

28 DEC 1988

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

Information Division, Ministry of Communications & Information, 36th Storey, PSA Building, 480 Alexandra Road, Singapore 11911. Tel: 2799794/5.

03-1/88/12/20 88-YM4-36

SPEECH BY DR YEO NING HONG, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION AND SECOND MINISTER FOR DEFENCE (POLICY) AT THE OPENING OF SECTION 5 OF THE MRT SYSTEM AT YISHUN STATION ON TUESDAY, 20 DECEMBER 1988 AT 9.00 AM

I am happy to be here this morning to join you in the inauguration of passenger service for Section 5 of the MRT system from Yio Chu Kang Station to Yishun Station. Last year, for the first time, many Singaporeans were able to do their Christmas and New Year shopping using the MRT when it was extended into the city. Beginning today, residents of Yishun will also be able to do the same. It will make for a merrier Christmas and a happier New Year for them. For this, I congratulate the Board members and staff of MRTC for meeting another tight schedule.

Yishun is a fast growing new town. More than 40,000 dwelling units have been completed. The opening of the two new stations in Yishun will add another 30,000 passenger trips each day to MRT's ridership which currently averages 250,000 on a week day and 350,000 on Saturdays.

With the extension today, the MRT has opened nearly two-thirds of its system for passenger service. Progress on the construction of the remaining one-third is on schedule. In a few days' time, the trackworks would be completed for all sections of the MRT except for a short length to Marina Bay station. Before the year is over, the tunnels leading to Marina Bay station would have been substantially completed. Electrical and mechanical equipment installation and architectural work are progressing in most of the stations east of City Hall. The Changi Depot buildings are

getting ready to receive the trains in May next year. We cannot afford to slacken in our progress. Singaporeans who live along the eastern corridor are waiting patiently for the MRT to serve them. I have, therefore, urged the MRTTC to continue in its efforts in bringing the MRT system to completion within its schedule.

The MRT has been in operation for more than a year now. The feedback received has been good. The MRT has met Singaporeans' expectations in terms of speed, comfort, and reasonable fares. In the short span of a year, the MRT has built up a sizeable pool of passengers, and more importantly a reservoir of goodwill among its commuters. These passengers should never be taken for granted. SMRT staff must always be on their toes to maintain the high standard of service.

This is because Singaporeans have now come to accept that it is possible for Singaporean organisations to excel by international standards. Many of those who have travelled on MRT systems elsewhere put us high on their ranking. Let us keep it that way.

I am happy to see Members of Parliament and grassroot leaders of the constituencies in the vicinity here this morning. They have played a key role in bringing about better communications and understanding between the MRTTC and SMRT and the constituencies, and hence have helped to make this early opening of the system possible. On behalf of MRTTC and SMRT, I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to them for their support and assistance over the years.

Let me conclude by wishing all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

- - - - -