



EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY

Speech by Encik Othman Wok, Minister for Social Affairs, officiating at the Pasir Panjang Basketball Tournament on 20 Jul 75 at the Zehnder Road Community Centre at 7.30 pm

1 It gives me great pleasure tonight to officiate at the opening of the Pasir Panjang Basketball Tournament, 1975. I am glad that the number of teams participating in this year's tournament is greater than the number last year. This is indicative of the organisers' success in promoting interest in sports consciousness among our constituents particularly in basketball. Keep up the good work. We hope to see more teams entering the competition next year.

2 Last year, our Constituency did not participate in the Inter-Constituency Basketball Tournament because the organisers found it difficult to raise a team. I have been told that this year we intend to participate and so, one of the objects of our Constituency tournament is to select the best players to represent our Constituency in the Inter-Constituency Basketball Tournament to be held in October this year. I am sure there is no lack of talent in the teams participating here to enable the organisers to raise a strong side which could

pose a challenge to the best teams in the Inter-Constituency Tournament. However, the essence of any sport is not so much in the winning but in the taking part although it is not uncommon for sports officials and coaches to exhort their sportsmen to train hard and win medals.

3 Sports, besides being a pleasurable pastime, is a way of life which helps us to attain physical fitness, mental alertness and a good character. We want our young people to take up sports early and keep up the interest in sports throughout their lives. This is the objective of our sports-for-all policy. We hope that through sports and other worthwhile youth programmes, we will have in the end robust and rugged individuals who have the capacity, stamina and will to do well in any undertaking which calls for sustained hard work. I would, therefore, urge our constituents both young and old to support all tournaments organised for the constituency not only as spectators but also as participants, even if only for recreational purposes.

4 I would also like to see greater participation by Malays in basketball, table-tennis and some of the games

traditionally played by the Chinese and greater participation by the Chinese in Sepak Takraw. There is no reason why one community cannot play the games customarily played by another community. Sports should provide the common ground for all races to come together in common participation. Our sports fields and courts for games are places where the average man can identify himself with others, irrespective of race or creed, in the enjoyment of common sports facilities.

5 Sports is one facet of nation-building. Participation in sports at the constituency level means the constant consolidation of self, the sense of belonging to a community, the willingness to share the benefits of collective endeavour and making friends and winning goodwill. These will build our Nation.

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