

# SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

PUBLICITY DIVISION · MINISTRY OF CULTURE · CITY HALL SINGAPORE 6

National Archives and  
Records Centre, Singapore.

MC/AUG/26/78(Education)

78 0058 14

SPEECH BY MR. CHAI CHONG HII, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR  
EDUCATION, AT THE OPENING OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION SEMINAR  
ON FRIDAY, 11 AUGUST 78 AT 9.00 AM AT THE NATIONAL STADIUM

I am happy to be with you at this physical education seminar this morning. The effectiveness of the school physical education programme is fundamental to the promotion of sporting activities and important to the physical fitness of our people. Sports and recreation today have become a way of life for many Singaporeans, both young and old.

Sports education nowadays occupies a major portion of the schools' programme for extra curricular activities, but extra curricular activities certainly embrace a much wider scope. Sports participation has definite relations to physical attributes and physiological benefits, but far more important than these are the character-building qualities in sports which can be inculcated through sound physical education programmes. To share the benefits of physical activities among the greatest number and to catch them young as the saying goes, the best means is through the physical education and sports programmes in schools. But here I must caution you that schools are not factories to produce "champions" nor are our educational programmes geared in anyway in this direction. There should be mass participation of sports and games in schools, and the pattern and curricular materials should be so selected that they provide young people with enough motivation to continue physical recreation in adult life.

The Ministry of Education is presently giving strong support to raise the level of physical education in schools. Re-training of teachers, better facilities in new schools and greater flexibility in the use of school funds are spearheading the trend to ensure successful physical education during pupils' formative

years. Competition rightly has a place in the sports education programme but one must guard against the creation of elitism in sports. For those who are less inclined towards competition, non-competitive activities like camping and hiking are more suitable. These are also being vigorously promoted in schools.

In order that physical education functions effectively, teachers and coaches must meet from time to time, as you do now, to re-examine the curricula and to consider new innovations. We must nurture a generation of teachers who, with wholesome attitude, would inject into every teaching opportunity unrestrained participation. Only then would pupils become intellectually and actively involved in practical experience with desirable educational outcomes.

This decade has probably seen vast and rapid changes in physical education. Physical educationists are now talking about feedback, curricula reforms, strategies, evaluation, rolling plans and innovations. The concept of physical education in relation to "total development" of the pupils is now widely understood and this has earned the subject a significant place in the school curriculum.

Finally, let me wish you success in your deliberations to bring in fresh perspectives and useful views, to inspire the teaching of physical education and to inculcate desirable values in young Singaporeans. Thank you.

#-#-#-#-#-#-#-#-#-#