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SPEECH BY H.E. THE GOVERNOR, SIR ROBERT BLACK, AT  
THE ROTARY CLUB'S INSTALLATION DINNER AT THE  
CATHAY RESTAURANT AT 9.30 P.M. ON THURSDAY, JUNE  
27, 1957.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives my wife and myself great pleasure once more to attend an installation Dinner of the Rotary Club of Singapore, and we thank you for your invitation.

I must confess that I am always happy on those occasions when I am invited as a guest at a dinner party and am assured that it will not be necessary for me to make a speech. I can then relax completely, enjoy the dinner which is served for one's delectation, and contemplate with detached equanimity the distracted expressions on the faces of the appointed ones, my host's or fellow guest's which clearly reveal the agonies of composition and internal combustion in which they are engaged while endeavouring, simultaneously, to extract the pleasure for their palates which the dishes before them merit.

Having made that confession, I shall however admit that there is one occasion when I am pleased to speak briefly at the end of a dinner party, and that is when I am given the opportunity of replying on behalf of my fellow guests and myself to say "thank you" for hospitality. That, Ladies and Gentlemen, is my pleasant duty this evening.

During the year which has passed under the leadership of your retiring President, Mr. Medora, the Rotary Wheel in Singapore has turned to significant purpose. It has not rusted with idleness; it has not turned idly on its own axis, disturbing the air only and nothing else.

I am not personally aware of whether or not you possess an analysis of the symbolism of your Wheel - why for instance it has six spokes while the Rotary test is arranged as a four way one; nor why there are 24 cogs on the wheel, unless this latter number is related to the hours of the day throughout which you must remain active and good Rotarians.

There is, however, no missing the significance of the fact that your badge is a cogwheel and can be interpreted as representing an integral part of our social mechanism. The symbol clearly bars any suggestion of megalomania or of a claim to a monopoly of ideals, and it also bars any obsession about the extent to which you alone can achieve social reform.

As I understand it, you believe that as individuals, and I repeat individuals, you have, each of you, in your own place and according to your profession or your trade, an essential part to play in the co-ordinated movements of the social machine and you intend to play your part fittingly. It explains your interpretation of vocational service and why, in your Rotary Club, you set yourself your tasks for the year. You have every right to be proud of the way in which you have carried out your obligations voluntarily undertaken; you can be proud of the range as well as of the volume of your achievements.

For material evidence of those, we can turn to the Anti-Tuberculosis Clinic, the School in Trafalgar Home, the rehabilitation

...of the

of the village in Ponggol, and, most recent of all, the building of a village hall and school at Kampong Teban. These buildings provide the setting within which those who benefit directly will live richer and fuller lives.

A community calls for companionship, and you Rotarians have succeeded in using the companionship of your lunch meetings to stimulate ideas about community problems, the purpose of which is to give others with fewer opportunities something of the companionship of your own Club.

This Rotary Club, because it is situated in Singapore, has great opportunities. Our statisticians have found that our total population is nearer one and a half million than we - and they - had thought, and this intensifies although it does not change the challenge. We have a people rapidly expanding, increasingly youthful and naturally and inevitably straining for improvement according to the lights held out to it. Among this population there are differences enough for those who would seek to divide and destroy or to extend and exploit. We live here in a crucial area which is crossed by the ideas as well as the goods of the modern world, and where so many races meet and live side by side. We have an economy which without basic manufactures or basic raw materials requires the constant good will of our neighbours for our market place.

We must earn their goodwill and, indeed, their confidence by our ability to perform services which, while they profit us, bring profit also to our neighbours and to all our customers. Efficiency and industry, however, are not enough; we must observe the highest possible standards of integrity. We shall be judged as a people, in the last resort, by our standards of conduct and by our humanity.

In facing the facts, which are our challenge, we have to cultivate the realism which Addison expressed in these lines

"It is not in mortals to command success  
"But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it."

We shall deserve it if we accept our responsibilities in the right Spirit. It is easy to suggest that we are being sentimental when we talk about the spirit of man as being something without which we are all mere animals but it is only when we acknowledge our obligations to our fellow men, realising that the spirit of man, in its most exalted moments, can reflect the image of God that we can secure our own individual integrity and achieve for ourselves and for our community a positive and valuable identity.

The opposite state of mind is sometimes described by a familiar word, namely "apathy". Its literal meaning is "without feeling" or "insensibility". It describes something mechanical, something inhuman without the warmth of imagination and of companionship, and therefore without the hope and faith that they create. We must prevent such a state of mind from trespassing into our community. We need effort, we need imagination and we need to associate together to realise our common purposes and our common obligations.

It was Edmund Burke who said that great empires and little minds go ill together. I would adapt that tonight and say that great achievements and little minds go ill together. We have a unique opportunity in Singapore but, only if the "We" is a real community united in purpose and constant in its companionship, can that opportunity be seized with advantage.

....If, ladies.

If, ladies and gentlemen, what I have said has not seemed as light in digesting as the previous and delicious part of the menu, let me set myself beside the "Gloomy Dean" and remind you of the remark of the late Dean Inge when he said "I have had in my time a good many troubles, most of which never happened". So let us in appreciation of what you have done in the past, in anticipation of what you will do in the future, and of the troubles which after all may never come, remember the Wheel of Rotary which is ever turning and, I hope, ever creating new stores of civic energy.

On behalf of my wife and of my fellow guests and of myself, I thank you, Mr. President and your fellow hosts, for your hospitality this evening.

June 27, 1957.  
SINGAPORE.

(Time issued 1700 hours)

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