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SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AT THE
OPENING OF THE NINTH ANNUAL GOVERNMENT
SERVICES SPORTS CHAMPIONSHIPS AT THE POLICE
DEPOT, JALAN GURNEY, KUALA LUMPUR ON
FRIDAY, 29TH OCTOBER, 1965

I am very pleased to be here this morning to set as a kind of official starter to get the Ninth Annual Government Services Sports Championships successfully under way.

For all athletes in Government service this Sports Meeting is always the culmination of many weeks and months of hard personal effort and training, so I am glad to see that there is an excellent turnout of no less than 229 entries from eleven States of Malaysia. Only two States are not represented here — Perlis and Sarawak. Next year, however, the roster should be complete, as Perlis has now formed its own Welfare and Recreational Council, which is awaiting registration, and Sarawak is now making plans to form an active Council there.

The fact that this Sports Meeting is being held at the Police Depot on this occasion, instead of the Stadium Merdeka, is a reminder to all taking part that these Championships are of special interest, being a curtain-raiser for the forthcoming South East Asia Peninsula Games taking place in December. Because the Stadium Merdeka is being made ready for the SEAP Games, the major highlight of this athletic year, it is necessary to bring the venue here, but despite the change I have no doubt that the competition will be keener than ever before, with hopes running high to earn the honour of places in the Malaysian team.

These Championships have a reputation for smashing records. Last year no less than eleven new marks were set. There is every prospect that more old records will go by the board, for two reasons. First, many out-standing athletes are taking part, including Olympic competitors. Second, the entries are fewer than last year because the qualifying standards are higher this time. With their eyes on the SEAP Games, the athletes will be going all out to give the best performances this important meeting demands and deserves.

As Chairman of the Olympic Council I would like to extend a very warm welcome indeed to all the athletes, both men and women, who have come together here to vie with one another in track and field events to produce their best in speed and stamina, strength and skill.

I particularly wish to welcome all the competitors and officials from Sabah, who are sure to give an excellent account of themselves, and I look forward to seeing competitors from Sarawak joining in next year with their brother and sister athletes from all the other States.

This Sports Meeting is sponsored and organised by the Malaysia Government Services Welfare Recreational Council which since its inception has expanded its activities year by year. The emphasis today is of course on the sporting side, but the Council has put up many ideas for welfare and cultural activities and is also engaged in comprehensive housing schemes. The Central Government has always given ready and willing support to the Council and I can give positive assurance that we will continue to help in every way possible. I would like the Council to take particular interest in every assistance given to the Borneo Territories so that Government servants in those areas will be encouraged to take part in all organised activities and share in the various plans and projects.

The Central Government believes that encouraging sport and recreation among its employees contributes not only to the health and efficiency of the service but also to wider friendship and understanding and greater unity and purpose among all these whose duty and honour is to serve the people of Malaysia. This Sports Meeting, which has involved a tremendous amount of planning and hard work, through the cordial rivalry of personal encounter, renews old associations and creates new friendships. I congratulate all the athletes on their smart turnout and wish them the best of luck.

Knowing that the spirit of true sportmanship will guide each of you both on the field and off, I take very great, pleasure indeed in declaring open this Ninth Annual Malaysia Government Services Championships.