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TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT), MR. HO CHENG CHOON, AT THE CAMP FIRE ORGANISED BY THE GEYLANG EAST YOUTH GROUP AT THE GEYLANG EAST COMMUNITY CENTRE ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 21, 1977 AT 7.30 P.M.

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I am happy to join you at this camp fire.

The youth of Singapore today, unlike their parents when they were young, have many and varied opportunities for intellectual development and advancement.

Today, things have radically changed for the better. We gained our independence and sovereignty in 1965. We are now masters of our own destiny. The sky is the limit. And, whether we float or sink depends entirely on us. This, the youths must realise. We have to be constantly aware of the manifold problems facing Singapore today and do our bit to sustain and improve upon the progress achieved in the past 12 years. Such progress has been made possible through hard work for which there is no substitute. Indeed, we have no choice but to work hard, struggle for survival.

The countries which have taken the easy way out and gone for soft options are now in trouble, a situation made worse by the emergence of sub-cultures advocating and eulogising uninhibited hedonistic practices of all kinds such as drug addiction, permissiveness and aversion to hard work. These are external manifestations of the malady that plague the societies in the West and it would be a long time, if ever, for things to return to normalcy.

If our youths were to imitate such practices it is surely the way to perdition. This is not what we want. The youths, in particular, who will one day be at the helm and govern the country must have the intellectual capacity to be discerning and discriminating enough to ward off these ills for a better future.

Ours is a competitive society with good rewards for the successful. But competition is fair and open. Everyone has equal opportunities to rise up to the top as advancement depends on merit and performance irrespective of race or creed. The youth of Singapore must therefore work, and work hard, in order to be successful in life.