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Speech by the Member of Parliament for Jalan Kayu, Mr Hwang Soo Jin at the Commissioning of the Initial 6,000 lines of Telephone Switching Equipment for Yio Chu Kang Telephone Exchange on 28 January 1977 at 10.00 a.m. at the new Yio Chu Kang Telephone Exchange.

Ladies and Gentlemen ,

You all will agree with me that today we are communicating more often on the telephone for domestic, social and business purposes. It has become a way of life and unconsciously the telephone instrument has become a necessary asset and no longer a luxury, as so thought of ten years ago.

With this change in habit and growing affluence of our society, the demand for telephone service has increased at 20% per annum over the last 3 years. This is reflected by the rate of applications for telephone in that 40,876 applications were received in 1974, 48,879 in 1975 and 63,332 in 1976.

Correspondingly, Telecoms installed 25,240 direct exchange lines in 1974, 33,612 in 1975 and 58,979 in 1976.

Expansion of the telephone network entails all the following activities:

- (a) expanding the cable network which takes 4 months for laying junction cables between telephone exchanges and 4 months to 1 year for laying distribution cables.
- (b) expanding the existing telephone switching equipment capacity which requires a lead time of 1 to 1½ years.
- (c) building a new telephone exchange if demand warrants its construction, necessitating 4 to 6 years to complete the project.

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and (d) in conjunction with the new telephone exchange, transferring telephone subscribers from existing telephone exchange area to the new, thus relieving the capacity of the existing telephone exchange.

We will not be gathered in Yio Chu Kang Telephone Exchange today to witness its commissioning but for the forward planning by Telecoms in 1972 basing on a predicted demand for telephone service for today. This long lead time is required to plan the building, purchase the land, construct the building, plan the telephone switching equipment and telephone cables then upon completion of the building to install the equipment and lay the pipelines and telephone cables between the building and the distribution points near the subscribers' premises.

In fact, I understand that the commissioning is advanced by 2 months to meet service demand.

Initially, Yio Chu Kang Telephone Exchange which cost \$5.59 million will have a capacity of 6,000 lines of telephone switching equipment. Another 4,000 lines are expected to be installed by 1978/79. It has an ultimate capacity for 30,000 lines, sufficient to meet demand up to 1995.

Telephone applicants in Jalan Kayu Constituency and part of Ponggol Constituency should be able to obtain telephone service without difficulty, except in those areas where there are shortages of telephone lines. Cable schemes are being planned and some already in progress. Upon completion of telephone cables, these applicants will be able to enjoy telephone service.

In conjunction with the opening of a new telephone exchange, overlapping telephone exchange boundaries between the existing and new telephone exchanges need to be corrected. Existing subscribers within the overlapping

boundaries but served from the old telephone exchange will have to be transferred to their new proper telephone exchange.

Since 2 telephone exchanges bear different series in telephone numbers, a change in telephone numbers will be necessary. I understand that tomorrow night at 9.00 p.m., some 3,000 telephone subscribers in Seletar Hill Estate, Seletar Hill Housing and Development Board Estate and Jalan Kayu Area including Seletar Air Base will be transferred to this new telephone exchange. These subscribers can expect improved quality of speech transmission.

Telephone number change exercises are integral part of the expansion of the telephone network, and existing subscribers are requested to bear with this "expansion pains".

In order to provide telephone service to new subscribers, four new telephone exchanges ie Ang Mo Kio Telephone Exchange, Ayer Rajah Telephone Exchange, Geylang Serai Telephone Exchange and Bukit Batok Telephone Exchange will be built in the next five years. It is envisaged that 125,000 telephone subscribers will be involved in the transfer in these four new telephone exchanges.

Recognising the inconvenience telephone subscribers affected by the transfer exercises will be experiencing, Telecoms will be informing them 6 months in advance of the transfer. Business subscribers can inform their business associates, and frequent callers of the new telephone numbers. Sufficient time is given for business men to print new stock of stationery and business cards to be used after the change.

Residential subscribers are provided with postcards for them to address to their relatives and friends a fortnight before the change. Telecoms will assist further by publishing the telephone number changes in the newspapers, and by announcements through radio and television.

In addition, the old telephone numbers (after the transfer) will be connected for a month to Change Number Interception (CNI) Service, so that callers to these numbers can be advised by the Telecoms operators to dial the new telephone numbers.

Subscribers affected are urged to inform their callers of their new telephone numbers in advance. Callers are requested to jot down the new telephone numbers so that they need not call the CNI Service or Directory Assistance repeatedly and therefore unnecessarily.

Telecoms is providing a basic communication need as quickly as the demand warrants it. The least the public could do is to be sympathetic towards its efforts and be more patient and tolerant with the situation.

I have great pleasure in commissioning the initial 6,000 lines of telephone switching equipment for the Chu Kong Telephone Exchange.