

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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SPEECH BY MR. WEE TOON BOON, MINISTER OF STATE (DEFENCE)
AT THE PRIZE-GIVING CEREMONY OF THE 8TH INTER-DISTRICT
PRIMARY SCHOOLS VOLLEY BALL CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT ON
SAT., OCT. 21, AT THE PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION AT 4 P.M.

I am extremely pleased to be here today at the invitation of the Singapore Combined Primary Schools' Sports Council to give away the prizes on the occasion of the Inter-district Volleyball Championship Finals. Singapore is now going through a stage when it has to build a more rugged and robust society to ensure not only survival as a nation but its progress into the future socially and economically. Physical education is one of the pre-requisites to achieve this end and it is for this purpose that great emphasis is being laid on physical education in schools. It is in the primary schools that the first seeds of physical education are sown for it is from the young boys and girls that future citizens who are strong in mind and body will carry on the work of building Singapore into a strong and virile nation. The fact that physical education plays an important role in the development of a nation can be clearly seen from the achievements of other countries which are powerful and progressive today. There is no reason, therefore, why Singapore, though small in size, cannot build up a nation of people with stronger and healthier bodies which will contribute to the economic and social progress of the country.

Physical education at the primary level will lay the foundation for the development of physical education of the people as a whole because it is at that stage that interest in games and other sports activities can be built up and popularised. The Singapore Combined Primary Schools' Sports Council and its officials must be highly commended by all concerned because their efforts at promoting physical education and training have immense possibilities to bring to fruition our aim of having a rugged and robust society.

Physical education does not stop at merely learning and becoming proficient in sports activities; it also instils into the young a spirit of team-work and sportsmanship, builds character and promotes friendship and understanding between the different racial and linguistic groups that form our nation. Sports activities bring together pupils from all language streams and it is in this context that friendship and understanding are forged and the realisation is born that whatever or whoever we might be we are Singaporeans first and foremost.

Proficiency in sports2/-

Proficiency in sports can lead a person to be a representative of a country in international sports. Indeed, as a representative of a nation a sportsman is an unofficial ambassador of goodwill. He will make friends with athletes of different countries and forge understanding and tolerance. I would therefore exhort all our young athletes to train themselves well so that they may in time become proficient enough to have the opportunity to represent our country in international sports.

Everyday in school you pledge before our flag to be a united people regardless of race, language or religion to build a democratic society based on justice and equality. This pledge should serve as a beacon of light throughout your life; it should light all aspects of life so that by the time you become adults you would have helped in establishing for all time a concept of a nation of Singaporeans - a happy and harmonious multi-racial people destined to reach very great heights in the future.

OCTOBER 21, 1967.

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