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**SPEECH BY MR TANG GUAN SENG, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(EDUCATION), AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF
LIM CHENG HOE RETROSPECTIVE AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM ART
GALLERY ON TUESDAY, 4 MARCH 1986 AT 5.30 PM**

Lim Cheng Hoe was a self-taught painter, and a week-end artist. His works of art include water-colours and pastels, depicting a world which is familiar to us. There is beauty and tranquility in the scenes and dignity in his portrait paintings.

After seeing this Exhibition, we will notice that we have, in the past, overlooked the clear sky, the sparkling waters and the green trees. We have also taken for granted the ordinary people and their dwellings, the innocence in the eyes of the schoolgirl, the wisdom in the face of the hawker or taxidriver. It only takes a moment of reflection for us to see this beauty around us.

The work of Lim Cheng Hoe is not only concerned with great emotions, it is the work of a person we can identify with. It is the work of a highly talented and sensitive person. It is no wonder that he deserves to be placed amongst the pioneers of Singapore art.

We can enjoy his work without great effort or a special knowledge of modern art. He was truly Singaporean in his aiming for perfection. He gave expressions of the love for the beauty of our country and of our people.

Lim Cheng Hoe gave a lot of inspirations in his works of art as we can see today. These are part of our valuable cultural heritage. The aspiring artists of our younger generation, while learning and appreciating the works of foreign artists, they should also learn from our own pioneer artists. In this connection, I would like to propose that the National Museum consider providing a permanent site for the display of the works of our pioneer artists, like Lim Cheng Hoe, on a regular basis. The display can be arranged either according to themes or times of their works.

I am pleased to learn that the family of Lim Cheng Hoe has been kind enough to donate some of his works to the National Museum. This kind of gesture should be encouraged and emulated by others.

Perhaps, studies should be carried out to identify the works of our pioneer artists that are worth preserving. I am of the view that it is now appropriate for institutions like the National Museum, to systematically collect the works of our pioneer artists through donations or acquiring from sales, locally as well as overseas. Although we are now in difficult times, it is still worth to do so; otherwise they will be lost in the wilderness in no time.

At the same time, I think it may be useful for the National Museum to compile publications of its permanent collections of our famous artists for the benefit of our students as well as for the public.

On this note, I am pleased to declare this Exhibition open.

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