

SPEECH BY THE ACTING CHIEF MINISTER, THE HON.
MR. CHEW SWEE KEE, AT THE OPENING OF THE
PHARMACY EXHIBITION AT THE VICTORIA MEMORIAL
HALL AT 5.30 P.M. ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1958.

I know that you are disappointed at not having the Chief Minister here to formally open your Exhibition.

He has asked me to convey his regrets and to inform you that he has had to remain in Kuala Lumpur longer than he anticipated but he is sure that this Exhibition and this Week of effort organised by you will be attended with success and that the work you are doing will more and more be appreciated by a grateful public.

I understand that although the Pharmacy Department of the University of Malaya Medical Faculty is not to be compared in size to the Medical and Dental sections, it is progressively flourishing and providing newly-qualified members for your profession at regular intervals.

As with many other professions nowadays, Pharmacy sponsors equality of the sexes and boys and girls compete equally as Pharmacy students. This is true in Singapore, the United Kingdom and many other places, but I learn that in neighbouring Thailand and also in a number of Central European countries, the ladies have more or less taken the profession over - lock, stock and barrel. As you have only two ladies on the Pharmacy Week Committee, I gather that it is not likely to happen in Singapore just yet!

Most of us usually have a feeling of sympathy for the under-dog, and it seems to me that in Singapore today, the under-dogs are those who practise the older forms of medicine in competition with what we know as modern Western medicine. Whilst I pay tribute to the "boom" that Western medicine is rightly enjoying as the rising generation and some of the older generations too turn from the older remedies to the type of pharmaceuticals that we shall see in this Exhibition, I feel we should spare a thought for the "sinsehs" and those who practise ayurvedic medicine, acupuncture and other old-established remedies who have also done a great deal of healing.

If I might be permitted an unkind crack at my hosts, I would add that I strongly suspect that much of the success of all forms of medicine depends very greatly on the patient having faith in a cure and confidence in the "obat" that being the first essential for recovery. Perhaps the exponents of modern Western medicine lean a little less heavily on the faith and confidence angle than do the others.

Of course, Western medicine has a wonderful advantage as the vitamin pills and tranquillisers of today are beautifully packaged in little bottles with tamper-proof seals with a pamphlet to tell you all about the stuff inside. However, this is where we need the pharmacist as he is - the man who can tell us whether all the right vitamins have been included in the pill or whether some of the not-so-cheap ones have been reduced to half a dose and the really expensive ones left out altogether. That is, of course, only one aspect of the important role that Pharmacists play in the medical world as colleague to the Doctor and adviser to the public, and in recognition of the value of this work it has been a pleasure to come and address this gathering. I wish the profession of Pharmacy well and the Exhibition success.
SEPTEMBER 1, 1958. (Time issued 1305 hours)