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PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR HON SUI SEN, THE MP FOR HAVELOCK AND MINISTER FOR FINANCE, AT THE OPENING OF A VARIETY SHOW AND PRESENTATION OF PRIZES TO WINNERS OF THE "SPEAK MORE MANDARIN" COMPETITION ORGANISED BY THE "HAVELOCK CONSTITUENCY PROMOTE MANDARIN CAMPAIGN" WORKING COMMITTEE AT THE COMPOUND FACING THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE PEOPLE'S PARK COMPLEX ON
SATURDAY, 19 JANUARY 1980 AT 7.30 PM

People of Chinese origin in the Republic have been using separate dialects of their own in the past, resulting in a multitude of dialects being used in the Chinese community, such as Hokkien, Foochow, Henghua, Cantonese, Teochew, Hainanese, Hakka, Shanghainese, etc. In fact, Mandarin has long been acknowledged as the common language of the Chinese, but it has not been widely used in the Chinese community despite effort to popularize its use in the past. For lack of active support and promotion for Mandarin from the people in general, the use of Chinese dialects has been perpetuated up to now.

Our current campaign to popularize the use of Mandarin seeks to make Mandarin the common language of the Chinese community, which will facilitate communication in our day-to-day activities.

The use of Mandarin among the younger generation is rather common now though it is still a bit awkward at the beginning among the older generation. However, it will soon become entrenched as a habit through frequent usage. As the Chinese saying goes, "Everything is most difficult at its beginning". Therefore, everyone must take the initiative to contribute to the current campaign, and will soon appreciate the convenience that will come with a wider use of Mandarin.

In response to the current campaign, the People's Park, People's Park Centre, People's Park Complex, OG Departmental Store and other commercial houses in the Havelock Constituency have jointly organized a

"Speak More Mandarin" campaign as a starting point of their promotional effort to demonstrate their perseverance in promoting the use of Mandarin.

Our gathering here this evening marks a good start for the effort to promote the use of Mandarin by Chinese Singaporeans in this constituency. Success, however, can be ensured, only through sustained effort. Finally, may I wish everyone all the best. Thank you.

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