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TEXT OF SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH,
MR. YONG NYUK LIN, ON THE OCCASION OF THE
HANDING-OVER CEREMONY OF A NEW AMBULANCE
KINDLY DONATED BY THE SIKH COMMUNITY AT THE
EMERGENCY/ADMISSION UNIT OF THE GENERAL
HOSPITAL ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, AT 4 P.M.

This afternoon's simple ceremony which commemorates the very generous donation of a new ambulance to our General Hospital by our brothers and sisters of the Sikh community is most significant on two counts:

(1) The timing is most appropriate. It is just one week since our Emergency/Admission Unit was reorganised to provide a more prompt and efficient service for an average of 400 emergencies daily (300 Traumatic and 100 Medical cases) or a total of 150,000 cases a year.

For the Traumatic emergency cases, we are most grateful for the great assistance rendered by our most efficient Fire Brigade Accident Ambulance Service, whose 11 ambulances (all of which are radio-equipped) last year answered 20,000 calls and brought in 19,000 cases.

For Medical emergency cases, our present fleet of six ambulances at this Hospital answered more than 6,000 calls and carried over 6,600 cases. Today's new addition to our ambulance fleet will therefore ensure that we will be in a better position to answer Medical emergency calls more quickly than was possible hitherto and thus to increase efficiency all round.

When Thomson Road Hospital is able to take in Traumatic cases which it is expected to do by the end of this year and thus will become Singapore's second General Hospital, it is our intention to install radio-equipment in all 30 ambulances now attached to eight Government hospitals, which will be the first step towards early centralisation of all ambulance services in Singapore.

(2) The second most significant fact of today's ceremony is that our Sikh community, small though it is, has shown remarkable generosity and great civic sense in making today's gift possible. It is difficult enough to find people willing to come forward to do charity even to help members of their own community, what more when the effort made is more than likely to benefit members of other communities! This indeed is true public service and typifies that the members of our Sikh community are true Malaysians in word as well as in deed, in a multi-racial Malaysia! On behalf of the Government and people of Singapore, I therefore express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to our Sikh brothers and sisters for their most welcome gift of an ambulance to our General Hospital. With the blessings of the revered Sant Sikan Singh, I am sure that this ambulance will be able to do more than its share of the sacred task of relieving pain and suffering of our people as and when the needs arise.

In conclusion, may I express the fervent hope that the fine example shown by our Sikh community will inspire other philanthropic individuals, firms and civic organisations to come forward to generously donate not only ambulances, but equipment and even of money, so that we may be able to provide a yet better Medical Service for our people.

AUGUST 8, 1964.

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