

Speech by Mr Ho Cheng Choon, Parliamentary Secretary,
(National Development) on the opening of the 2nd
Confederation Zone of Oceania Fencing Championship
at the Singapore Badminton Hall on 1.9.75 at 10 am.

First of all, I would like to welcome all participants in this
2nd Confederation Zone of Oceania Fencing Championships.

The first Confederation Zone of Oceania Fencing Championships was
held in Australia in 1971. The 3 participating countries then were Australia,
New Zealand and Singapore. Today's meet, the second in the series, speaks
well of the growing popularity of fencing as the number of participating
countries has increased to seven. Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Hong
Kong have now joined the first group of participants to make this a truly
international sporting event.

The increasing awareness of the importance of sports and the
greater participation of people in sports is a noticeable trend in many
countries, including Singapore. A novel approach to sports is viewing it
as a form of human investment, the returns of which are good health and
a better frame of mind.

This is not more true of other sports than in fencing which demands
physical dexterity and mental alertness. Fencing has indeed come a long way
from the days when duels were fought to settle points of personal honour to
an organised sport today.

Today's meet is a major event in fencing circles in Singapore and
provides an excellent opportunity for our local fencers to gauge their
fencing skills. As in any international meet of this kind, we hope that
participants will engage in friendly competition and goodwill thus
enhancing the socio-economic ties which we have with each other.

Let me then wish all participants a good match and the best of
luck. For those who have come from abroad to participate in this 2nd
Fencing Championships, I also wish you a pleasant stay in Singapore.