

The
Post Office Savings Bank
of Singapore



Your National Savings Bank

100
years

The Post Office Savings Bank of Singapore

100 years

'Singapore Waterfront 1861', is a painting by W. Gray. Courtesy of the Singapore National Museum.



*Published July 1977 by the Post Office Savings
Bank of Singapore, No reproduction of
photographs, illustration and text is permissible
without acknowledgement of the publisher.*

*Design and photography by Hagley & Hoyle
Private Limited. Printed by International Press
Company (Pte) Limited.*

*Special acknowledgement is due to the
Singapore National Library and National Archives
and Mr. Ray Tyers for their assistance in
supplying historical photographs.*

The First Hundred Years of the Post Office Savings Bank of Singapore



Text by Consulon Research Bureau

Published by The Post Office Savings Bank
1977

Foreward



I would like to extend my heartiest congratulations to the directors and management of the Post Office Savings Bank on the hundredth anniversary of its foundation.

In the early years of its history, when commercial banking facilities were only available to trading corporations, the POSB performed a valuable service for individuals. More recently, with the rapid growth of commercial banking and with the incorporation of the POSB as a Statutory Board independent of the Postal Department, the POSB has been able to supplement the wide range of banking facilities now available to households.

The success of the POSB, especially since 1972, in garnering the savings of households for purposes of national development has been remarkable. However, in comparison with the national savings institutions of developed countries, the POSB still has some way to go. In particular, the POSB's ability to attract savings has to be matched by a more vibrant role as an investor.

I wish the Post Office Savings Bank every success in meeting the challenges of the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sui Sen'.

Hon Sui Sen, Minister for Finance.

Message

As Minister for Communications, I was privileged to have been associated with the growth and progress of POSB during the years 1968/74. During this period, the number of its depositors rose threefold from 278,000 to 831,000 and deposits increased sixfold from \$42.8 million to \$269.4 million.

Whilst we celebrate the Centenary Year of POSB which now proudly has more than 1.2 million depositors and over \$1,000 million in deposits, it will be pertinent to comment upon the rapid development of POSB over the past decade.

In my view, the three significant features were:

Early in 1968, Dr Goh Keng Swee then Minister for Finance appointed a Committee to study ways and means to activate the operations of POSB which was then a department of the Post Office. A number of innovative measures were implemented. This Advisory Committee which was under the effective chairmanship of the Postmaster-General (Mr M Bala Subramanion and later Mr Wong Lee Hoong) succeeded in doubling the number of depositors and deposits over a 3-year period.

To allow for greater flexibility in administration POSB was next converted into a Statutory Board in 1972. Under an enterprising Board of Directors ably led by its Chairman Mr Tan Chok Kian and supported by an enthusiastic and dedicated staff (the majority of whom are members of the fair sex) POSB expanded further.



It soon became obvious that POSB was fast becoming more and more a financial institution and had little bearing on the work of Communications, so I decided that it would be judicious to hand over the responsibility of POSB to the Ministry of Finance. This was effected in 1975 and the achievements of POSB thereafter are gratifying.

My congratulations go to all who have contributed towards making POSB what it is today.

On the auspicious occasion of its Centenary Year I wish POSB still greater successes in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yong Nyuk Lin'.

Yong Nyuk Lin, Member of Parliament (Geylang West).

The Centennial

This document of public service spans a dynamic period of Singapore's history. It is a record of the contribution made by a national institution, the Post Office Savings Bank, and it is woven into the tapestry of the nation's growth over a hundred years.

The Savings Bank was founded in 1877 as an institution without pretensions but with a base durable enough to sustain it for a considerable time. From that base it weathered the vicissitudes of its changing fortunes for ten decades.

The Post Office Savings Bank in 1977 is a hundred years old and it values its past as a mature institution should. But while it cherishes the richness of its tradition, the mellowness of age is laced with a vital new spirit of youth.



From the 1820's until 1824, the activities of the Post Office were conducted from a room in the Master Attendant's Office situated on the south bank of the Singapore River.



contents

<i>1</i>	The Pioneering Years	9
<i>2</i>	The Occupation	13
<i>3</i>	Reconstruction	15
<i>4</i>	A Singapore Bank	16
<i>5</i>	The Advisory Committee	20
<i>6</i>	The Statutory Board	23
<i>7</i>	New Vistas	29
<i>8</i>	The People's Bank	33
<i>9</i>	The Bank's People	39
<i>10</i>	The Years Ahead	45

The Pioneering Years



With the beginning of the last quarter of the 19th century, Singapore entered a period of consolidation and relative calm. The first 56 years since its founding in 1819 had indeed been frenetic; trade and commerce had flourished and the foundations of a durable Settlement had been laid. On the southern bank of the Singapore River, a thriving commercial and banking sector had put down firm roots. Raffles Place, or Commercial Square as it had been known earlier, was the hub around which the business activity of the Settlement revolved. By 1875, the essential geometry of the area had been defined and was to remain intact for a considerable length of time thereafter.

Outside the immediate perimeter of Raffles Place at a point on the north-east corner, an elegant public building had been completed a year earlier. This was the General Post Office. It was the first independent premises occupied by the Singapore Postal Department and with its twin dormers and an imposing facade it now dominated Fullerton Square.

The Postal Department was, in fact, as old as the Settlement. For the first 34 years it had operated out of a small room on the opposite bank of the river from Raffles Place as a section of the Master Attendant's Marine Office. Its affairs were delegated to a postal clerk, a native writer and a peon as it was considered neither desirable nor necessary to collect or deliver mail within the limited confines of the Settlement.

Notwithstanding the growth in the volume of mail, the department continued to function out of a narrow, one-room structure near the Town Hall even after its elevation to a separate department in 1858. It was only in 1872 that plans were put in motion to construct a new building across the river nearer to the needs of business.

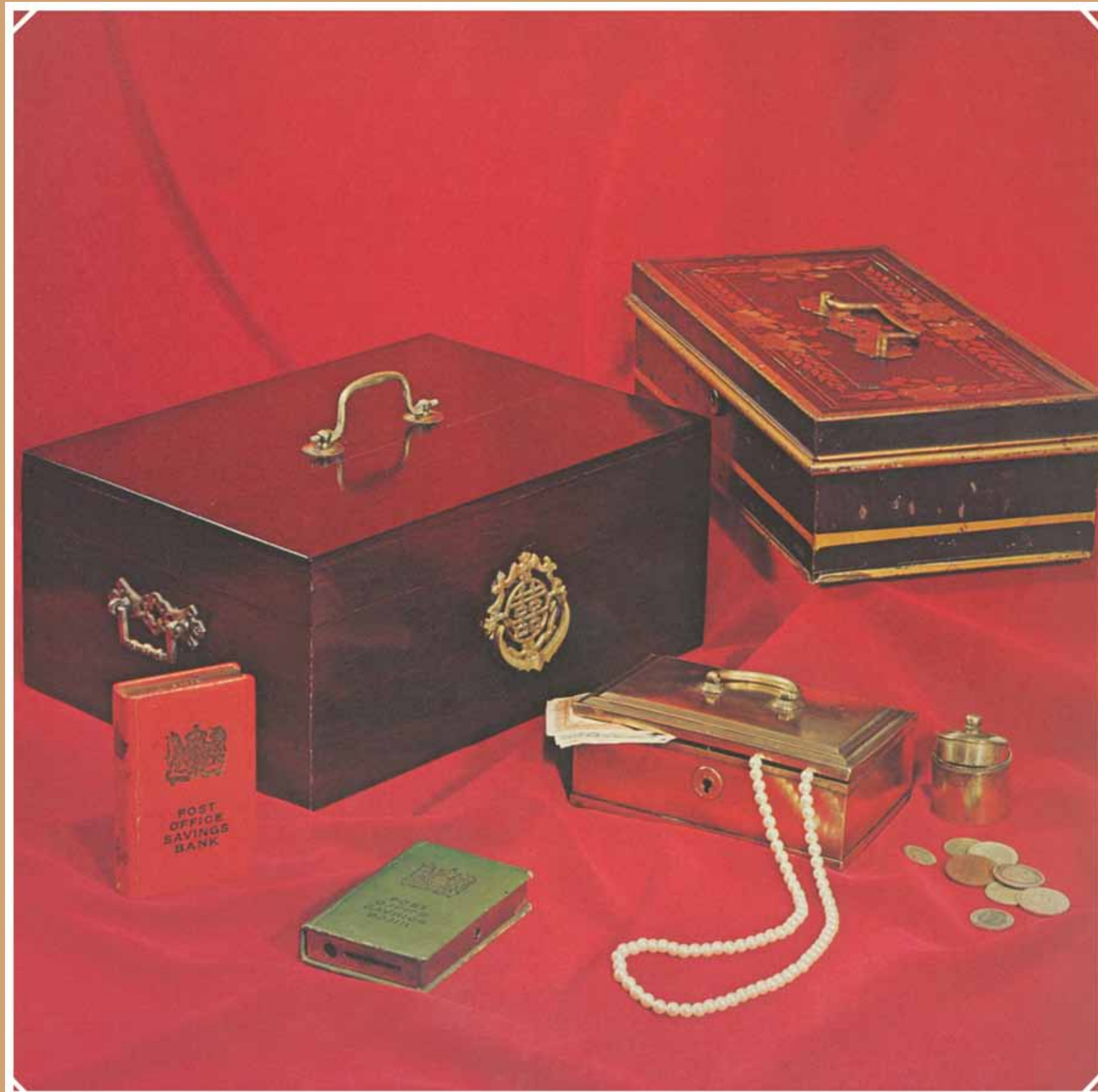
The building was occupied on August 1, 1874 and in keeping with its new function, it was called the General Post Office. The Annual Report of the Straits Settlements for the year 1874 pointed out that the new building was "in every way adapted to the requirements of the Public and the Department." The needs of the business community had at last been satisfied and the Postal Department soon after moved to extend the benefits of its enlarged presence to a wider segment of the people.

