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SPEECH BY MR. ONG SOO CHUAN, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(FOREIGN AFFAIRS) AND MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR NEE SOON AT
THE COMMISSIONING CEREMONY OF 10,000 LINES OF TELEPHONE
SWITCHING EQUIPMENT AT ANG MO KIO TELEPHONE EXCHANGE
ON FRIDAY, 16 DECEMBER 1977 AT 9.40 A.M.

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I am happy to be here this morning to commission the second 40,000 lines of telephone switching equipment at Ang Mo Kio Telephone Exchange. The first 10,000 lines were commissioned only four months ago. I understand that the third 10,000 lines will be ready by end of next year.

Within 1½ years 30,000 lines of telephone switching equipment have to be provided in Ang Mo Kio Telephone Exchange. This is because the Ang Mo Kio New Town covering an area of 3,751 hectares, is designed to accommodate some 200,000 population in approximately 44,000 housing units. The construction of Ang Mo Kio Telephone Exchange within the Ang Mo Kio New Town is part of telecoms plans to provide timely and efficient telephone service to all dwelling units in new housing estates. The present 3 storey telephone exchange building has a capacity to house 40,000 lines of telephone switching equipment. It has additional foundation provision for 2 additional floors to accommodate ultimately, a total of 80,000 lines of telephone switching equipment adequate to serve all dwelling units in Ang Mo Kio New Town as well as the Sembawang Hill Estate and future Nee Saon Village.

The provision of an efficient telephone service to all new housing estates is in keeping with our Republic's objective of becoming a major communications junction in Asia. While our Telecoms is upgrading Singapore's connections by satellites, submarine cables and microwave links with other countries in the region and around the world, they are not forgetting the needs of our citizens at home.

The need to have quick and efficient telephone communications is increasingly felt in our daily life. It becomes even

more pronounced /2.

more pronounced when people move from their old neighbourhoods and family homes into flats in new housing estates springing up all over our island. While they are settling into their new homes and still adjusting to their new neighbourhood, which might not have sufficient amenities nearby, the telephone becomes essential for keeping in contact with their families and friends in their old neighbourhoods or for ordering goods from shops further away. Otherwise they would feel dull and isolated.

Presently there are 8,200 telephone subscribers connected to Ang Mo Kio Telephone Exchange. New telephone applications and applications for telephone removals average 300 per month. As at last month there are only 27 deferred subscribers waiting for telephone service due to temporary shortage of telephone lines. All these deferred subscribers can expect to get their service by January next year at the latest.

In order to relieve the congested North Telephone Exchange at the junction of Thomson Road and Whitley Road, arrangements have also been made today to transfer some 4,000 subscribers to Ang Mo Kio new Telephone Exchange. Telephone subscribers affected by the transfer are those bounded by Ang Mo Kio Avenue 1 and Avenue 6, Thomson Ridge, Adelphi and Windsor Park Estates.

Construction work is also in hand to install the third 10,000 lines of switching equipment scheduled to be commissioned in December next year. With these additional equipment and telephone line plant, most applicants in the Ang Mo Kio Housing estate would be expected to receive their telephone service within a month and no deferred subscribers will need to wait for more than 3 months then. I must congratulate all staff in Telecoms for their outstanding performance and their continuous efforts in serving the people of the Republic. I am happy to note that the technicians involved in installing the modern equipment of this exchange are all our own people and largely young. This shows that our young people are responding well to the government's call to turn to technical education and jobs in order to man the levers of a modern society. I hope that the technicians of Telecoms will continue to give of their best in providing Singapore with the best telephone service in the region.

It is now my great pleasure to commission the second 10,000 lines of telephone switching equipment in the Ang Mo Kio Telephone Exchange.

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