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SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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SPEECH BY MR CHAI CHONG YII, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR
EDUCATION, AT THE OPENING OF THE WORKSHOP ON SCHOOL
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ON SATURDAY, 21 FEBRUARY 1976
AT 0900 HOURS AT HWA CHONG JUNIOR COLLEGE

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak on this occasion - the opening of the Workshop on School Financial Administration. The workshop, I am informed, marks the inaugural activity of the Singapore Educational Administration Society. The Society was registered in December 1975 with the commendable objectives of promoting the advancement of educational administration, seeking solutions to educational problems and fostering a high standard in the practice and study of educational administration. The fact that it is able to conduct this workshop so soon after its beginning is indicative of its capability and genuine desire in carrying out these objectives. The Society is to be congratulated for its efforts to help Principals adjust to their new roles as financial administrators.

2 Principals, by and large, have reacted favourably to the announcement made by the Ministry in December last year to grant them full discretion in use of their School Funds. As they come to grips with the problems of how and when to use these funds, they will adopt different lines of approach. Some Principals may feel inclined to 'play safe' and not spend at all rather than risk queries or complaints that funds have not been spent wisely later. This negative approach is to be avoided. My advice is to spend but spend wisely in the interests of your pupils and to improve your schools. You will not be called to task for wrong decisions made in good faith nor will there be

any stigma against you. But you should bear in mind that these funds should not be used to benefit only a handful of pupils. You should also not allow personal enthusiasm for particular activities or programmes to exercise undue influence on your decisions. For example, a Principal who is a keen sportsman or a music enthusiast should not spend a disproportionate amount on sports or music programmes to benefit only a few at the expense of other activities which would benefit more. The yardstick of whether expenditure has been wisely made is not determined by the amount spent but by the consequent benefits to the school in general and the pupils in particular.

3 Finally I urge all Principals to plan well-balanced programmes of activities so that all students will have the opportunity of an enriching and rewarding school life. On this note, I declare this workshop open and wish all participants every success in their deliberations.