In the fifteen years between 1845 and 1860, the population of Singapore had doubled to some 80,000 people. By 1875, the number of people living on the island exceeded 100,000. The migration had started as a small trickle much earlier but in the intervening years a monumental change had overtaken this small outpost at the crossroads of Asia. For those who were willing to chance their fate and their future. Singapore had indeed become a land of untold opportunity. Now a flotilla of frail vessels straddled the South China Sea bringing an ever-growing stream of pioneers to the Settlements in search of the rainbow's end.

The contents of the pot of gold were, however, sparingly rationed out. Principal beneficiaries were the long-established mercantile patriarchs, who had much earlier chased the rainbow from other points on the compass. It was a close fraternity and its financial needs, commercial and personal, were met by an even closer fraternity of banking institutions which had judiciously placed themselves at the principal points in Raffles Place. For a majority of the population, the only banking facilities were those available at the corner exchange shop, or in times of difficulty, at the pawnshop. It was in these circumstances that a decision was made to start an institution which was to become a vital instrument of public service and, very much later, a major financial facility. That institution was the Post Office Saving Bank.

Left: Fine workmanship is revealed in this collection of early money and jewellery boxes used by Singapore's multi-racial community during the last one hundred years. At left foreground, are savings boxes, in the form of a book, previously distributed by the Bank.

Below: Samples of passbooks issued during various periods in the Bank's one hundred year history.



The French Renaissance-style building on the right was the Post Office's second home which it occupied, together with the Chamber of Commerce, the Exchange and the Singapore Club, between 1874 and 1924. In the background, spanning Singapore River, is Cavenagh Bridge, which still stands today.



The idea of a savings bank in Singapore was not entirely new. A proposal for such an institution had been mooted in 1833 and again in 1846. But it was not until 1872 that a committee was appointed to report on the possibility of establishing a savings bank in the Singapore Post Office. The committee appointed by the Governor of the Straits Settlements, approached its task with the principal objective clearly defined: "To encourage those in receipt of small incomes to practice economy by affording them a safe investment for small amounts at a fair rate of interest, and also of

affording borrowers opportunities of obtaining loans at lower rates of interest than were procurable from other sources."

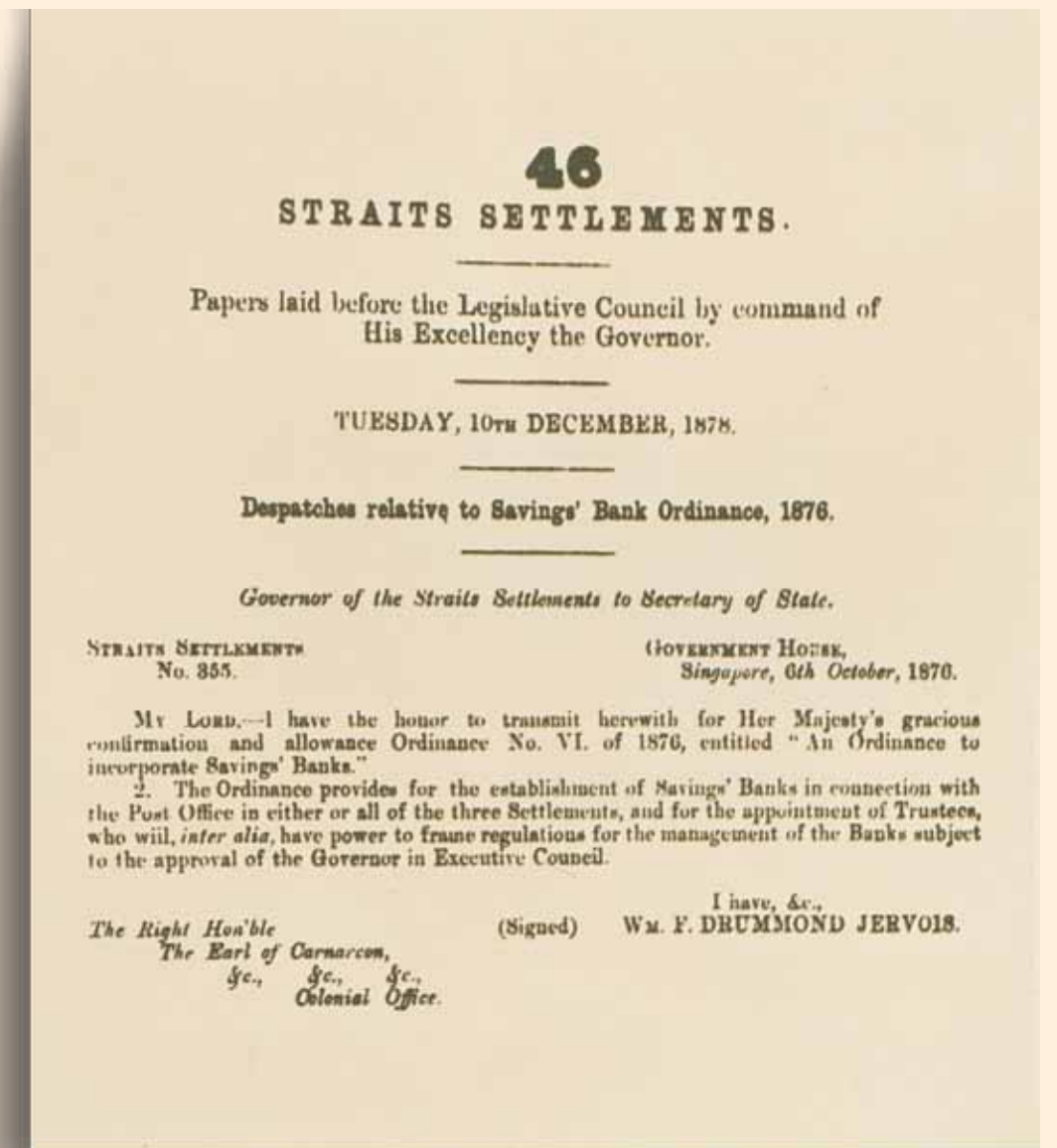
The Savings Bank Regulations drawn up by the committee were made public on October 7, 1875 and they served as the basis for drafting legislation to incorporate Savings Banks in the Straits Settlements. A year later, Ordinance No VI of 1876 called "The Savings Bank Ordinance," was introduced in the Legislative Council and passed on September 25, 1876.

The day-to-day running of the Bank was to be under the control of the Postmaster-General and overall policy-making function was assigned to a group of Trustees appointed by the Governor. The importance attached to the Savings Bank was evident from the stature of the individual members who served as the Trustees. Without question all were men of considerable influence and well known in the Settlement. The first meeting of the Trustees was held on November 24, 1876 at the General Post Office.

The Bank was to be open three days a week between 11 am and 2 pm for the transaction of general business. However, deposits would be accepted on only one of these three days. The overall responsibility of the Trustees did not end with formulating policy. A Trustee and the Secretary of the Bank were required to attend during the hours for receiving deposits and make entry of such deposits. Entries had to be verified and signed by the Secretary and the Trustee in attendance. Withdrawal of funds by depositors required adequate notice. For example, two days notice had to be given for withdrawals of amounts of less than \$25. For withdrawals above \$25 but under \$200 the notice required was one week. Two weeks notice was necessary for amounts larger than \$200 but less than \$500 and a full four weeks notice had to be given before amounts in excess of \$500 could be withdrawn.

The Bank was officially opened on January 1, 1877 and the early beginnings were modest. The number of depositors on November 30, 1877 was 211 and the amount deposited was \$19,861.90. The Annual Report for the year recorded that "this was a state of affairs which may be viewed with satisfaction, considering the short time the Bank has been in existence."

This document may well be the first record concerning savings in Singapore. It is a copy of a letter written by the Governor of the Straits Settlements, W.F. Drummond Jervois, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in London.



A cross-section of savings activities as reported in the Syonan Sinbun and Syonan Times during the Japanese Occupation of Singapore.



Though operations had commenced, formal approval of the Ordinance was required from England. This was granted much later and was subject to recommendations which were incorporated in a subsequent Ordinance passed in January 1879.

With a single office, limited hours of business and a restricted clientele, the Bank progressed slowly but steadily and in its first year of business the Bank recorded a profit of \$32.57. By 1890, 465 new accounts were opened and the amount credited to depositors stood at \$95,654.61. For eleven out of the fourteen years the amount deposited exceeded the amount withdrawn. The majority of the depositors during this period were the poorer European residents and Eurasians.

The Ordinance of 1879 continued to serve the Bank as it moved into the twentieth century. A more detailed set of rules was drawn up when the old Ordinance was repealed and a new one providing for the establishment of sub-savings bank offices and some minor modifications was passed in 1907.

