PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH AT THE TANJONG PAGAR COMMUNITY CENTRE ON THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 1966.

(TRANSLATION)

Friends,

I would first like to thank the members of the Citizen's Consultative Committee of Tanjong Pagar for their great effort and success in the recent drive to recruit volunteers for the People's Defence Force. The response was one of the best in all constituencies.

But I would like to take this opportunity of drawing attention to the fact that the medical check-up has shown that people in our urban areas are less physically fit than those living in our rural areas. Many have been found physically unfit for military training.

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It is not only the middle-aged who are not physically fit. Young people, including secondary school students, have also been found to be in poor physical condition.

This is a danger signal we must heed and we must pay greater attention to the physical fitness of our young.

Too often in schools, our students are concerned only with passing examinations. They are not interested in taking part in extra-curricular activities or in sports. Not enough emphasis is placed on physical fitness and discipline.

It is dangerous to be flabby when we live in a turbulent part of the world. We must remedy the situation immediately. If our students are only thinking of doing well in examinations and getting a good job, then we shall be a flabby lot with the best as bookworms.

There are considerable changes already under implementation in our educational policy and employment policy. Schemes for Government Service, conditions for entry into Government Service will have to be altered to reflect this shift in emphasis. Any applicant for a government post will in future improve his chances by having taken active part in sports and extra-mural activities besides scoring distinctions in his examinations. Our future leaders and administrators must not merely be bookworms. They must have the qualities of leadership plus physical vigour, stamina and endurance.

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In this constituency, various sports organisations have provided young people with facilities for physical activities using Duxton Gardens and the two community centres. Thanks to them, there were (of those who responded to the call for recruits) a good number who were certified physically fit and were selected for training. This only brings home the point I made just now!

If our nation is to survive forever and ever, we must nurture a vigorous and healthy people capable of standing up for ourselves and our right to live our lives without being coerced or molested.

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