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5 AUG 1978 · **SPEECH BY MR ONG TENG CHEONG, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 8TH ANNUAL LONG SERVICE AWARD
PRESENTATION CEREMONY ON TUESDAY, 1 AUGUST '78 AT 5.00 P.M. AT
THE PORT AUTHORITY RECREATION CLUB, BUKIT CHERMIN, SINGAPORE**

This is the fourth successive year that I have the privilege to present long service awards to PSA staff. There were 226 recipients in 1975, 234 in 1976 and 232 in 1977. Today, 231 employees will receive watches for their long and faithful years with the Authority.

The steady stream of employees who have worked for PSA right up to retirement, is a shining example of dedication and loyalty to their organisation. This is something which the Authority can be proud of. Most organisations today face serious problems of job hopping. Many young Singaporeans do not look to any employer for a career, much less to spend their entire working lives. I hope PSA continues to be in this happy position by being an enlightened employer.

Singapore's growth and prosperity depends heavily on trade supported by our Port. Trade accounted for 27% of our Gross Domestic Product for 1977, not taking into consideration its contribution to related sectors like transportation and communications.

We must live with the times and take challenges in our stride. One major challenge is, of course, the rising tide of economic nationalism which has made trade with many countries more and more difficult. Another is the competitiveness of international trade brought about by improved methods of cargo storage and transportation, as well as technological advancements in cargo handling particularly with the advent of bigger, faster and more sophisticated ships. Moreover, sea-borne trade is subject to increasing competition from air freight.

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I have every confidence PSA will meet these challenges successfully and continue to provide efficient services as a leading international sea port. The Authority has made notable strides in recent years to expand and improve its range of services. Today our port is able to service all types of vessels, ranging from tugboats and barges to container vessels and super tankers.

A significant trend in shipping has been the increasing use of containerships. Through careful planning, PSA is now able to service these ships effectively. The impact of containerisation upon conventional shipping has been dramatic. About 30% of the cargo handled by the port in 1977 was containerised. In fact, the bulk of our trade with developed countries is containerised cargo.

To meet this rapid growth in containerisation, the Authority is actively planning to convert many of its conventional berths into container berths. The manpower implications of these plans are important. There will be an increase in the demand for technically-trained workers to man freight-stations, operate sophisticated machines, etc, and a corresponding decrease in the demand for semi-skilled and unskilled workers of the traditional type. I am pleased that the PSA adopts an enlightened policy in dealing with these changes. For those workers who are prepared to be trained in higher skills and thus enabled to qualify for better jobs, the Authority will provide opportunities for them to improve themselves.

It is my earnest hope that the Authority will continue to enjoy the loyalty and dedication of its employees who will feel proud to be part of such a progressive organisation. A sound management, supported by dedicated, loyal and hardworking employees, should enable PSA to forge ahead in the service of our Republic.

I am happy to officiate at this ceremony to honour the 231 employees whose efforts have in some way or other been responsible for what the Port is today. May I now take this opportunity to wish all the recipients a happy retirement.