Despite the changes that were taking place, the Bank continued as a modest institution serving the needs of individuals with modest means. The war of 1914-18 did not affect Singapore in any significant way but during the Depression of the 1930s, the Bank was a source of comfort to thousands of small depositors. Though the number of depositors had increased, no particular effort was directed at providing better facilities or incentives. By 1940, the number of accounts stood at 57,674 and the amount of deposit totalled \$14.3 million.

Change seemed desirable, but it came about in a manner which was least desirable. War had broken out in Asia, and Singapore had to contend with a situation different from the one it had become accustomed to for so long.

The Occupation

The style of the Savings Bank had scarcely changed in any substantial measure over the years. In Singapore, it had for some time now been a part of the Straits Settlements Post Office Savings Bank. As the war moved towards Singapore in 1941, the institution which had for so long played the role of a people's bank faced its first acid test.

Panic swept Singapore as the Japanese forces began to threaten this vital station commanding the Straits of Malacca. Demands for withdrawals increased and virtually deluged the Post Office as the Japanese moved down the Malay Peninsula. With great courage, the Bank rose to the occasion but the outdated machinery was hardly geared to the exigencies of war. On February 15, 1942, Singapore surrendered and was renamed Syonan. With that, a new chapter opened up for the Post Office Savings Bank under Japanese administration.

A Savings Encouragement Department was formed under the Postal Administrator, Malaya and the Japanese announced the reopening of the Bank with a notice in the Syonan Times on August 28, 1942. Verification of passbooks was to begin from September 1, and withdrawals would be permitted from September 15. Only Chinese, Eurasians, Malays, Indians and nationals of neutral countries were permitted to withdraw money from their accounts. The first withdrawal would be limited to \$30 and thereafter, a maximum of \$25 could be taken out but not more than once every six months. The notice further stated that deposits would be accepted in due course and interest of 3 percent per annum would be allowed.

A new passbook was issued by the "Nippon Government" and a new set of accounts was opened under the Japanese administration.

In an attempt to bolster public confidence, several campaigns were instituted. A Post Office Savings Bank Promotion Week was observed in December 1942 and another in February of the following year. Postal vans were mobilised to attract public attention to postal savings, and competitions were instituted for school children. By 1943, the tide of war had turned but it was to take some time before the normal tenor of life could be restored.



One of many postmarks and stamps issued by the Japanese authorities celebrating savings stamps sale achievements. In this instance, 5 million yen.

REPORT ON THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS POST OFFICE
SAVINGS BANK FOR THE YEARS 1945 AND 1946.

The Post Office Savings Bank of the Straits Settlements was reopened by the British Military Administration for public business on the 15th October, 1945, and on the resumption of Civil Government on the 1st April, 1946, transferred to the control of the Postal Services Department of Malaya.

5. A limited number of withdrawals was allowed by the Japanese during the occupation period. These withdrawals have been debited against the relative depositors' accounts, and a reserve to cover the total amount has been included in the balance sheet.

13. Consequent upon frequent enquiries regarding the accounts of labourers who had died in Siam during the occupation, a special section was organised to deal with them. A prerequisite was the compilation of a complete index of depositors. Six temporary typist operators were engaged for this purpose and the work commenced on 14th January, 1947. A circular-letter addressed to managers of rubber estates and other large employers of Tamil labour asking for details of ex-employees who had died in Siam, especially those whom it was thought might have been depositors, was in course of printing at the end of the year 1946.

J. M. CUNNINGHAM,
Postmaster-General, Malaya.

KUALA LUMPUR, 29th May, 1948.

Excerpts from this
Annual Report vividly
illustrate the aftermath
of the Occupation.

Reconstruction

Chaos is the only word to describe the state of the Post Office Savings Bank following the Japanese Occupation. The Bank was reopened by the British Military Administration for public business on October 15, 1945 and on the resumption of Civil Government, it was transferred to the control of the Postal Services Department of Malaya on April 1, 1946. Soon afterwards the task of reconstructing what had once been a proud institution began.

The records of the Bank were so disorganised that the preparation and audit of the annual accounts for the years 1945 and 1946 could be completed only by April 14, 1948 and the provision in the Savings Bank Ordinance requiring accounts to be submitted by May 31 of each year had to be suspended to allow sufficient time for reconstruction.

The combined report for these two years was submitted by the Postmaster-General J M Cunningham and laid on the table of the Legislative Council on August 17, 1948. It had a truly pathetic tale to tell. Demands for withdrawals had poured into the Bank during 1941 and 1942 as the Japanese forces drove down Malaya towards Singapore. The run on the Bank was so intense that many of the usual safeguards had to be relaxed. Hundreds of cheques issued by the Bank could not be cashed and were returned in the last few days. Many ledger cards in the process of being transferred from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore were held up in a railway truck at Gemas and this made it impossible to keep ledger cards up-to-date. During the Occupation itself, many of the control ledgers were either lost or destroyed. The only reliable record available was a statement of the balances due to depositors on January 1, 1941. The situation

in 1945 was best described by Mr Cunningham: "On the opening of the Bank," he reported, "what can only be described as an avalanche of correspondence submerged it." The process of reconstructing the Bank was slow and painful. Work at Headquarters was impeded by the lack of suitable accommodation, of accounting machines and other equipment and, most of all, by the lack of trained personnel. The steel cabinets containing the ledger cards were in unsatisfactory condition and the locks broken. Of the four accounting machines only two survived and these had been almost mined by neglect and ill-usage during the Occupation. To complicate matters, the number of transactions was 44 percent above the pre-war figure.

To overcome the many handicaps, working hours were extended and the staff worked on Sundays and holidays. The two surviving accounting machines could not cope with the pressure and breakdowns were frequent. In spite of these difficulties, the work of posting was kept reasonably up-to-date. The unrelenting efforts of the staff resulted in order being brought to the situation.

At the end of 1946, the total deposits with the Bank including interest amounted to nearly \$23 million as against \$14.3 million at the end of 1940. The accounts numbered 75,632 as against 57,674 in 1940. Except for a few details, order had been restored, and by 1948 a more cheerful Mr Cunningham could report that the year "was a very strenuous one for the Savings Bank of the Straits Settlements. The number of transactions soared to a new high level, and the turnover was the largest ever recorded in the history of the Bank."

A Singapore Bank

4

Up to 1948, the Straits Settlements Savings Bank had included the territories of Singapore, Penang, Malacca, Labuan in North Borneo and Christmas Island. On December 28, 1948, a Savings Bank Ordinance, No. 38 of 1948, was enacted establishing a Singapore Savings Bank from January 1, 1949 and replacing the Straits Settlements Savings Bank which had been in existence for 70 years.

The liabilities of the Straits Settlements Savings Bank were divided up between Singapore, the Federation of Malaya, and Labuan in preparation for the division of assets. The balances due to depositors were divided according to office of origin and the reserves were provisionally divided in the same proportion.

On January 1, 1949, the Singapore Post Office Savings Bank began operations as a separate entity though still under the control of the Postmaster-General, Malaya. It had a total of 19 outlets. The report for the year ended 1949 showed that the Singapore POSB had 74,246 accounts with deposits totalling over \$27.4 million. The establishment of a separate Bank in Singapore apparently called for a change of approach.

Attention was now directed at school savings and some tentative but fruitful efforts were made at publicity through pamphlets and cinema slides.

The first milestone in the development of the Bank was reached in 1951 when the number of depositors passed the 100,000 mark. In that year, deposits exceeded \$36 million. During the next 4 years, there was a rapid rise in deposits, reaching a peak of \$57.6 million in 1955 with 154,668 depositors. However, the period 1954–56, was the first and only time in the history of the Bank as a Government Department when deposits exceeded the \$50 million mark.

This was achieved inspite of only a moderate increase in the number of Post Offices transacting savings bank business from 25 in 1953 to 29 in 1956.

The rapid growth rate attained by the Bank was reversed from 1957 when total deposits dropped to below the \$50 million mark and except for a brief period during 1962 – 63, when a marginal increase was recorded, deposits continued to slide for a decade. At the end of 1966, the total stood at a little over \$37.4 million, a drop of over \$20 million from the peak of 1955. The Bank returned to almost where it had begun 15 years earlier in terms of deposits inspite of having more than twice the number of depositors on its books.

In 1965, Singapore separated from Malaysia to become an independent Republic. Following this, the control of the Singapore POSB was transferred from the Postmaster-General, Malaysia to the Postmaster-General, Singapore. A team of 30 staff from the Singapore Postal Services Department went to the POSB Headquarters in Petaling Jaya in April 1966 to study the savings bank operations there and to prepare for the establishment of an independent Singapore Savings Bank.

On July 8, 1966, the Singapore POSB ceased to be administered by the Postmaster-General, Malaysia. The ledger cards of Singapore-based accounts, related documents and equipment were transferred to Singapore on July 9, 1966.

