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**SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AT THE PRESENTATION OF A CHEQUE OF
\$40,000/- FOR A YOUTH CENTRE AT
METHODIST BOYS SCHOOL, JLN. DAVIDSON,
KUALA LUMPUR ON 22ND APRIL, 1966.**

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very glad to be here with you this afternoon and would like to congratulate your Board of Management for the initiative you have taken in launching the development of a youth centre.

As you already know it is the policy of my Government particularly over the next five years during the implementation of our Development Plan to take active steps to provide every facility to help our young people to become productive and self-reliant members of society.

This task becomes even more important when one considers that in Malaysia today about 60 per cent of our population is under 25 years of age.

As you know we have set up a separate Ministry to implement this task and the culture, youth and sports programme is intended to encourage the development of youth activities which are designed to foster creative thinking, interest in arts and culture, community cooperation and youth leadership.

With recreational, cultural and sports activities, our Malaysian youths will be helped to develop a healthy body and a healthy mind.

A sum of \$3.3 million will be provided in the Plan with the construction of 12 multi-purpose youth centres at State level throughout Malaysia and these centres will provide facilities for training courses in leadership, instruction and coaching of sports and cultural activities.

However, Ladies and Gentlemen, in a truly progressive and democratic nation such as ours, although Government has definite responsibilities in this field, it is also our policy to give every possible encouragement to voluntary organizations to play their part, and shoulder their share of participation in nation building; and with the active encouragement of a voluntary organization such as yours, and many others throughout the country, the true principle of democracy is applied in achieving our national aims, namely that our Government and our people go forward together, advancing in the correct and proper direction, towards the achievement of a better way of life particularly for the future citizens of our country - our youth of today.

As you know, the future of Malaysia depends not only on economic progress, but also on being able to blend into a unified and harmonious whole, the various races and cultures which comprise our nation, and it always has been the policy of the Alliance Government to practice tolerance of religion even though constitutionally our national religion is Islam.

And I think that this cheque which I am about to present to you for the development of a youth centre sponsored by your Church is tangible evidence of this principle of religious tolerance in Malaysia.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, in handing over this cheque to Dr. Leong Kwok Onn, I hand with it my very best wishes for the success of your youth centre, and my deep desire that the young people of all races, who will use this centre, will gain benefit from it, and acquire the qualities of both body and mind to enable them, as they grow up, to lead useful and fruitful lives as good Malaysians.