

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

Mr. Wop Toon Boon,
SPEECH BY THE ACTING MINISTER FOR CULTURE, AT PRIZE-
GIVING CEREMONY FOR R.T.S. SHORT STORY AND SONG
COMPETITION ON 27.7.69 AT VICTORIA THEATRE AT 7.30 P.M.

EMBARGOED TILL 7.30 P.M.
ON SUNDAY, 27.7.69.

The song and short story competition conducted by the R.T.S. is not something new altogether to Singapore. Such competitions have been held in the past but this year's competition has a special significance for it is one of the many celebrations in Singapore to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the founding of Singapore. The songs and short stories therefore were required to reflect the history, life and aspirations of the people of Singapore whose different ethnic origins and cultural pursuits make our nation a unique and colourful assemblage of a multi-racial and multi-cultural people whom history and geography have brought together to form a nation.

Modern Singapore on its 150th Anniversary is making new history. We are launching ourselves into an industrial and technological age and it therefore beholds us to reflect on the past, to capture the present and project the future. Songs and short stories are one of the ways through which this can be done and our multi-racial society is ideally suited to translate the hopes and aspirations of the people in the image of their own thoughts with Singapore as the focus of their future. There are amongst our people hidden talents which must be tapped and stimulated to creativity. It is through competitions such as this that we can bring out these hidden talents and use them to the best advantage for the betterment and benefit of the country. I am sure that a lot more can be done in this regard.

R.T.S. has taken steps to popularise the prize winning songs by distributing them to schools and cultural bodies for use at anniversary celebrations and on other appropriate occasions. The songs will also be presented over radio and T.V. These steps should encourage more of our people to participate in such competitions for they give recognition to works of merit.

This competition has been a success and, no doubt, this success is due in part to those who participated in it. Their works have displayed the highest order of patriotism, an understanding of the challenges that Singapore faces, their faith in the future of Singapore and the role that they themselves have to play.