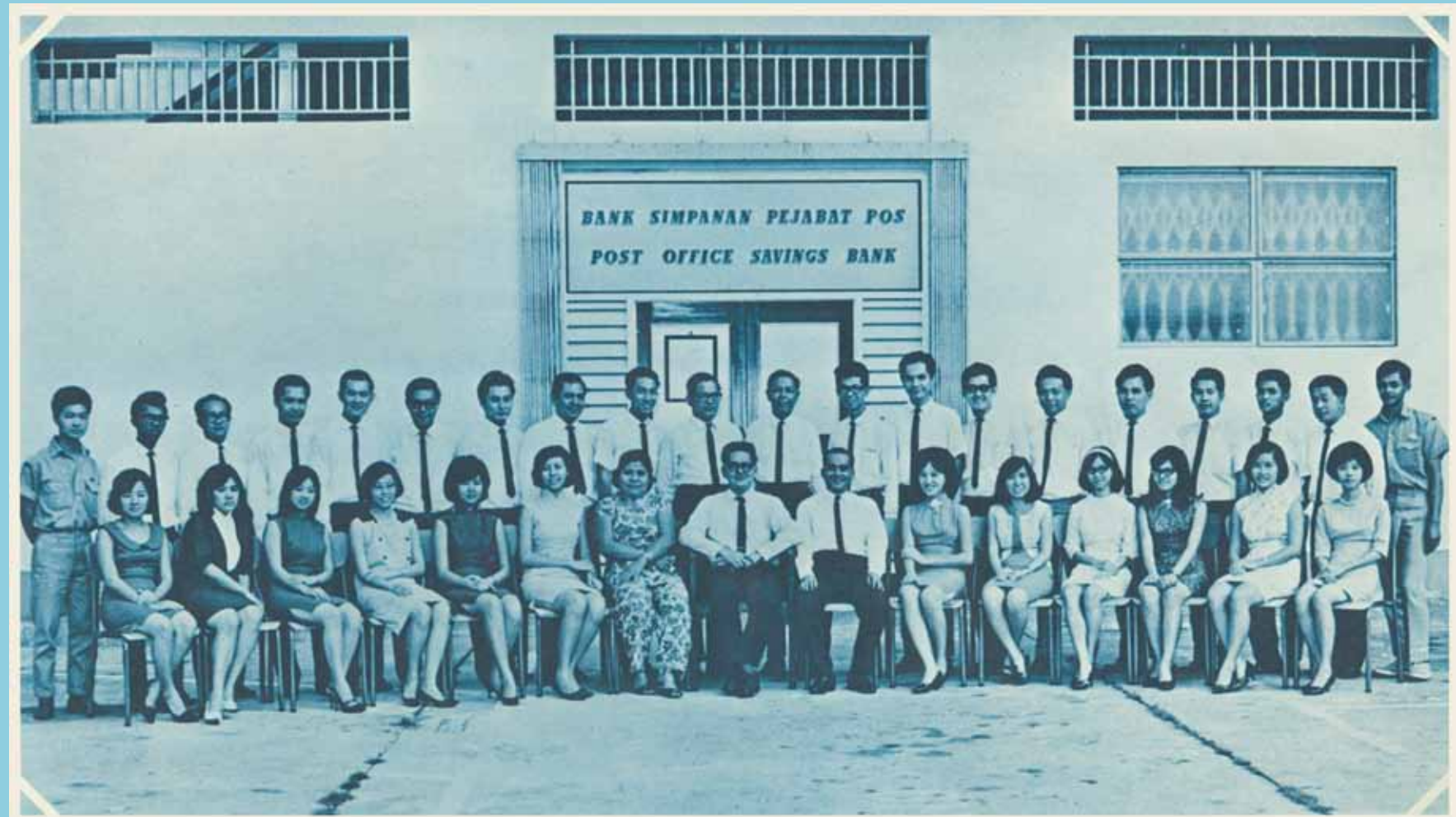
From that day, the Singapore POSB entered into yet another time frame when it came under the direct administration of the Postmaster-General, Singapore. The Bank began operations on Monday, July 11 with an initial staff of 35 from its Headquarters in Middle Road. The Bank was not aware of it at that time, but its new destiny was just about to be shaped.



Left: A team of representatives from Singapore sorting ledger cards in preparation for the transfer of Singapore savings accounts from the control of the Postmaster-General, Malaysia, to the Postmaster-General, Singapore.

Below: Mr. C.D. Clunies-Ross, then Deputy Postmaster-General, Singapore, and Mr. M. Rajasingham, then Controller, Savings Bank West Malaysia, signing the handling-over documents.

Bottom: The POSB staff in 1966.





A bold plan for the development of a broad based industrial and oil refinery complex, improvement of transport, harbour and ship repair facilities, sophistication in communications and the creation of a financial centre, modern housing, better education, more jobs and a higher level of prosperity for all...

The Advisory Committee



Early savings posters were displayed widely to encourage more savings.

Guided by a dynamic leadership, Singapore in 1967 was fast gathering speed for a spectacular economic take-off. Lacking natural resources, it had thrived for most of its history largely due to its locational advantage as a centre for entrepôt trade. But it was now an independent Republic and the need for a more durable economic base was imperative if the newly formed city state was to survive. By 1967, the targets had been set and the plan for its new role was already in motion.

The grand design called for the development of a broad based industrial and oil refining complex, improvement of transport, harbour and ship repair facilities, sophistication in communications and the creation of a financial centre with its base in Singapore. With it came modern housing, better education, more jobs and a higher level of prosperity for the people. It was a bold plan and every resource at the nation's command had to be tapped if it was to succeed.

The Post Office Savings Bank was in an admirable position to mobilise a significant amount of the resources required for national development. But while Singapore surged forward on all fronts, the POSB was faced with an entirely different situation. Its level of deposits had declined by over \$20 million over an 11-year period, while those placed with commercial banks had multiplied from \$149 million in 1961 to \$285 million in 1967 — a growth of over 90 percent in just six years.

The situation soon attracted the attention of Dr Goh Keng Swee, then Minister for Finance. His reaction was quick and incisive. He identified the POSB's potential in the mobilisation of domestic savings. He observed that there were several reasons for the decline in POSB deposits and indicated that it would not take a great deal of effort

to redress the situation. He recommended the formation of a small committee to look into the changes which would be necessary in the system to make it more attractive and competitive.

Events then moved swiftly. Dr Goh's proposal to revitalise the POSB found immediate acceptance and later a Savings Bank Committee was formed. It comprised M Bala Subramaniam, then Postmaster-General who functioned as Chairman of the Committee, Mrs Elizabeth Sam of the Ministry of Finance, Han Kang Hong, then a lecturer at the Singapore Polytechnic, and two prominent businessmen, Tan Teck Chwee and Lim Soo Peng. The members were selected with a view to providing the proper balance of expertise from Government, business and the institutes of higher learning. The Committee held its first meeting on March 15, 1968. Its principal term of reference was clearcut and to the point:— *To study the present system of the Post Office Savings Bank and to recommend changes and improvements whereby the volume of Savings Bank deposits could be increased.*

On April 27, 1968, within six weeks of its initial meeting, the Committee completed its report. The proposals called for a drastic departure from time-worn tradition and provided the framework of a revitalised system with considerable appeal for depositors. The new schemes were announced on July 29, 1968 and in the following month the Government appointed a permanent Advisory Committee comprising the same members who had served on the Savings Bank Committee.

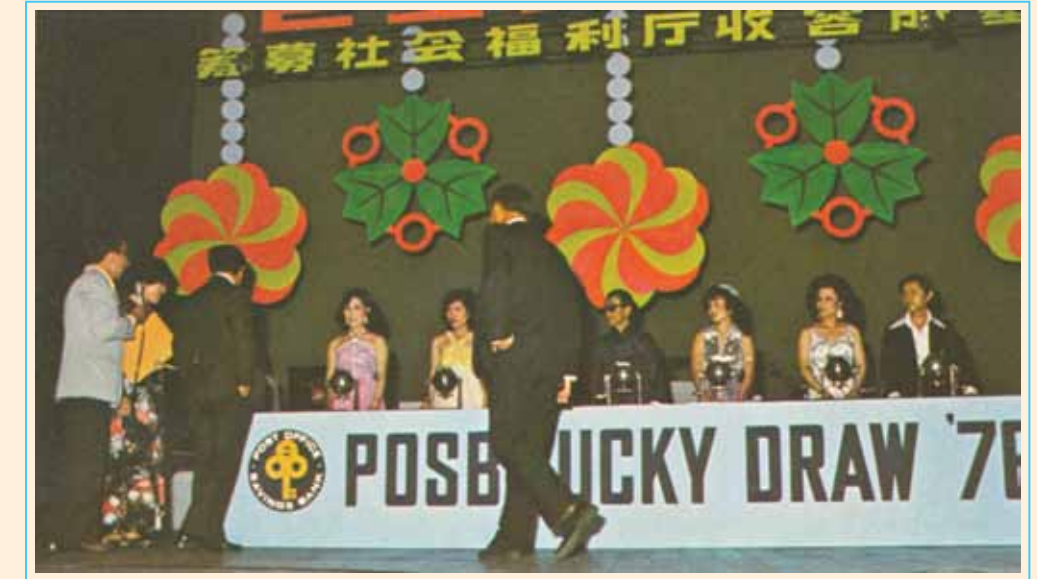
The Committee immediately set about implementing the proposals in its report and a sustained campaign was launched to encourage more depositors to save with the POSB. A Savings Competition was instituted among all Government and

Government-aided schools and attractive prizes were awarded to the first three schools having the highest average amount of savings per student during the competition period.

In addition to providing incentives, the Committee also sought to eliminate several irritants which had been built into the system over the years. For example, up to that time an account could be operated only through a signature in a Roman script. The alternative was a thumb impression, a practice considerably demeaning to a large number of people many of whom were educated in Asian languages like Mandarin and Tamil. Now an account could be operated by a signature in any language.

Another restraint related to the limits imposed on withdrawals. "On-Demand" withdrawal limits at Post Offices other than the Headquarters were set at \$200 once every seven days. The limit was now raised to \$500 once every three days.

