

SPEECH BY MR HO CHENG CHOON, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
TO THE MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRESIDENT
OF AMATEUR FENCING ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE AT FENCING
BRONZE AWARD PRESENTATION CEREMONY, TANJONG PAGAR
COMMUNITY CENTRE ON 20TH FEBRUARY 1973

It is a great pleasure for me to attend this Ceremony.

In the past few years sports have become more and more popular in Singapore. Self-defence is one of the sports which attract increasing numbers of young people. However, fencing is still not as common as other games in this country.

The graceful art of swordsmanship is of the greatest antiquity. Before the days of gunpowder and guns, the sword was a source of military force. In the course of the last few centuries fencing has achieved very wide popularity as a sport, especially in Western countries. We in Singapore started to have fencing way back in the early '50's. With the presence of the British Forces' personnel in those days, fencing competitions and activities were first stage within the compounds of these establishments, and only a sprinkling of local enthusiasts were involved. But with the founding of the A.F.A.S., fencing in Singapore took a great leap forward in popularising the game among Singaporeans.

Today we have affiliated to the A.F.A.S. 4 major fencing clubs. They are the Vigilante Corps' Fencing Club, SAFSA's Fencing Club, Tanglin Fencing Club, and King Edward Hall Fencing Club and a few more have applied for affiliation.

The membership roll of these clubs is quite substantial and the A.F.A.S. will be launching a membership drive campaign very shortly to further popularise the game in Singapore.

Courses and competitions are being planned and carried out by the Association to try to improve and maintain a high level of proficiency in the various weapons used in fencing.

In the past we have courses conducted mainly for beginners who only need and want to learn the basics of fencing. And once these courses were completed, the training and talents that these beginners might possess were not put to further use except for some rare occasions when competitions were held.

Hence with this prevailing situation of fencing in Singapore there is much to be desired in so far as standard of fencing in Singapore is concerned. The A.F.A.S. will work towards the remedy of this situation by conducting courses both at intermediate and advanced levels and also for the various weapons through the engagement of coaches and films in the near future.

With the appearance of fencing in the Asian Games to be held in Teheran in 1974 and the staging of the Oceania Zono Championships in Singapore in 1975, the fencers in Singapore have got no choice but to try and improve their technique and speed in fencing by giving their full support in helping their clubs and each other in planning out courses, competitions and practise sessions and other means of promoting the quality of fencing in Singapore so as to be assured of a place in the National Contingent.

Towards this end we must all work together to improve on what little coaching and assistance that your club has given you.

You can rest assure that the Association will do all it can to give you every assistance, technical or otherwise to enhance the activities in your club.

Finally, I would like to congratulate all of you who have successfully completed your basic training in fencing. I hope that you all will further your study in a higher level and improve your techniques.

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