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SPEECH BY MR S DHANABALAN, MINISTER FOR CULTURE,
AT MOBIL'S LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF A BOOK "IMPRESSIONS OF SINGAPORE"
WITH AN ACCOMPANIED PHOTO-EXHIBITION AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM
ART GALLERY ON WEINERDAY, 11 MARCH 1981 AT 6.30 PM.

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The book "Impressions of Singapore" is a welcome addition to the literature on Singapore. It is an outsider's view of the Singapore society - its past and present and the ways of its various ethnic communities. The observations of a poet's eye are enhanced by some of the most eye-catching photographs of Singapore that I've seen - images that will lead many Singaporeans to look again and appreciate the beauty and detail of the common-place things around them that they take for granted.

I must say in frankness that I do not agree nor endorse all the observations. We know that we have our failures and shortcomings, just like anyone else. Often a newcomer is able to see our traits more clearly than we Singaporeans. But a casual visitor or, for that matter, even some Singaporeans have no clear appreciation of the political and social imperatives that resulted in some of the features we see in Singapore today. To see the world in a grain of sand is not given to many but with it goes the risk of seeing more than what is there or even what is not there.

But any book or work of art must be judged as a whole and I have much pleasure in commending Mr Geoffrey Dutton and Mr Harri Peccinotti for this book which should give pleasure and food for thought to many Singaporeans and friends of Singapore.

Mobil Singapore, in commissioning this book, has once again set an example as a company that sees its responsibility to the community as more than selling oil and making money. My congratulations go to all concerned for this fine result.