The overall effort was supported by attractive publicity campaigns intended to draw attention to the new services and incentives now available at the Post Office Savings Bank. The POSB had suddenly come alive and the press now began to feature its activities in bold headlines. Before the year was out the trend of declining deposits had been reversed and in a short period of five months following the announcement of the new schemes, the number of new depositors had increased by 19,157. By 1968, the declining trend in deposits was arrested and it was possible to show an increase of \$5 million at the end of the year to \$42.8 million. For the first time in ten years, there was an increase in deposits over withdrawals.



The 1976 Lucky Draw held at the National Theatre.



The POSB Lucky Draw pamphlets.

There was now no looking back. The POSB moved into 1969 in top gear. The improvement of services and facilities continued, supported by an aggressive promotional effort. The year marked the launching of the annual Lucky Draw. In the first Draw, 20 prizes of \$500 each were awarded to lucky depositors. The scheme was designed to enable depositors having a minimum balance of \$500 in their accounts during a three-month qualifying period to participate in the Draw. The new campaign proved extremely popular from the beginning.

The POSB's new style conformed to the dynamic new image of Singapore. There was a growing pride in that image. By the end of 1969, the POSB had quite evidently achieved its immediate objectives. A total of 174,506 new accounts, including a large number from school children, was opened during the year as against just 10,598 barely three years earlier in 1966. The total number of depositors now stood at 447,457 compared with 252,033 in 1966 and the amount standing to the credit of depositors stood at \$57.7 million, a figure previously reached in 1955. The Bank had indeed come a long way in a very short time.

Savings: Now four new incentives

SINGAPORE Saturday. NEW incentives to encourage people to save more through the Post Office Savings Bank were announced today by the Minister for Communications, Mr. Yong Nyuk Lin.

The tickets set for 1964 year are to increase the number of depositors from 210,000 to half a million, and to reach a deposit figure of \$10 million.

The new incentives are:

1. Exemption from income tax of the 4 per cent interest earned on deposits between April and June. Depositors can claim the tickets to July in all post offices. Twenty prizes of \$500 each will be awarded to the lucky winners total prize money \$10,000.
2. A lucky draw in which one ticket will be issued free to depositors for every \$50 deposited in deposits between April and June. Depositors can claim the tickets to July in all post offices. Twenty prizes of \$500 each will be awarded to the lucky winners total prize money \$10,000.
3. A school savings competition in which prizes of \$1,000, \$2,000 and \$3,000 respectively will be awarded to the three schools having the highest average amount of savings per student for the period February to October.
4. The students' gift scheme in which all secondary One students who are in Secondary One classes for the first time this year and having a minimum deposit of \$5 in their postal savings accounts will receive a gift of \$5 paid to their accounts by the Government.

The combined sum of \$10 however can only be withdrawn after five years from the date of Government's contribution.

The total amount standing to the credit of members at the end of last year was \$41.4 million—a 15 per cent increase over that of 1967.

Ministry statement said that for the first time since 1958 deposits exceeded withdrawals by \$2.8 million.

20,200 new depositors in Savings Bank

SINGAPORE, Mon.—More than 20,200 new accounts were opened in the Postal Savings Bank last month—bringing the total number of depositors to 278,308.

This was announced today by the Postmaster-General, who said that the total amount standing to credit for depositors last month was \$51.5 million.

This was the highest amount since 1957, when the total was \$48.9 million. The lowest—\$37.4 million—was in 1965.

In 1969, 17,621 new accounts were opened last month, bringing the total number of school savings accounts to \$12.53. The campaign was launched in May.

The Postmaster-General also announced that Savings Bank deposits had the share of more in their accounts throughout the qualifying period from May 1 to July 31 may now claim their lucky draw tickets.

The tickets will be issued at any post office during the month on presentation of passbook.

Those wishing to claim tickets by post should send their passbooks to Savings Bank, headquarters in Middle Road.

The \$53m success story

SINGAPORE, Wed.—The number of Postal Savings Bank depositors doubled over the past 12 months, while deposits rose \$12.8 million to \$53 million.

Depositors increased by 148,235 (54 per cent) to 422,112 as a result of the Government's domestic savings drive launched in September last year.

This improvement was described as "most gratifying" by the Minister for Communications, Mr. Yong Nyuk Lin, today.

He said that progress in the School's Savings Campaign, launched early this year, was also encouraging.

A total of 12,391 new accounts were opened at schools last month bringing the number to 122,674.

So far, 457 schools are taking part in the savings campaign.

Cash prizes

The current School's \$3 a year Competition, which started in February, will close at the end of this month.

Three cash prizes of \$3,000, \$2,000 and \$1,000 will be awarded to the three schools having the highest amount of savings per student.

All students in secondary I who have not applied for the Government's Students' Gift Account Scheme have until the end of the year to do so.

Under the scheme, all secondary I students who have a minimum of \$5 in the postal savings accounts will receive a gift of \$5 paid into their accounts by Government.

The \$10, however, may only be withdrawn after a period of five years from the date of Government's contribution.

SAVE MORE DRIVE PRODUCES RESULTS

Deposits in banks highest since '64

SINGAPORE, Friday. THE Government's "save more" campaign is bringing in handsome dividends—to those who have said to the Treasury.

Deposits in the post office savings bank and commercial banks in the first quarter of this year have been highest since 1964.

The Postal Savings Bank in March this year had a deposit figure of \$51.5 million—a definite indication of more active participation of money in trade and industry.

According to the monthly report of statistics, the total amount standing to the credit of \$81.18 deposits at the end of March was \$81.18 million.

The number of new accounts opened in March was 17,621, which is a total of 278,308.

The total amount standing to the credit of members at the end of last year was \$41.4 million—a 15 per cent increase over that of 1967.

Ministry statement said that for the first time since 1958 deposits exceeded withdrawals by \$2.8 million.

All-time record in postal savings

SINGAPORE, Tues.—The Government's domestic savings drive, launched by the postal savings banks last September, has reached an all-time record.

In the first half of this year, a total of 82,548 new accounts were opened.

This is 85 per cent more than that achieved for the same period last year when the total was 44,542.

The total number of depositors at the end of last month was 358,558, the Postmaster-General announced today.

"The progress in the separate school savings drive is also most gratifying," he added.

New accounts opened during the past four months (from March to June) totalled 63,881. A breakdown of the figure is as follows: March (13,547), April (16,306), May (12,522) and June (11,506).

Bank balance with the banks in March was \$61.4 million, compared with \$41.4 million in January.

Comments today reported a total deposit of \$12.53 million.

Cash balance with the banks in March was \$61.4 million, compared with \$41.4 million in January.

The banks had a balance of \$51.5 million at the end of March. In comparison, the total balance at the end of December 1968 was \$48.9 million.

The banks gave more than \$2.8 million loans and advances, a record since 1964.

Extracts of newspaper reports highlight the progress made by POSB resulting from the Advisory Committee's drive to encourage new deposits.

The Statutory Board

The tremendous expansion which had taken place following 1968 was at once an inspiration and a challenge to the Savings Bank Advisory Committee which had set the POSB on a new path. The number of depositors at the end of 1969 had grown by 61 percent over the previous year. The number of new accounts opened during 1968 showed an increase of 69 percent and in 1969 the number of new accounts shot up by a staggering 652 percent!

The volume of business now conducted was indicated by an increase of 130 percent in the number of transactions (deposits and withdrawals) handled during 1969. The increase in the previous year had been a modest 18 percent. Similarly, the total sums deposited rose by 67 percent in 1969 against 23 percent in 1968.

The figures told their own story. They demonstrated a promising future and it seemed essential to re-examine the entire structure of the Bank to maintain and adequately service this anticipated growth.

Throughout its past history, the POSB had functioned like any other Government department. Administrative control rested with the Minister for Communications, while financial and investment policy was controlled by the Finance Minister. It seemed necessary that if the POSB was to consolidate its gains and to cope with the prospects of even greater growth following the new drive, to attract deposits, it should be allowed greater flexibility in its operations and be transformed into an independent institution. The desirability of a POSB independent of the Post Office found acceptance with both the Ministers for Finance and Communications.

On September 19, 1970, Mr Yong Nyuk Lin, then Minister for Communications announced that the POSB would be converted into an independent Statutory Corporation. Shortly thereafter, legislation was introduced in Parliament and on October 19, 1971, the Post Office Savings Bank Act of Singapore, No. 13 of 1971 was passed by

the House. The Act transforming the Bank into a Statutory Corporation was brought into force on January 1, 1972.

Tan Chok Kian, then Permanent Secretary (Budget) in the Ministry of Finance, was appointed Chairman of an eight-member Board of Directors. Other Board Members were selected to provide a proper balance of expertise drawn from Government, business and the institutes of higher learning. They included Wong Lee Hoong, Postmaster-General, and Lian Hock Lian, then Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Communications; four prominent professionals and businessmen; Lim Soo Peng, Goh Mia Hoon, Hwang Soo Jin and Lim Chew Swee; and a senior lecturer in the Department of Accountancy. University of Singapore, Han Kang Hong.

Members of the first Board of Directors from left to right: Lian Hock Lian, Hwang Soo Jin, Goh Mia Hoon, Tan Chok Kian, Wong Lee Hoong, Lim Soo Peng, Han Kang Hong and Lim Chew Swee.



