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SPEECH BY MR WAN HUSSIN ZOOHRI, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
(HEALTH & CULTURE), AT THE 1984 BOOK ILLUSTRATOR'S  
EXHIBITION AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY LECTURE HALL ON  
MONDAY 20 AUGUST 1984 AT 6.00 PM

The first exhibition of the works of book designers and illustrators was held in 1981 but this is the first time that an exhibition has been put up in such a large scale. I would like to congratulate the National Book Development Council of Singapore, the National Library and the Association of Book Designers and Illustrators for organising this exhibition.

Quality in book production is very important. Well produced and illustrated books encourage reading especially amongst children. Children today are exposed to quality books from abroad, and computer aided TV graphics have brought to us colours and movements beyond our imagination. The reading public's expectation of good graphics is very high. There is therefore a great need for locally produced books to be more creatively and imaginatively designed.

Quality in books just does not happen - it is created by designers, illustrators, paste-up artists, editors and printers working with care and dedication. The publisher must be able to spot the creative skills of people around him and give them the support and encouragement.

The National Book Development Council recognised the need to improve book design and illustration. Over the years, it has organised several courses for book designers with the assistance of German and Japanese experts. It has

also identified book design courses conducted by institutions overseas so that local publishers could sponsor their designers for further training in these institutions. Finally, it has encouraged the formation of the Association of Book Designers and Illustrators.

A few other recent developments which will contribute to better book design and illustration in the longer-term need special mention. The Nanyang Academy of Arts has set up a Graphic Department and the St Patrick's Institution has set up the St Patrick's Art Centre. At the same time, the Baharudin Vocational Institute has upgraded its course on Advertising Arts to a diploma level.

The quality and range of book design in Singapore need further improvement to match the standards achieved in the advanced countries. This is important if Singapore is to develop and flourish as an important international publishing centre for quality books. Publishers should upgrade their book design departments and accord due recognition to the important role of book designers and illustrators in the publishing of quality books. More book designers should be sent overseas for training. The National Book Development Council may also want to consider increasing the cash prizes for the Best Book Designer's Award which it currently sponsors. This would encourage more designers to participate.

This exhibition displays a wide range of books by local designers and illustrators. The exhibition, I am sure, will make the public more aware of the role of designers and illustrators in the production of books.

I am pleased to declare the exhibition open and wish it every success.

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