

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

NO. MAY 13/69 (CUL)

\*\*\*\*\*  
+ EMBARGOED TILL AFTER DELIVERY +  
+ PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY +  
\*\*\*\*\*

14

TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
TO THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE, INCHE SHA'ARI TADIN,  
AT THE FINISH AND PRIZE-GIVING CEREMONY OF ST.  
JOHN AMBULANCE BIG WALK AT ST. JOHN AMBULANCE  
HEADQUARTERS, BEACH ROAD, ON SUNDAY, MAY 11 AT 9 A.M.

It is a privilege to witness the finish of the second annual St. John big walk.

It is a common and valid observation that city bred people, by and large, are not noted for their ruggedness. Their comfortable ways of life tend to make for softness. Sedentary occupations, soft indoor recreations and the general disinclination towards physical activities are some of the contributory factors. It is not surprising, therefore, to find people driving to the barber shops situated hardly 300 yards away from their homes - a walk under the circumstances will be salutary, and also improve the blood circulation.

For Singaporeans, it is vitally essential that extra efforts be taken - such as N.F.K. and now this big walk. In short, living in comfortable circumstances and enjoying modern facilities such as only highly organised societies can provide, we have specially to resist the temptation to do nothing about our physical health and well-being. At first, it may prove troublesome and difficult to make efforts to play games to keep ourselves fit, but with lot of will-power and determination, the habit can be acquired.

The concept of the rugged society serves as a continual emphasis and a constant reminder that Singapore should not go the way of big cities in other parts of the world - that is, to become soft, over-indulgent, flabby and even associated. We cannot afford to become degenerate, mentally or physically, particularly in the difficult years ahead. We have to grow muscles in order to have adequate staying to cope with the problems facing the nation, particularly after 1971.

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the founding of modern Singapore, that is this year, perhaps it is a sad reflection that while our forebears had bequeathed the whole set of paraphernalia for us to continue with the process of nation-building, we lack a sporting tradition on a mass basis. It looks as though our ancestors, except for a few enthusiasts, had not been as interested in sports as they should be.

On this .....2/-

On this line of thought, it is obvious that we have a lot of leeway to make up. Hence the emphasis on sports and games as an effective form of nation-building. Although the emphasis on physical fitness on a mass basis had its origin only as of 1965, the year of independence, it is better late than never. And judging from statistics and progress reports, there is no doubt that Singaporeans are determined to develop physical prowess and the attitude of taking sports seriously. Today's St. John's big walk is proof of increasing concern for physical fitness. And this is first-class preparation for tackling the difficult tasks ahead.

It is now my pleasure to give away the prizes. May I congratulate winners in particular, and all participants for their sporting spirit and I wish them better luck next time.

MAY 10, 1969.

(Time issued: 1515 hours)