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## SPEECH BY THE CHIEF MINISTER AT THE OPENING OF THE MERDEKA HISTORICAL EXHIBITION ON 30TH AUGUST, 1957

I am very glad that an Historical Exhibition has been included in our Merdeka programme and, as you have said, I am keenly interested in the work which the Malayan Historical Society is doing in introducing to the Malayan public glimpses of the past which many of them had no chance of learning when they were at school.

Malaya has a very long history, but unfortunately very few records and monuments have been preserved with the result that they have not sufficiently aroused the interest and curiosity of the present generation. The Tableaux of historic events in the various divisions as well as the collections of uniforms, photographs and weapons are most valuable, and I hope some of them at least could be sent to other parts of the Federation for exhibition.

Malaya has been the centre of attraction to many visiting races in the last fifteen hundred years. This has resulted in the plurality of community in this country. I am glad indeed that the organisers of this exhibition have laid emphasis on the friendly association which has prevailed between our main communities for so many centuries. I refer to the tableaux of the visit of Admiral Cheng Ho to Malacca in 1406, to the early meeting of the Malay Chief and the Capitan China and Captain Francis Light at Penang, and the concept fellows-at-arms of all Malaysians in the security forces.

I have time and again mentioned that in the course of the long association of the various races with this country they have all cultivated a common Malayan characteristic and outlook. All it needs in order to create unity among the Malayan people is to develop this common trait. Everything that can be done will be done towards this end. This kris of Malaya is known throughout the world but few people know its significance. To a Malay it is said that a house without a kris is like a house without a soul. In this exhibition you see all kinds of weapons. They represent the spirit of the Malay people of old but after foreign domination this spirit has vanished; I only hope it will be revived

with independence. With independence let all people who consider Malaya their home cultivate the spirit of goodwill, peace and happiness towards one another. Let all the krites and weapons displayed here be articles of adornment for we stand for peace and goodwill and we will work towards that end.

The amount of planning and research put into this exhibition must have taken a lot of time and the effort put into the task must indeed be enormous. Therefore I would like to congratulate the organisers for the very hard work they have put into this exhibition and I hope that all who have come here to attend the Merdeka. Celebrations will take full advantage to visit this Exhibition. I now have much pleasure in declaring it open.