*The POSB girl represents
courteous and efficient service
at all times.*

The Board established from the beginning the primary task of the Bank. The Chairman of the Board summed up the POSB's mission in one word: SERVICE. To provide the quality of service which would make the POSB in Singapore synonymous with savings, the Chairman urged his new management team to superlative performance. Though the Bank had achieved record targets in the previous four years, he called for even greater effort. To attain that objective, the Board of Directors moved the Bank into several directions at the same time.

The primary tasks were many and the most important among them was the improvement of facilities at POSB outlets. Until then, the main outlets of the Bank were Post Offices. Savings Bank transactions were handled by postal staff who were also required to handle other postal transactions. In order to provide more personalised services, it was decided to provide separate Savings Bank counters at the various Post Offices and served by a POSB girl.

The first independent branch of the Savings Bank was established without fanfare at the General Post Office in Fullerton Building in June 1971. On April 15, 1972, the second independent branch, fully air-conditioned and with four counter positions, was opened for business in the bustling new township of Toa Payoh. It was soon to become the Bank's busiest outlet and it was on the occasion of its opening that the brand new logo of a modern, forward-looking POSB was unveiled. The logo in the form of the now familiar key was made up of the Bank's initials and it symbolised savings, security and prosperity.

The process of creating a new identity for the Post Office Savings Bank was in full swing throughout Singapore. Before 1972 was out, separate Savings Bank counters had been established at 29 Post Offices. This was a significant achievement and called for management commitment and operational efficiency of a very high order.

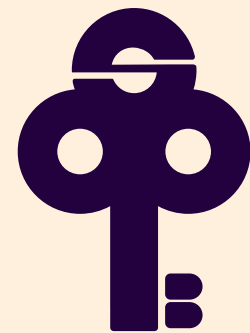
Recognising that service was more than just creating a chain of outlets, management developed and put into action an intensive training programme for counter personnel. In the years to come, the charming POSB girl was to symbolise the quality of the Bank's service and become as friendly and familiar a sight as the POSB logo. But the initial effort at developing a pool of efficient counter personnel marked one of the more memorable chapters in the Bank's history.

While expansion and training continued, the POSB Headquarters in Middle Road underwent a complete facelift. Work on the renovation and expansion of the building was started in July 1972 and by the end of that year the ground floor providing for 16 new counter positions was completed and opened for business on December 26.

In the same year, a significant step forward was taken when the Bank moved to convert its outdated manual system of accounting to computer processing.

The computerisation of depositors' accounts began on October 2, 1972. A total of 181,958 accounts with a total balance of over \$92.6 million was fed into the computer at The Port of Singapore Authority computer centre.

Moving in yet another direction, the POSB entered into a joint venture with three financial institutions — United Overseas Bank Ltd, Gillett Investments Ltd of UK and The Chartered Bank — to establish the Discount Company of Singapore Ltd which commenced business on November 27, 1972. The POSB held the major share with 40 percent equity participation. The Company was one of the three pioneer discount houses to commence operations in the Republic. It was an early step in the POSB's contribution towards the development of Singapore as a major financial centre and a pioneering effort in creating a secondary market so necessary to broaden the range of money market facilities available.



*The POSB logo – a symbol of
savings, security and prosperity.
The design is an amalgamation of
the letters P-O-S-B.*





Top: The Port of Singapore Authority's computer centre where the records of more than one million depositors' accounts are maintained.

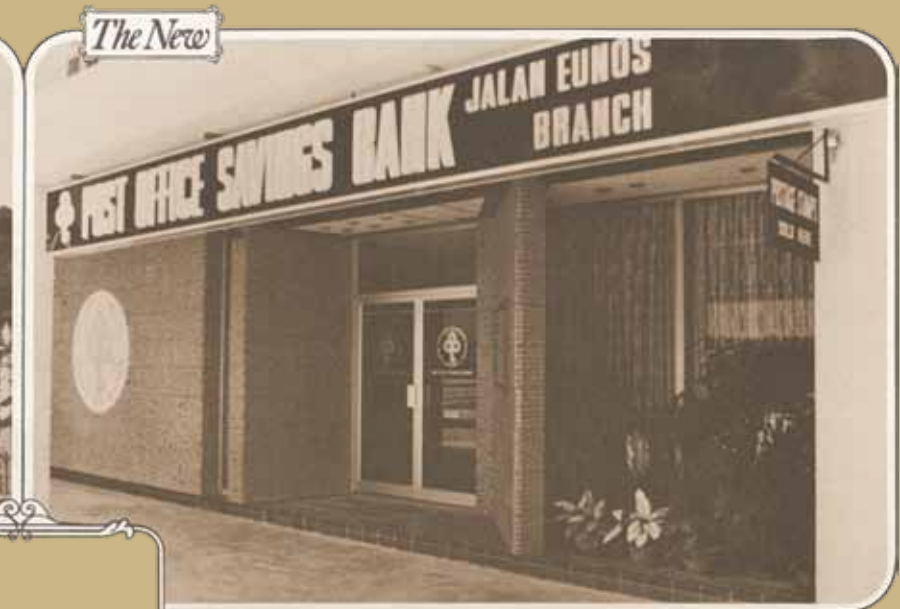
Bottom: The trading room of the Discount Company of Singapore Ltd.

The POSB applied for and was admitted as a member of the International Savings Banks institute (ISBI) on October 3, 1972. The Institute with its headquarters in Geneva and a regional office in Bangkok has 81 members from 50 countries representing 5,000 savings banks. Membership with the Institute meant the POSB could now benefit from the many programmes for training and exchange of information and expertise conducted and provided by the ISBI.

It had been a hectic year of achievement for the Bank and in a short spell of 12 months it had transformed its image and caught the public imagination. The evidence was clearly seen when the Bank tallied up the results for the year. The number of depositors rose to a high of 622,714. Total amount standing to the credit of all open accounts passed the \$100 million mark and registering a full 37 percent growth over bumper year 1970.

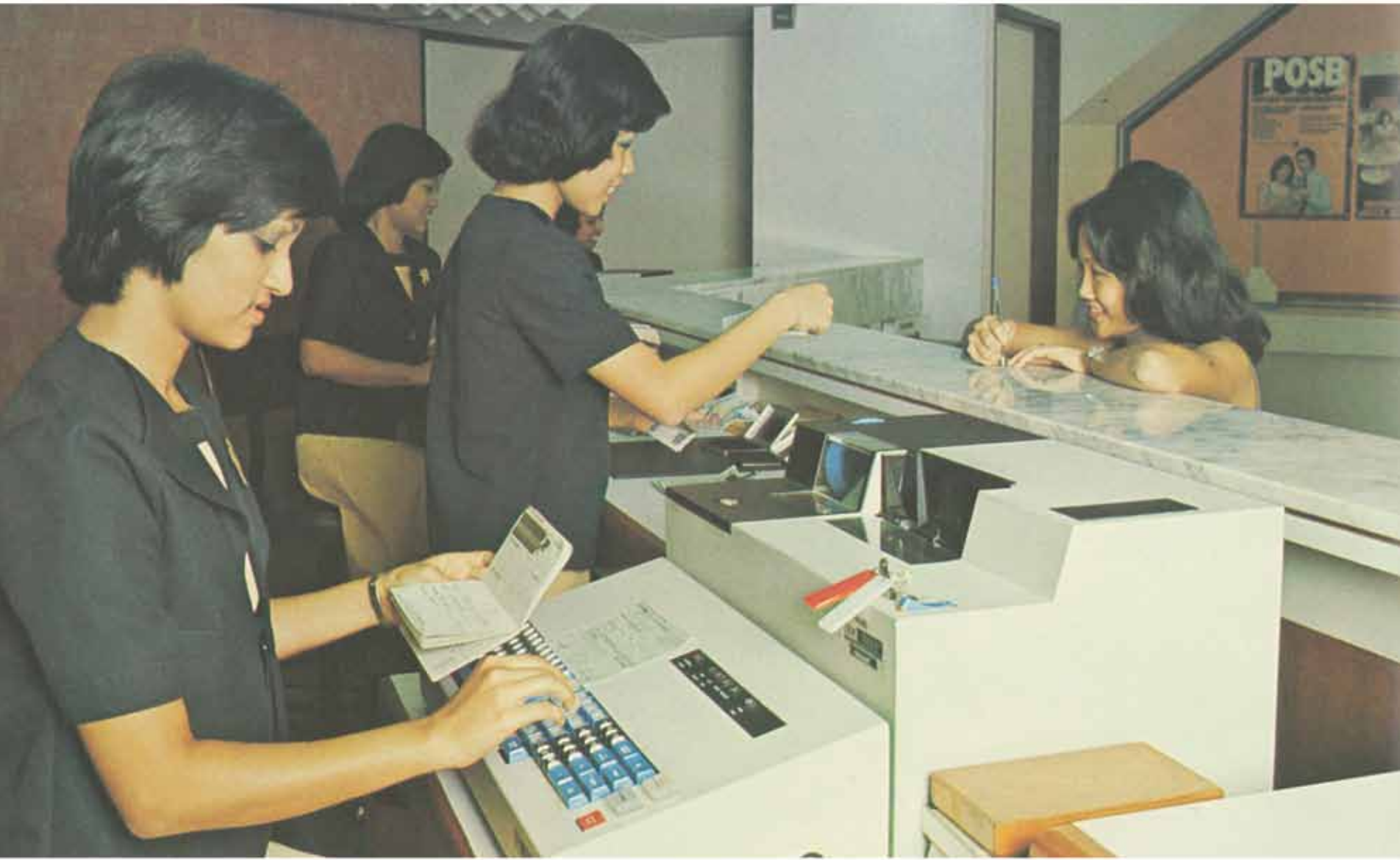
Deposits received during 1972 alone were in excess of \$87.3 million — an increase of 51 percent over 1971. Total transactions also breached the million mark. The net excess of deposits over withdrawals during the year surpassed the previous year's performance by an overwhelming 93 percent.

