over the way some of the school policies and programmes have been implemented. I can assure you here that ever since the Malayisation of the senior posts in the Ministry,

For example, the Ministry has carried out a "silent revolution." the General Syllabus Review Committee to revise the Syllabus appointed about a year ago is nearing completion of its work. A Committee is at present considering the implementation of the policy of raising the school-leaving age to 15 with the view to ascertain the best form of education - alternative to the Secondary Continuation School if so considered necessary - to meet this policy requirement. If a change is brought about then it is expected that there will be a major change in our educational programmes although not changes in basic policy. Then there is the constant review of the technical and vocational education programmes undertaken all the time with the object of ensuring a proper diversification of courses so that our vocational, trade and technical schools do produce craftsmen of the right skills to staff the lower level of technical jobs in the developing Malayan industries. At the higher level of manpower supply you are aware yourself that the University of Malaya has been established as an entity of its own, while courses at the Technical College has been further diversified. Consideration is at present being given to expand education at the higher educational level. A manpower survey is being conducted with the view to enable the Ministry's Higher Education Planning Committee to ascertain the country's needs for manpower at the professional and technical level and from these studies to recommend accordingly extensions or addition of new courses of studies at our existing University or at new institutions of higher learning to be established, if necessary. This manpower survey, incidentally, although limited in scale is the first of its kind ever conducted in the Federation. Then there is the reorganisation which the Ministry is carrying out in respect of teacher-training policy and programmes, provision of in-service courses - more varied in nature and more intensive and extensive, establishment of special courses for teachers; not least scholarship and training awards are made, not only as in the past restricted to P.E., Art & Craft, Music - but extending these to such varied fields as Child Development, Educational Psychology, Educational Research in Curriculum, Educational Planning, methodology, linguistics, testing and counselling,

5. Educational guidance, school inspection, technical education, educational administration and supervision - diversifications which aimed at making Malaya as self-supporting and self-sufficient as possible. In this connection a departure from the previous training policy has also been effected, whereas before we were made to follow a system adopted by a particular country and one country only - to-day it is the policy to send our teachers and officials to the four corners of the world - to learn from the different countries what these countries can best offer us as guides with the view to orientate and adapt their practices wherever found suitable to solve our own educational problems by suiting these to our needs and our own background. This, if I may emphasize, Mr. Chairman, is an attempt on the part of the Ministry to establish a truly national system of education that best meet the needs, aspiration and background of our people and society. In fact it is an attempt to correct some of the mistakes which we have inherited through historical accidents. All these reviews, revisions, reorganisation and implementation of new educational programmes which we can proudly call our own once established are all being carried out with a staff strength that differs little from that of pre-Merdeka days. In short all these tasks and responsibilities are being carried out by an understaffed Ministry.

7. I have not, Mr. Chairman, narrated all these with the view or to give excuses to blow the Ministry's trumpet, but purely because of the fact that the Ministry has been misunderstood many times in the past and accused often as being lethargic and complacent and being made the target of much public criticism. Also because I notice that even for such a group of intelligentsia and dedicated teachers as yours today this lack of appreciation and understanding is noticeable as seen, for example, in our Draft Resolutions Nos: 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 15, 23, 26, 28, 31 - 33, some of which I observe are repeats of last years and had been explained by me when I had the occasion to address the conference then, while others are matters which the Ministry has many times explained through statements and speeches. Please therefore excuse me if I have by so narrating taxed your patience and the hospitality given me this

morning. I apologise also for having taken the liberty to misuse your platform for venting out this feeling because an opportunity such as this comes scarcely in my way. I will not, Mr. Chairman, tax the patience of this meeting any further but before I conclude I would just like to emphasize two more things; the first concerns conditions of service and the other concerns the relationship between the Ministry and the practising teachers in general. I am very glad, Mr. Chairman, to find that a salary issue which had been uppermost in the minds of your members for some years past seems to have now been happily although temporarily resolved at least on paper as evidenced by this conference resolving to welcome the Minister's statement on the Government Education Service.

But as usual your group is a difficult one to please. I refer to your call on the Government to bridge the salary gap between holders of pass degree and those of honour's degree. I can only say here that the Ministry too hoped that this be resolved as well in the course of considering the salary scales for the ^{members of the} Government Education Service.

8. On the other hand, Mr. Chairman, I note with much regret the wording of Resolutions 2 and 4 in which the Ministry is accused very strongly as "shirking its responsibility" - to quote the very words used. You will recall, Mr. Chairman, that in suggesting that such issues as housing, medical attention and retirement benefits for members of the Unified Teaching Service be the subject of negotiations in the then yet to be established National Joint Council for Teachers as a negotiating body, I explicitly indicated that I also found the Unified /Salary Scale/ as enforced to be NOT wholly satisfactory and that it was too complex and would require quite a revision. I also indicated then that it was the view of a major section of the teachers that the Unified Teaching Service had really benefitted only a small group of teachers, leaving the majority more or less at status quo. Some of the bolder teachers' unions have even come forward to accuse certain groups of individuals as feathering their own nests. To me personally therefore the Unified Salary Scale, as it is, requires a review. On my part the earlier we get down to

extricate ourselves from some of the knotty problems arising out of the unnecessarily complex nature of the scheme, the better it is rather than continuing to sling mud at one another.

10. In regard to the ~~second and final~~ matter there seems to be a tendency on the part of teachers whether consciously or unconsciously ^{/even in such sacred educational matters purely educational} to regard themselves as belonging to the opposite camp - so much so that more often than not teachers' unions tend to adopt an aggressive and critical attitude towards the Ministry. It is not that I fear or dislike criticisms or that the Ministry should not be reminded of all its shortcomings, of which I admit there are a few. But the manner in which some of these criticisms ^{have been} ~~were~~ made and publicised in meetings, vociferously mentioned in Speech Day reports by some Headmasters, though resolutions and front page newspaper sensation tend to dishearten even the stoutest of heart especially when the person so criticised is fully aware of his shortcomings and faults, is also placed in a ridiculous situation of not able to make himself heard or not able to make others appreciate whatever he has done without fanfare and publicity or tries to do in the face of odds and regulations. It is therefore in the spirit and manner in which a family tackles such a situation that I would like to commend to your Union and others to adopt. We are all members of the same family that of the Ministry of Education. You who are teachers and we, who happen to be entrusted with the burden of administering education, have a common objective and common task to perform. Let us through private discussions and good counselling overcome whatever shortcomings and problems that lay in our way. Only through such discussion and counselling can we improve the standard of education in the eleven States of Malaya and through this to serve our young and sovereign nation. In whatever we do we should always bear in mind that we are undergoing a difficult transitional period. We in the Ministry will always welcome suggestions from all teachers whether individually or through their unions, officially or unofficially. It is my earnest hope that teachers as a group would bring up their problems, suggestions and views whenever these arise and not wait till

the next annual meeting of their union for the opportunity to condemn, deplore and resolve. My appeal to you, Ladies and Gentlemen, is that let us all teachers from this day regard ourselves as members of a family working for a common objective of building through education - a united nation - a climate for economic and social progress - a cultural renaissance and unity out of the rich cultural background of our diverse population and plural society - and not least through all these a place - a respected place for our people in the comity of nations. Only this change in attitude can bring about less heartache and frustration on your part, and headache and blood pressure on our part in the Ministry - a sine qua non for a healthy growth of our Ministry of Education in the service of the nation.

Thank you.

27th September, 1963.