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SPEECH BY THE CHIEF MINISTER, DR. LIM YEW HOOK, AT THE OPENING OF THE NINTH INTERNATIONAL SALON OF PHOTOGRAPHY AT THE VICTORIA MEMORIAL HALL ON FRIDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY, 1958, AT 5.30 P.M.

You have been kind enough to ask me once more to open your International Salon of Photography and I am happy to accept, and to have the opportunity of congratulating you on this ninth exhibition. Your progress has been steady both in the standard of your exhibits and the range from which they come. You have earned place in our cultural calendar and have contributed your creative part to the wider life of our settled community. You have made sure that our Singapore home has pictures of the highest standard on its walls - and I am happy to see not only on the walls of houses and offices and cinemas, but now of our International Airport.

This Salon is not only a day in our Singapore cultural calendar, but a day in the international calendar of practitioners of the photographer's art. In this you have played your part in building up a more balanced picture of us overseas. The devil in us is always better news than the angel is us, and certainly than the greater part of us which is neither devil nor angel, but just human as we live our lives with the human talents and the human opportunities given to us. The more that groups such as yours build up the goodwill of associations and friendships overseas for Singapore, you are, while following your art and your inclination, playing your part too in the new life of our community.

You have not invited me here as a man behind the camera: for if I were, the result would be highly original and difficult to give a distinctive title to. Nor have you asked me as a man in front of the camera. But I can claim to be here as one who stands in front of the finished product to admire and gladly praise. Within each frame in this hall is a unit of eloquent experience which needs no verbal reinforcement from me. We are here to meet and respond to their appeal in their own language - the language of light. Photography literally means - writing in light. And what better language could there be. After all we can borrow the phrase of Sir Stamford Raffles himself and define our aim as one to write the history of Singapore in "characters of light".

You have your cameras and you can write studies of ourselves and our life written in light - in the light of the perceptive artist in you and in the deepening glow of the new light of citizenship with its growing strength and stature among us.

It gives me the greatest pleasure to welcome and declare this exhibition open for our delight.

February 21, 1958.

(Time issued 1400 hours)