

17 NOV 1984

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SPEECH BY DR TAN ENG LIANG, CHAIRMAN, SINGAPORE SPORTS COUNCIL, AT THE 12TH ANNUAL INTER-OIL GAMES DINNER & DANCE AT THE ISLAND BALLROOM, SHANGRI-LA HOTEL ON SATURDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 1984 AT 7.30 PM

I would like to thank the Inter-Oil Organising Committee for inviting my wife and I to your function tonight. I would also like to congratulate the Committee for organising the Inter-Oil Games for the 12th year. I understand that there was keen competition between the seven sports clubs namely, BP, Burma-Castrol, Caltex, Esso, Mobil, Shell and Singapore Refinery Company who have participated in the Games of 1984.

Tonight, I would like to touch on sports and recreation in industries. From research conducted in developed countries, industrial recreation increases productivity, reduces turnover and absenteeism and brings about better communication between the employer and employee thus boosting the morale of employees. Studies have also shown that recreation and sports can help to relieve the tedium and tension of work.

Generally, sports in industries have not been fully developed in Singapore notwithstanding the efforts of a number of sports clubs formed by some firms and factories, especially the oil companies.

The slow development of sports in industries may be attributed to three factors. First, there is a general lack of encouragement on the part of management. Second, there is a lack of knowledgeable sports officials to initiate and implement sports programmes. Third, the lack of facilities has deterred employees from participating.

To what extent industrial recreation will develop depends very much on the firms and factories themselves. To lay a strong foundation now and to ensure progress for the future, I would like to suggest that the following lines of action be initiated.

First, interpret the value of sports and recreation to employees by stressing its significance, importance and the inherent good that would be gained. This could be done through the medium of a firm's in-house newsletter. Talks by proficient sports officials to employees would also be most beneficial. Should you need the services of the Singapore Sports Council in this area, I would be most happy to oblige.

Second, plan to offer equal opportunities for participation by employees. Management can plan competitive and non-competitive programmes providing for variety, balance and continuity to all levels of employees.

Third, an effort should be made to train and prepare sports and recreation leaders from among the staff. The Singapore Sports Council has conducted several courses for officials from firms and factories, and we shall continue to conduct these courses to churn out recreation leaders to promote sports in industries.

Fourth, this suggestion may not be feasible in companies or factories which lack space. But where space is not a problem, management should look into the building of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities within their own grounds. This could be done by proper planning and improvisation. Limited but functional facilities for netball, squash and basketball can be provided. Modern fitness equipment and compact and well designed to fit into small areas. These are available today.

I wish firms and industries in Singapore could emulate the oil companies in Singapore which have established sports clubs and varied programmes of sports and recreation activities for all its members.

Finally, I hope that you will continue with the good work in providing meaningful sports and recreation activities to all your staff.