

**SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
AT THE OPENING OF EXHIBITION OF MAORI ARTS
AT MUSEUM NEGARA, KUALA LUMPUR ON 30TH OCTOBER 1967**

Your Excellency, Mrs. Zohrab, distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen;

I am very happy to be here this morning and to have been given the honour earlier of a splendid welcome in the traditional Maori way. Such a welcome is now quite familiar to my wife and myself as it was not long ago that we had the pleasure of visiting the beautiful and fascinating country of New Zealand.

During that visit, although it was a very short one, we had the good fortune of seeing the beautiful and fine specimens of Maori arts and crafts. The Maories claim to have come from the Polynesian Islands and of the same ethnic stock as the Malays in this country. They said they were of the stronger group; that is why, they migrated into cooler climate, and we who remained in the tropics are the weaker group.

I was most impressed by the beautiful carvings and paintings that were put up on show during our tour of New Zealand. We also had the opportunity of being entertained to a grand Maori Show which consisted of dances and melodious songs, many of which resemble the Malay songs in this country. So, therefore Your Excellency, we had brought back all these happy memories with us and I am glad today to have this opportunity of refreshing these memories again by coming to this Exhibition of Maori arts and crafts.

I am very grateful to you and the New Zealand Government for having arranged this Exhibition to take place in Kuala Lumpur as this will enable our people here to see and learn of the fine qualities of Maori arts and to prove or realize the many things in common that we here have with Maori people. It is also heartening to know that this Exhibition will taken on tour to a number of South East Asian countries. This is indeed a very good gesture on the part of your Government as we ourselves in Malaysia believe that through exchange of cultures that we will be able to bring these countries in this region closer together and to co-operate together for the benefit of all concerned.

Also, by this Exhibition here this morning, it will enable our people to know and learn the traditional and modern aspects of the Maori people. It is through such a medium that the people of our two countries will be able to understand each other more closely.

Your Excellency, our two countries, New Zealand and Malaysia, have many things in common. We are both small Nations; both multi-racial in character. We have similar problems and our people share the same ideals of democracy and freedom over the years. Through our students going to New Zealand in their

hundreds to study and through your brave soldiers helping in the defence of our country and through constant contacts between leaders of our Governments, we have built up close and warm relations between us. I hope and trust that the existing friendly ties between our two countries and our people will continue to grow stronger in the years to come.

Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, I have much pleasure in declaring this Exhibition open and wish it every success.