

Singapore Government **PRESS RELEASE**

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SPEECH BY MR HO KAH LEONG, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (EDUCATION)
AND CHAIRMAN OF THE MANDARIN PROMOTION COMMITTEE, AT THE MANDARIN
PROFICIENCY CERTIFICATE PRESENTATION CEREMONY AT THE SINGAPORE
CONFERENCE HALL ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1981, AT 8 P.M.

This evening's ceremony marks the successful completion of the first Conversational Mandarin course conducted for officers in the civil service. We are privileged to have the Prime Minister as our guest-of-honour and to give away the Mandarin Proficiency Certificates to representatives of successful candidates in the various Ministries and Public Service Organisations.

Since the launching of the Mandarin Campaign slightly more than two years ago, much effort has been directed at explaining to Singaporeans the objectives of the campaign and in encouraging Chinese Singaporeans to use Mandarin in place of dialects.

All Chinese Singaporeans are encouraged to learn Mandarin if they do not already know the language. Those who know and can speak the language are urged to use it more freely in public places and at home. The intensive effort put in to encourage the learning and the widespread usage of Mandarin will help to create a language environment that will bolster up the development and growth of Mandarin as a living language.

Officers in the Public Service have set the example for the learning of Mandarin. Instructional materials in Mandarin have been prepared and produced for both civil servants and the general public. Special short courses on terminologies peculiar to the work situation of different government departments and statutory boards have been developed and are being taught to public officers in small groups.

A four-part "Conversational Mandarin" series designed to help public officers to understand and speak simple everyday Mandarin is used to teach such officers at the Ministries and the statutory boards.

It is2/-

It is also used to teach the public through television and in classes held in community centres. Two other series, "Mandarin by Radio" and "Let's Learn Mandarin" are also being broadcast by SBC and Rediffusion respectively.

The general response to the learning of Mandarin is encouraging. A number of organisations such as banks, commercial firms, hotels, clan and other associations have started classes for their staff and members. Those who are unable to organise classes on their own are urged to enrol their staff and members at the nearest community centre.

The first Oral Proficiency Examination in Mandarin held in May this year, was jointly conducted by the Education and Culture Ministries. A total of 1,858 officers sat for the Oral Proficiency Examination. Of this number, 1,350 or 73 per cent have passed the examination.

I congratulate all 1,350 civil servants for having successfully completed the course. I hope they will put to frequent use what they have learnt and at the same time help others to make the switch from dialect to Mandarin. To those who have been unsuccessful in the examination, I urge them to practise using Mandarin more often and to make another attempt at the next examination.

I have now the honour and privilege of calling upon the Prime Minister to address us and to give away the Certificates of Proficiency.

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