The POSB, however, hardly had time for self-commendation. There was more to be achieved. The sights had been lined on a new target of a million depositors set by Mr Yong Nyuk Lin. From that point, the target became a driving force with the Bank.



Despite the fact that POSB has gone through quite remarkable 'face lifts', it does not always discard old buildings for new. In the bottom right corner, the re-located Tanglin Post Office and Post Office Savings Bank occupy a building of colonial charm.

POSB's On-Line network, the largest in Singapore, speeds up operations and enables depositors to make transactions at any office convenient to them.



New Vistas

7

The success achieved by the POSB in its first year as a Statutory Board did not in any way throw it off balance. It was obvious nonetheless, that hard work and imagination alone could not cope with the increasing volume of business and thus a major overhaul in the system was necessary.

The initial step in the modernisation process was the computerisation of the accounting system. The Bank discarded the old manual ledger card system and switched to the batch Off-Line system on October 2, 1972. Information from the ledger cards was fed into a computer and all records were transferred to tapes.

The faster processing of accounts meant that the POSB could now handle a larger volume of business. The modernisation programme had, however, still some way to go. In the first Annual Report of the Bank as a Statutory Board, the Chairman stated: "The logical extension of this computerisation programme would be for the Bank to go on to an On-Line system at its branches and counters." The decision could not have been made at a better time.

After over 90 years of sedate existence, the POSB's pace of progress had quickened immeasurably in the short spell between 1968 and 1972. In seeking greater technological sophistication the POSB was responding to the challenge of change, undeterred by the fact that the On-line concept was relatively new to Singapore in 1972.

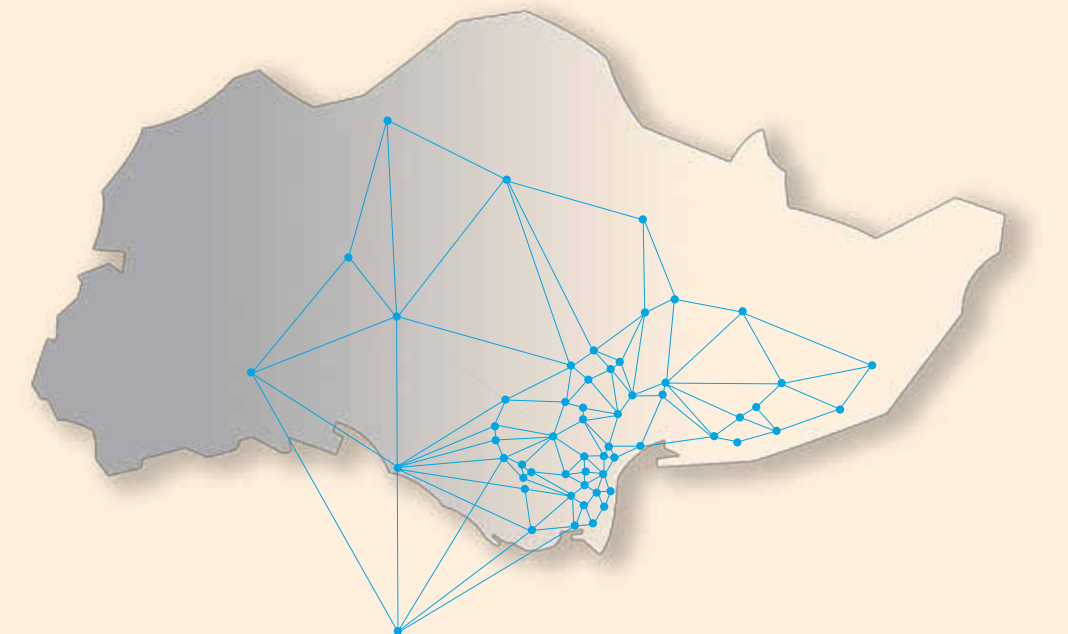
On June 1, 1974, following strenuous efforts involving installation, training of staff, tests and checks, the first batch of three On-Line banking terminals went 'live' at the Bank's Headquarters. The decision to go On-Line was a critical one involving not just feasibility studies or investment, it was more than that. It called for courage and a determined commitment to the future — a commitment from which there was no turning back.

In the following months, other POSB offices were successively equipped with On-Line facilities. The final phase of the programme was completed towards the end of January 1976. Thereafter, all new branches opened by the Bank have been equipped with On-Line banking terminals.

Today, the POSB's On-Line network is the largest in Singapore. Considerable investment has been made in the system and the benefits can best be evaluated by the quality of service which the Bank is now able to provide and the knowledge that half the people of Singapore now place their trust in their national savings bank.

The advantages of the POSB's On-Line system are many. Total transaction time at the counter, including updating of interest and other uncredited items, has been reduced drastically. In addition to the increased speed in operations, the On-Line system enables depositors to transact savings bank business at any POSB office convenient to them.

POSB has a total of 71 offices including one on Pulau Bukom, an offshore oil refinery island.



Another tangible benefit is efficiency. Document flow has been reduced considerably eliminating the need to maintain physical records except for audit purposes. In fact, all the POSB's records for the past three years are now kept on a single disk pack about 45 cm (18 inches) wide and 20 cm (8 inches) high.

The flexibility which the On-line system provides has enabled the POSB to widen its influence in the community beyond the facilities it provides for savings. Promoting the savings habit remains the principal objective, but the Bank recognises that it has a social and national role to play.

The Chairman underscores the Bank's corporate philosophy when he states that the POSB's goal is to reach a maximum number of people by providing services and incentives in a number of areas related to the Bank's primary activity. "We touch the lives of a large number of people," he says, "and as a service organisation we now play a moderating role between the people and the commercial organisations. Our diversification into certain areas of personal financing is an element of that role." Mr Tan also sees the POSB as more than just a people's bank. "We are now an adult institution and we must accept our responsibility as an instrument of national development." The public's money, he says, must be put to productive use to support national objectives. He envisages that the POSB will be increasingly involved in strengthening Singapore's position as a financial centre. "But not in the primary market," he adds. "Our influence would be better defined as a catalyst in promoting the secondary market."

Since 1972, the POSB has considerably enlarged its involvement in the financial sector by channelling savings to finance development projects and industries. At the end of 1976, the POSB had approved term loans amounting to \$314 million, in addition to investing another \$304 million in Singapore Government securities.



Amongst the recipients of POSB medium and long-term financing are the NTUC COMFORT (National Trades Union Congress Workers' Co-operative Commonwealth for Transport Limited) and Singapore's national shipping line, Neptune Orient Lines.



Much of the Bank's funds are directed to the vital sectors of the economy. It participates in providing medium and long-term finance to such key areas as aviation, shipping and public transport, including a recent \$8.2 million loan to NTUC COMFORT for the purchase of taxis. In the latter instance, national objectives overlap social goals. The NTUC loan was intended to help taxi drivers own their vehicles as such ownership of equipment and property is very much a desired national objective.

The same philosophy guided the Bank to establish a wholly-owned subsidiary, Credit POSB Pte Ltd

in August 1974. The company manages and promotes the Bank's home ownership scheme and makes loans available to depositors for the purchase of houses and flats at reasonable rates of interest on easy repayment terms. The Bank was the first to offer 20-year housing loans to help depositors own their homes. In addition to housing loans, the Bank now offers loans for the renovation of houses and flats as well as for the purchase of commercial properties. The latter scheme is intended to assist depositors in owning their shop or office units.

The pleasant semi-detached house in a modern privately developed housing estate is typical of homes purchased by depositors with POSB housing loans.



The People's Bank

The twin objectives of service and contribution have provided the inspiration for other schemes launched by the POSB in recent years. The Save-As-You-Earn (SAYE) Bonus Scheme provides facilities to wage earners for regular personal savings and medium-term deposits. The Group Savings Scheme (GSS) makes it easy for groups of employees in the same organisation to save by automatic deduction at source of the amount an employee wishes to save. The employer sends a block cheque to the POSB to credit the individual amount of savings to the respective accounts. The GIRO Service enables depositors to settle conveniently and without charge, bills for electricity, water, gas, telephone, property tax, rental and conservancy charges of public housing by automatic transfer of the billed amount from their savings account. Safe deposit box facilities are also available at certain branches of the Bank.

Elsewhere, the POSB supports the national effort through the facilities it provides for savings to members of Singapore's Armed Forces. The SAF Savings Scheme was inaugurated in December 1975 and is intended to promote the savings habit among full-time SAE servicemen.

The Bank remains committed to a multi-dimensional thrust in its future operations. Lately, that thrust has been directed at achieving greater sophistication in the POSB's investment and funding policies. The Bank has made its entry in the Asian Bond market by investing in some Asian Dollar Unit Bonds. More recently, it was one of the managers for a major bond issue in the local corporate bond market.

In the context of its increasing involvement in the financial sector, the dual nature of the POSB's reporting relationship to the Ministries of Communications and Finance has also been changed since January 1, 1975. The Bank now comes under the portfolio of the Minister for Finance, Mr. Hon Sui Sen.



