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PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY DR YEO NING HONG, MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS &
INFORMATION AND SECOND DEFENCE MINISTER, AT THE MRT
CORPORATION'S ANNUAL DINNER & DANCE AT THE WESTIN PLAZA
ON 1 DECEMBER 1986 AT 8.00 PM

In a year's time Singaporeans will get to ride on the first MRT trains. Public transportation in Singapore will take a quantum leap forward, putting us on par with some of the most developed cities in the world.

Four days ago, we launched the last beam to complete the viaduct for Phase IA of our MRT Project. With this we are on our way to linking all 20 stations from Yio Chu Kang to Clementi in the entire first phase. It brings to an end, three years of inconvenience to the public that the construction of the first phase has caused. The public has been understanding and supportive, putting up with all the inconvenience. From now on, work will be less disruptive, though no less intense. Rails will have to be laid, stations refurbished, and trains and operating procedures tested. I expect the inconvenience to the public to diminish over the coming days.

But that does not mean that it be completely smooth sailing from here on. Almost overnight a whole new mode of mass transportation is open to the public. The present public transport system will have to adapt to this major change. The public, too, will have to make some changes. Some of those who travel in buses, cars, and taxis will use the MRT. Obviously the change will be greatest in HDB estates served by the MRT routes. To prepare for this change, bus companies need to review the bus routes that run

parallel to or close to the MRT routes. This is necessary to keep down wasteful duplication of routes. Otherwise commuters will have to bear the burden of waste and pay higher fares. To keep transport costs low, bus services must complement the MRT, much like SBS and TIBS services complementing each other at this moment. This is practised in many cities overseas and is what transportation experts called an "integrated system". MRT and the bus companies have already started work on this integration. They have come together to form a MRT Bus Integration Committee, the MBIC. Consultants with experience in other countries which have integrated their MRT and bus routes recently have been engaged to advise MBIC. I expect the studies to be completed some time in the third quarter of 1987. Together, the bus operators, the MRTTC, and my Ministry will make every effort to achieve a smooth transition to a new age of public transport system.

Singaporeans have coped well with the inconvenience of the construction of the MRT. I am confident that they will also take the necessary adjustments in our MRT/bus integration in their stride as we press on to December 1987, when the MRT will herald a new way of travel in Singapore.

May I extend warmest Greetings for the Season and wish all of you a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

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