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TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR, MR. JEK YEUN THONG, AT THE WOODWORKING INDUSTRIES EXHIBITION HELD AT THE SINGAPORE POLYTECHNIC ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, AT 4 P.M.

I am very pleased indeed to have this opportunity of attending the Woodcraftsmen's Competition which is being held in connection with the Woodworking Month. I believe that this is the first time in Singapore in which a contest has been arranged for our craftsmen and skilled workers. I believe also that the Light Industries Services is planning not only to continue the Woodcraftsmen's Competition on an annual basis, but intends to hold contests for skilled workers in other trades as well.

We all realise that the skilled worker has a very important role to play in the industrialisation programme in Singapore. However, there is often a tendency to feel that with mechanization, the machine becomes more important than the man. This is not really so, for in industrial modernisation programmes, the skilled worker plays a most important part. Therefore competitions of this kind which focus attention upon the skilled worker does add to the realisation of his importance.

The Woodcraftsmen's Competition which we have today, shows hand-craftsmanship only. I am told that the Woodcraftsmen's Competition for next year will introduce the use of electric portable hand tools which can do jobs more efficiently and less tediously. This trend towards modernisation for the woodcraftsmen is, I am sure, a step in the right direction.

I, therefore, have pleasure now in presenting awards to the winners.

NOVEMBER 15, 1964.

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