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SPEECH BY MR CHAI CHONG YII, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE
FOR EDUCATION, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE STUDENT
SEMINAR-CUM-EXHIBITION AT TOH TUCK SECONDARY SCHOOL
ON THURSDAY, 15 MARCH 1979 AT 9.00 AM

It is always a pleasure to see the principal and staff of a school putting in extra efforts for the benefits of their pupils. The principal and staff of Toh Tuck Secondary School are therefore to be commended for organising this seminar-cum-exhibition on careers and inter-personal relationships.

Using the school vacation for worthwhile activities is indeed laudable. When the school is in session, the pupils are busy with their lessons and extra-curricular activities. They therefore need a break during the school holidays. However a break does not mean just whiling the time away without any objective in mind. For growing, active and restless school children to have nothing to do, it means boredom. A break is doing something different from daily routine. It is relaxing. You often enjoy it because you do not feel any pressure.

Young people need to be helped to develop their talent. The best help they can get is from their teachers. They need to be encouraged to participate in activities which are likely to give them confidence. Confidence is gained through practice. There are occasions when they watch and learn. There must also be occasions when they put theory to practice. Much more is learnt this way. They will grow up to be more matured men and women.

Schools can encourage pupils to engage in group activities such as sports, games, camping, community work, as well as individual pursuits such as hobbies. These activities help to break the monotony of daily routine. All children love to participate in some of them. Teachers can encourage pupils with similar interests to get together during school vacations to share their experiences. They may even do a project together. This will motivate pupils to develop their

interests. It will also prove to pupils that teachers are interested in their all-round development. Teachers are their mentors, not just instructors and disciplinarians. Such vacation activities must of course be voluntary.

By helping our children to develop their interests and engage in healthy activities, we are helping them to be happier persons while in school. These activities will also benefit them in their adult life. Good habits learnt while in school inevitably permeate into one's personality when one grows up. The modern world is full of monotonous routine. While we must learn how to do our daily work well, so must we know how to lead a happy and meaningful life.

Finally, I have the pleasure to declare this seminar-cum-exhibition open.
