

REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE DATO SERI DR MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD THE PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF CARPENTERS

THE MALAYSIAN HIGH COMMISSION IN LONDON, 24 MAY 1989

Master,
Wardens,
Gentlemen and Ladies;

It is a great honour to be admitted to the freedom of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters. This is a distinguished and ancient company. Indeed the mention of a Master Carpenter is documented as early as the thirteenth century. I therefore pay tribute to the great traditions which this company honours. This has been for me a very special occasion. My only regret is that I have not been able to attend the traditional lunch.

2. Carpentry has from my early days given me countless hours of satisfaction. And today, it is a means of relaxation for me. There is nothing I enjoy more than to retreat from the cares of government into my own workshop.

3. In this ceremony, we honour the skills of craftsmanship itself. People imagine that if you are a Prime Minister, you deal only in grand designs and gestures. If only this were true!

4. In my experience, statecraft is indeed a craft. It requires all the qualities of craftsmanship namely, - personal commitment and endeavour - attention to detail - learning always from experience - and satisfaction in achievement.

5. In Malaysia, among other things, we are seeking to instil these values in our children. We want every child, wherever possible, to have a trade or a skill. It is not just because of the contribution they can make towards a stronger economy but for a still more important reason; a skill brings to a person capability, pride and dignity.

6. In the age of science and technology, it is tempting to over-value the wizardry of machinery and to under-value the skill of people.

7. Today, I detect here in Britain, as in Malaysia, a return to placing a high value on craftsmanship. Long may it continue.

Thank you.