

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR CHOR YEOK ENG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY,
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, AT THE COMMISSIONING CEREMONY
FOR 15,000 LINES OF TELEPHONE SWITCHING EQUIPMENT AT THE NEW
AYER RAJAH TELEPHONE EXCHANGE ON FRIDAY 31/3/78 AT 11.05 AM

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It gives me great pleasure to be here today to commission the first 15,000 lines of telephone switching equipment at this new Ayer Rajah Telephone Exchange, which is the twenty-second operational telephone exchange in Singapore.

As you know, telephone is an essential appliance in the industrial and commercial activities and the demand of such service will undoubtedly continue to increase. This \$5.8 million telephone exchange can accommodate up to 100,000 lines of telephone switching equipment. Until today, the area surrounding it is served by a 1,000-line mobile telephone exchange.

With this commissioning too, I would like to congratulate Telecoms for having installed 100,000 lines of telephone switching equipment as planned under its Annual Operation Plan 1977/78.

With this achievement, the total size of Singapore's telephone network will be brought to 492,600 lines.

While Telecoms is constantly involved in its role of providing telephone service to more of the public, it is indeed heartening to note that it has not forgotten the important aspects of improving the grade of service, thus maintaining the objective of a public service organisation.

Telecoms has spelt our realisable sub-goals to achieve this in its Annual Operation Plans. In the 1978/79 financial year starting tomorrow (1 April) Telecoms has pledged to provide a faster installation service for the public. Telecoms has implemented a telephone installation appointment scheme, whereby an applicant, upon acceptance of telephone service, can fix a date with Telecoms

to have his /2.

to have his new telephone to be installed within 6 days. Telecoms aims to fulfill at least 95% of such appointments.

To achieve our expectation of developing Singapore into a financial and commercial centre, all public organisations especially the essential services departments such as the Telecoms, must continue to upgrade their work productivity in order to bring about prosperity.

On the maintenance aspect of telephone service, Telecoms is set to provide a more reliable telephone service. It has targeted to restore service to 78% of faulty telephones within 24 hours, as compared to the present target of 65%.

It has also targeted to reduce the number of repeated faults from 2.9 to 1.5 per 100 telephones per month. Not only will this mean a more reliable telephone service for the subscribers, but also higher productivity per repairman.

Operator services are requested by subscribers when they wish to book trunk or international telephone calls, or when they are unable to find their friends' telephone numbers from the phone books or when they find difficulty in getting through called telephone numbers. Telecoms operators are trained to answer at least 95% of the requests for their services within 10 seconds. In-house courtesy campaigns will be mounted to sustain operators' awareness to render courteous service to subscribers and the public. However, the good reputation of the hardworking majority is often jeopardised by the inconsiderate and delinquent minority. It is therefore my hope that this small group of workers could change their attitude towards the performance of their work in order to restore the confidence of the consumers.

Finally, the public can expect readily accessible public telephone service in built-up as well as remote areas of Singapore. During the financial year ending today Telecoms has doubled the number of public telephones to 9,000. In the coming year, apart from increasing the number of public telephones in Singapore to a total of 10,000, with an average penetration of 17 public telephones per square kilometre, Telecoms is formulating a programme to improve further this service. Modern outdoor and indoor booths are planned to replace the older phone booths. Gradually old types of public

coinphones will be replaced with modern instruments; more public telephone booths will be lighted; and more public telephone signs will be installed to direct users to the locations of the public telephone.

It is no doubt that these plans will be implemented by able, diligent Telecoms officers to improve their grade of service for the public to enjoy. I would like to take this opportunity to wish Telecoms all their best in their endeavours.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it now gives me great pleasure to commission into service the first 15,000 lines of telephone switching equipment for the new Ayer Rajah Telephone Exchange.

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