

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

Speech of Mr. Yong Nyuk Lin, Minister for Communications, at the inaugural meeting of the Stamp Advisory Committee held at the Conference Room of the Malayan Rubber Export Registration Board, 3rd floor, Fullerton Building on Tuesday, 27th August, 1968 at 1500 hours.

More imagination and drive needed to make our Postage Stamps more attractive.

I think it is a fair statement to say that almost every one is a stamp collector, at heart! When we come across a beautiful and attractively designed stamp on an envelope, one's first reaction would be to cry out "What a lovely stamp it is", followed by the acquisitive remark "Let me cut it out and keep it". But, if the letter is not addressed to oneself, to plead "May I keep the stamp, please?". It is thus, we begin a stamp collection, ending up with boxes, full of stamps and cherishing the hope that one day, we will find time to clean and sort them out, and to paste them up in the appropriate sections of a Stamp Album and later to browse over them on Sundays, public holidays and especially rainy days, when we are forced to remain indoors.

2. Most of us however, stop at that, but there are many who are interested enough to join Stamp Clubs or to become what are technically known as philatelists, who follow the new Stamp issues of countries all over the world, with religious fervour and enthusiasm and of buying some for their own collections, something which only stamp lovers can understand and appreciate. This very large and sizeable section of the world's population have thus created a multi-million dollar business, which grows and grows, with time.

3. Although postage stamps serve the useful purpose of encouraging the voluminous flow of mail that is being exchanged between people of one country or with peoples of other countries, there is no reason why we cannot use more imagination and drive in the creation of attractive designs for our postage stamps,

which we have to issue, from time to time, for two good reasons (1) to improve their aesthetic value and (2) as a result of making them more attractive, philatelists (i.e. those who love stamps) would be most happy to buy them up for their collections, for future enjoyment, during their leisure hours.

4. Not wishing to be too critical of what has been done in the past, it is generally conceded by philatelists, the world over that Singapore stamps, except for some of its recent commemoratives, are generally "dull". To illustrate the point, philatelists have shown little interest in Singapore stamps, because in recent past, from 1955 to 1958, not a single commemorative stamp was issued. During the last 9 years from 1959 to 1967, only 9 commemoratives were issued or an average of 1 per year. It is no wonder then that our sales of stamps to philatelists have been disappointingly low:-

1963	\$200,000
1964	\$ 9,000
1965	\$ 11,000
1966	\$ 31,000

5. This situation certainly calls for immediate remedial action and in line with present Government policy of increasing productivity and to raise additional revenue, wherever possible, I have therefore decided to reconstitute the present Stamp Design Committee into a larger Stamp Advisory Committee, and also with much wider terms of reference:-

I. To study and make reports and recommendations to the Minister on:-

- (1) themes for commemorative and definitive issues;
- (2) the number and denominations of commemorative and definitive stamps to be issued;
- (3) the design of stamps;
- (4) ways and means to publicise the stamps of Singapore so as to generate, and sustain, interest in them among philatelists in Singapore and abroad;

- (5) methods to increase the sale of stamps to philatelists, locally and abroad.
- II. The Committee shall keep abreast of changing demands and trends in the philatelic market with a view to recommending policy changes so as to enable the Republic to secure optimum market advantages. To this end the Committee shall make systematic studies and research into all aspects of philately.
- III. The Committee shall maintain close and cordial relationships with local and international philatelic groups with the objective of popularising the Republic's stamps.
- IV. The Committee shall make specific proposals on ways and means to generate local demand by fostering and encouraging local interest in philately especially among the schoolchildren and youth of Singapore. Towards this end the Committee may, in conjunction with other organisations (e.g. schools, community centres and philatelic clubs) if necessary, organise competitions, exhibitions and other philatelic activities for school-children.

The members of the 9-man Stamp Advisory Committee (some of whom were on the previous Stamp Design Committee), are as follows:-

Chairman - 1. Mr. Phua Bah Lee  
(Parl. Sec.)

- Members - 2. Mr. M. Bala Subramaniam  
(Postmaster General)
3. Mr. Roy Daniel, (Head, Publicity Division, Ministry of Culture)
4. Mr. Koh Seow Chuan (Ag. President, Singapore Stamp Club)
5. Mr. Choy Weng Yan (Lecturer, Arts & Crafts, Teachers' Training College)
6. Mr. Lian Hock Lian (Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Communications)
7. Mr. W. Maxwell (philatelist)
8. Mr. Eric Khoo Cheng Lock (philatelist)

Secretary - 9. Mr. Patrick Lee Boon Guan  
(Asst. Controller of Posts)

All of whom, are present, here today.

6. I should like to take this opportunity to announce that:-

(a) a new series of definitive stamps depicting masks and dances of the main cultural groups of Singapore will be released later this year;

(b) that for next year, 3 commemorative issues will be issued:-

(1) Early in 1969, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of ECAFE which will hold its meeting in Singapore in April;

(2) Around mid year, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of Singapore; and

(3) To commemorate the completion of the 100,000th unit of our Housing and Development Board, which event is likely to take place some time around the 3rd quarter of 1969.

One of the first tasks of the new SAC is to direct their energies towards the issue and design of commemorative issues for 1970, (say) 4 in number, if possible.

7. In conclusion, let me thank all of you for having kindly accepted my invitation to serve on this SAC and to wish you all success in your endeavours.

27th AUGUST, 1968.

TIME ISSUED: 1100 HOURS.