

**SPEECH BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE, AT
THE OPENING OF THE ARMED FORCES
MUSEUM, RIFLE RANGE ROAD, KUALA
LUMPUR, ON 23RD FEBRUARY, 1960**

Mr Chairman, the G.O.C. Federation Armed Forces, and
Gentlemen:

I am very glad indeed to have the chance to be here today and
formally to open this Armed Forces Museum.

So many things are starting in the Federation of Malaya these
days, so many new ideas are coming forward, that we are getting
quite used to seeing small beginnings aimed to produce
large results.

Even in our Armed Forces we are involved in small beginnings,
because only last year did we see the initiation of the Royal
Malayan Air Force and the Royal Malayan Navy. And there is no
need for me to stress that we all have great faith and hope in the
promise which these small beginnings have successfully produced.

There is nothing to be ashamed of or embarrassed about in
starting in a small way; the main thing is to have a good idea. It is
far better to start in a small way than never to start at all.

As Brigadier Raja Lope has said the idea for this Museum first
sprang up shortly after the end of the war. It didn't bear fruit
then, and later on and during twelve years since we have been
having a war¹ of our own. As a consequence, there are many
facts and associations with events we can record or store here
which are of deep personal interest to Malaya.

There is another most important consideration. As an in-
dependent country, it is most right and proper that we should have
a continuing and accurate record of all aspects of our history, and
the Armed Forces should play their part. It is far better to be

1 Emergency 1948-1960

keeping this record while in close touch with time and events than to do so years afterwards at the cost of a great deal of expense and research. That is the special reason why I am very glad to see this Museum commence.

I am confident that this Museum, which will one day become a section of the National Museum, will be very popular with the public. The people of Malaya are justly and rightly proud of the reputation and prestige of their Armed Forces. I say this because when the small National Museum we have, held a special exhibition relation to the Armed Forces it was exceedingly well-attended. You will also remember that the Armed Forces section of the big Progress Exhibition² in Kuala Lumpur last year always drew a very big crowd. So there is every reason to hope for public interest in what is being begun today.

This will mean a great deal of work by a devoted Committee over the years, but if the Committee is determined to keep the Museum growing by adding to the collection regularly I am sure it will deserve great support from the public. Every unit in the Armed Forces should also make it a point to contribute some items for the collection as this is your own Museum.

I would like to see a special Library start relating to the Armed Forces of Malaya. Many books have been published, about the Emergency in particular. I am told there are three or four new ones on sale in the bookshops today. I am sure an appeal to many people who have private libraries for donations for this purpose would be a fruitful start.

Bearing in mind, too, the very close association of the Armed Forces and the Police in the Emergency, we must envisage the fact that ultimately in the National Museum the Police will have a part, too. I see every reason why they should be asked to join in with us during this initial period so that the two collections can be readily available for the time when they are handed over to the National Museum.

The more you think about it, the more the possibilities of development of this Museum grow. Recently when the Prime Minister was in Australia he visited the Australian National War

2 A ten-day exhibition sponsored by the Information Department held at the Selangor Turf Club from 27th February-3rd March, 1959

Memorial in Canberra. This is principally a great Museum devoted to the story of the armed forces of Australia, and it is a source of patriotic pride to every Australian, being visited by thousands and thousands throughout the year.

There is no reason why what we are starting today in Malaya should not in its own right become an equal source of pride to every Malayan. With the co-operation of the Services and the public I am sure it can be done. I can also assure you that as long as I am Minister of Defence you can call on me for any assistance in your project. I wish this Museum continuing growth and success, and I have the greatest pleasure indeed in declaring it open.



Tun Abdul Razak meresmikan Persidangan Tahunan Pegawai-pegawai Penerangan di Dewan Tunku Abdul Rahman pada 10hb Mac, 1960.