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SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

SPEECH TO BE GIVEN BY MR. TANG SEE CHIM, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (FINANCE), AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF "MONTRES ET BIJOUX" AT THE SINGAPORE CONFERENCE HALL ON 20TH JANUARY, 1969, AT 5.00 P.M.

The whole world recognises with the deepest admiration Switzerland's reputation for elegance and precision in industrial design. This Exhibition sponsored by the City of Geneva has deservedly won recognition as the premier salon of the highest standards in watch and jewellery design, which perhaps symbolises the most glamorous aspect of industrial design. At its annual competition, the top designers from Switzerland and the rest of the world vie for the distinguished City of Geneva Prizes and the honour and privilege of helping to shape the face of Tomorrow's time.

As the honourable Charge d' Affaires has rightly pointed out, Switzerland like Singapore has no raw materials of her own. Both countries have to depend on the ingenuity and skill of their people.

It is for this reason that in Singapore we are giving high priority to the development of a wide range of precision engineering industries and particularly the watch and jewellery industry. In this, we could benefit greatly from the Swiss experience. In this connection, it is gratifying to us that there has already been encouraging response from Swiss and other manufacturers in making Singapore an assembling and manufacturing centre to benefit from our high productivity and comparatively low wage costs. Singapore workers are already demonstrating their high productivity and the quality of their craftsmanship in a number of enterprises now making watch parts, accessories and assembling time-pieces. Indeed, we have today two Swiss tool and dye making experts working in the engineering workshops of the Singapore Economic Development Board towards the development of a sophisticated watch-making complex.

It is our belief that in industry today great benefit can come from the inter-change and cross-fertilisation of techniques and ideas among artisans from different countries and the call of the

Honourable Charge d' Affaires for greater exchange of know-how between Singapore and Swiss industrial designers is most welcome. We look forward to continuing expansion of technical co-operation and joint ventures of this nature for mutual benefit. Furthermore, I hope this Exhibition will help to stimulate and inspire our own budding craftsmen. Perhaps they will resolve to work diligently and aspire to see their own works one day among the collection of a future "Montres et Bijoux".

Our presence here today is a doubly happy occasion. This Exhibition was founded to commemorate the two thousandth anniversary of the founding of a great city - Geneva - and as a tribute to her position as the Capital of the art of elegant watch making. For the first time, the Exhibition has been brought to the Far East and coincidentally, it is shown in the hundred and fiftieth anniversary year of the founding of our own city - Singapore. In declaring this Exhibition open, I would also like to take the opportunity to send to the citizens of Geneva and Switzerland the greetings and good wishes of the peoples of the City and Republic of Singapore.

20TH JANUARY, 1969.

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