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SPEECH BY MR CHAN CHEE SENG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(SOCIAL AFFAIRS), AND PRESIDENT OF THE SINGAPORE AMATEUR
SWIMMING ASSOCIATION, AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
SINGAPORE AMATEUR SWIMMING ASSOCIATION HELD ON TUESDAY,
1 MARCH 1977 AT 5.30 P.M. AT THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS
CONFERENCE ROOM

1 1977 is an important year for us. We must plan our programmes
carefully to meet the many commitments of the Association and also to
plan ahead with the view of improving the organisation and upgrading the
performance of our swimmers and water polo players as well as to organise
a programme of mass participation in swimming.

PM's advice

2 Our priority is still to get the average Singaporean to be able
to swim. The Prime Minister has already advised all parents to see that
their children learn to swim and all youths to take to water before
leaving primary school. The Prime Minister advised parents to make sure
that their children learn to swim - like riding a bicycle, because once
you learn, it is with you for life and the best time to learn is to
learn young. Looking at statistics on the causes of deaths, out of 472
cases of deaths by accident, next to car accidents and accidental falls,
drowning is the cause for 70 cases of deaths in 1974 and 50 cases in
1975. Many of the drowning cases could have been avoided if people know
how to swim and it is quite ridiculous that there are many Singaporeans
who could not swim when we have so many swimming pools.

(The Association will continue)

Promoting Community Participation

2

3 The Association will continue to promote community participation in swimming programmes through its affiliates including the People's Association Youth Swimming Club, schools, Chinese Swimming Club and the Singapore Swimming Club. All of these had a busy year keeping the swimmers in readiness and coaching young boys and girls in swimming.

4 Despite the suspension by FINA, we were able to continue with our programmes in swimming and water polo both in the local meets and in friendly competitions with other countries. Several meet and national records were broken. This certainly augurs well for the Association.

P.R. of China
5 Last year we had the opportunity to play host to the People's Republic of China swimming and diving teams. Competition was keen. We had much to learn from their divers. The meet provided another opportunity for young swimmers to pit against the best from China.

6 The 7th Asian Age Group Meet was not held last year. This was indeed a disappointment to our young swimmers. It is possible that the meet may be held in August this year by Malaysia. This meet was originated by Singapore and we really hope that the Asian Age Group Meet would be organised this year, thus affording the opportunities for young swimmers in Asia to have a fine competition for gaining international competitive experience.

(For the South East Asia Games..)

7 For the South East Asia Games to be held in Kuala Lumpur this year, there is a problem we need to solve urgently. The holding of the meet happens to coincide with the GCE examinations. Four or five of our potential gold medal winners may be out of the competition. The result is that we will face very stiff opposition from both Philippines and Indonesia which have many potential swimmers undergoing training in the United States. To iron out problems, our Working Committee should start at once to work out the operational details. Co-operation and assistance from the Singapore Sports Council and from all affiliates, namely, the schools, Singapore Armed Forces Sports Association, People's Association Youth Swimming Club, Chinese Swimming Club and others, are very necessary. We must maintain the standards and we must try and do well in the South East Asia Games.

Training of swimmers, divers and water polo players

8 The training of our water polo players and divers is being intensified. They will continue with their centralised training at the Toa Payoh pool. *The swimmers will be* under their respective coaches and under the watchful eyes of the Association. The system of centralised training under their respective coaches who are their teachers and guardians, will certainly bring good results. The last six years have shown that this method is a

(good one and we must take.....)

good one and we must take advantage of our position as a small country with good means of transportation and communication to exploit this advantage ~~over the bigger countries which find difficulty in organising~~ centralised training.

9 In the planning of the programmes of the Association, we must consider the future of aquatics, our general promotional programmes as well as the question of the formation of an Asean and Asian Swimming Federations. So much has been said about all these but details have still to be worked out. We shall put our efforts towards the formation of these Federations.

10 Finally, I wish to thank all the coaches and swimmers, parents and affiliates, for their whole-hearted co-operation and sacrifices in assisting the Association, not only to bring the sport to the masses but also to improve the standard of swimming in the Republic. I would like to call upon all young retired participants to come forward and offer your time and services in helping us to implement our swimming programmes more effectively.

11 Thank you.

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