

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF VIVEKANANDA
SECONDARY SCHOOL — 13-9-1958**

**SPEECH BY THE THEN PRIME MINISTER —
TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN PUTRA AL-HAJ**

While opening the Vivekananda Secondary School on 13-9-1958 the Hon'ble the Prime Minister, said :

“Nothing gives me more satisfaction than to be among people who devote all their spare time to helping others. A widespread spirit of volunteer work and service among citizens is one of the greatest assets a nation can have.

We all know what we mean when we speak of the public service, the civil servants, whose work affects all our daily lives, but how often do we stop to think of what is being done by what I may call the private servants of the public, men and women, boys and girls who in one way or another, working together in voluntary groups, devote themselves to such worthy causes as charity, education, civic improvement or cultural affairs.

They do not blow their own trumpets or seek personal publicity; their reward comes in the satisfaction of doing good. Malaya is fortunate in having hundreds of such volunteer organisations, willing to express the responsibility as citizens and their sense of duty towards their fellowmen.

There is one form of patriotism which may call upon a man to die in the service of his country. Voluntary work is also patriotism of a high order because it asks a man to live for the service of his country. It is a treasure we should guard and respect; as long as we have it we can build our nation in confidence.

These are the reasons why I am always happy to do what I can to help those who are willing to help others. That is why I have the greatest pleasure in being here today to open the Vivekananda Secondary Tamil School, because the men and women who have made it are an inspiring example of the spirit of voluntary service.

For nearly fifty four years the Vivekananda Ashrama has devoted itself to training good citizens, fostering loyalty to family and nation among the Hindus of Kuala Lumpur, particularly in the field of education. They have worked tirelessly and with foresight. In some ways their efforts have anticipated certain aspects of our national education policy.

The school has for a long time been teaching both Malay, the national language, and English, and has a full-time Malay teacher on its staff today. The school has always stressed the importance of loyalty to Malaya and pride in being Malaysians. Many will remember the Merdeka exhibition it organised in July last year, which was attended by no less than forty thousand people.

The school was established in 1914, with only 14 pupils. Today there are 90 in the kindergarten, 360 in the Primary Section and 98 in the Secondary Section. The teaching staff has grown from one to nineteen. This is a story of long and steady progress but it is a story which is not yet complete.

The Vivekananda authorities were the first to organise a secondary section in the Tamil medium; now they are going to introduce a syllabus with strong emphasis on Malay, English, and Malayan affairs with hope that this will be the forerunner of the first "Malayanised" Tamil High School in the Federation of Malaya.

In tribute to this occasion and to the enduring values of good education, let me quote the words of the Holy Prophet :-

"Acquire knowledge. It enables its possessor to distinguish right from wrong; it lights the way to Heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when friendless; it guides us to happiness; it sustains us in misery; it is an ornament amongst friends, and an armour against enemies".

Their efforts of the Vivekananda Ashrama are worthy of the highest praise, and I take both pleasure and pride in declaring their Secondary School open.

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