Bond issues in the local corporate bond market for which POSB was one of the managers.



The POSB Giro Service enables depositors to settle many kinds of bills by automatic transfer from their savings accounts.



The overwhelming confidence placed by the people in their national savings bank cannot be measured in the absolute number of depositors alone. Nor is the volume of funds on deposit an indicator of the warmth and affection that people have for the institution.

For some, an account with the POSB is a gilt-edged security guaranteed by the Government of Singapore; for others, it is the range of services, facilities and the easy accessibility which the Bank provides; for many, a POSB account is a legacy passed down from generation to generation.

Depositors include men, women and children of many races, creeds, nationalities and callings. Among them are businessmen and workers, scientists and technicians, executives and clerks, teachers and students — in effect, all segments of Singapore society. Age poses no limitations. There are infants barely a year old for whom parents have opened accounts and people who are eighty years of age and over. Some of these older depositors have had accounts with the POSB for over half a century, indeed an overpowering demonstration of a close and enduring relationship.

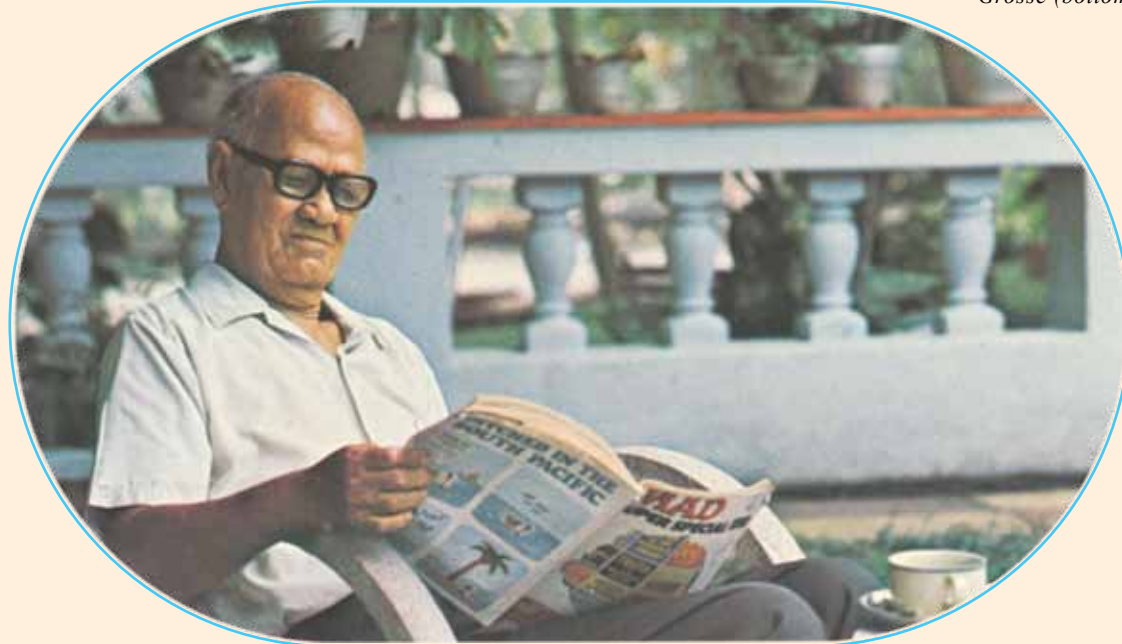
The Bank's depositors include people of different ethnic origins from every walk of life. In this diversity there is unity of purpose — to ensure a more secure future through savings.



As part of the School Savings Campaign, the Bank's staff make regular visits to schools where the savings habit is inculcated at an early age.



Two of POSB's oldest depositors, Mr. S. Vythilingam (top) and Mr. Francis Grosse (bottom).



Despite computerisation and the growth in the number of accounts, this relationship remains very personal for a large number of people. "The Bank," says S. Vythilingam of Jalan Chengam, "has been increasingly responsive to the people's needs." A sprightly 78, he opened an account with the POSB when he joined the Postal Services Department of Malaya in 1918. He has maintained it for 58 years and his is one of the oldest accounts with the Bank!

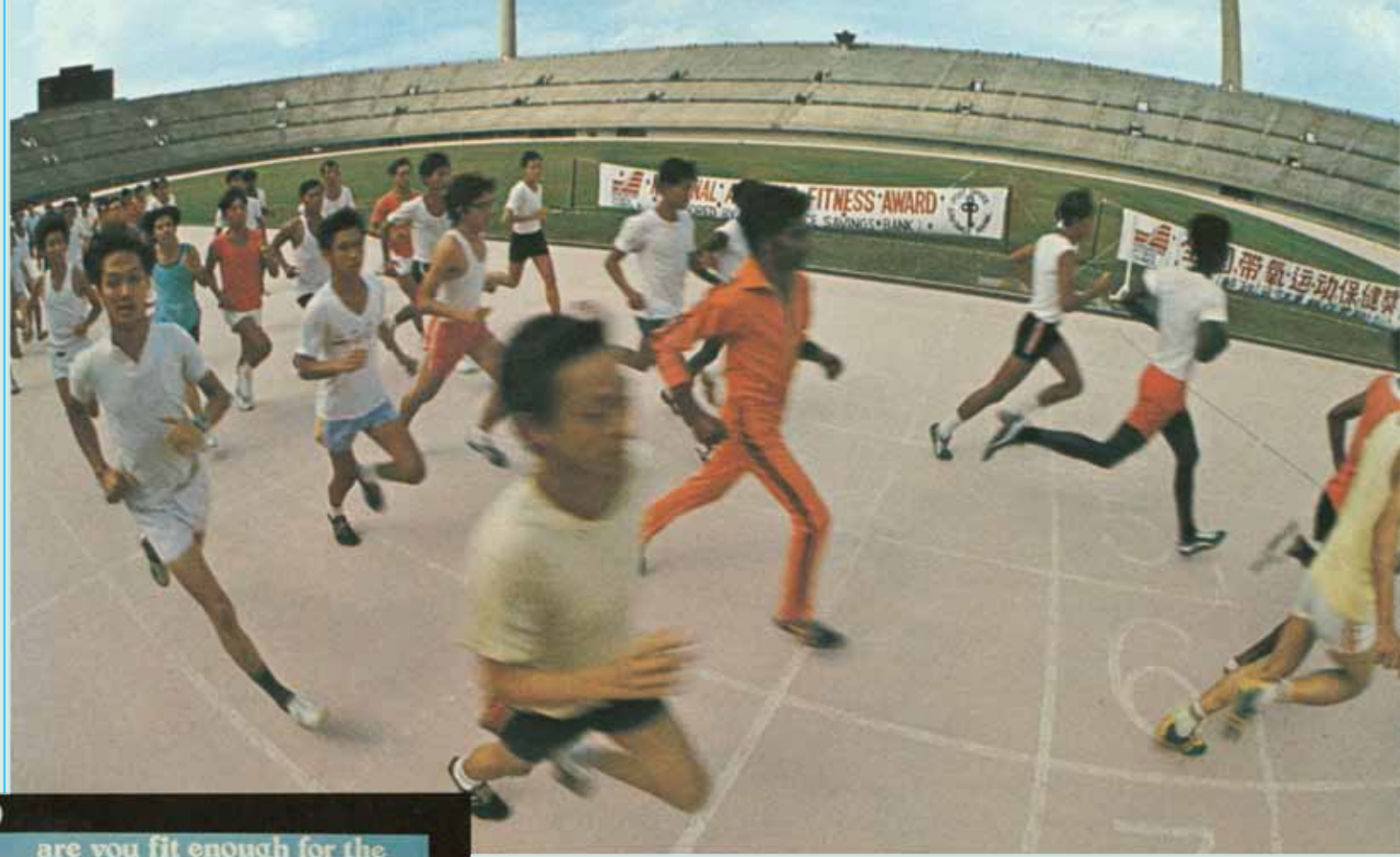
As an ex-official in the Postal Services, he takes considerable pride in the growth of the Bank and welcomes the new facilities which it now provides.

That opinion is shared by octogenarian Francis Grosse, another long-time depositor. Born in Singapore just 19 years after the POSB was established, he opened an account when he was 23 and has seen the Bank grow into an institution of considerable size over the years. He is full of praise for many new services introduced in recent years. "In those old days, we would never have believed the POSB would become so modern," he says.

That old acquaintance is not easily forgotten is apparent from the substantial number of accounts held by people over 60 years of age. At the end of 1976, there were 13,244 depositors belonging to this honoured age group including 6,000 women.

The largest group of depositors are, however, youngsters between 20 and 24 years of age, reflecting the enormous pull the POSB has on young people. A greater number of them have been drawn to the Bank through the School Savings Campaign.





Not all of POSB's activities are centred around the business of savings. Community involvement includes sponsoring sports and cultural events.

It is in the style of the POSB as the people's bank, that its relationships with different levels of depositors remain close. None are closer than those which has been established over the years with the student population.

It is, in fact, a matter of considerable pride to the POSB, that a student holds a particular place in its long history. That student is Koh Seow Hai, who, as an 11-year old Primary Five student opened POSB's millionth account at the Killiney Road Post Office on March 9, 1976.

Just how closely the people identify themselves with the Bank was evident during those early months of 1976 when the POSB was reaching out towards a million accounts. In an overwhelming demonstration of confidence, nearly 50,000 new accounts were opened between January 1 and March 9, 1976 to enable the POSB to attain the goal of one million depositors.



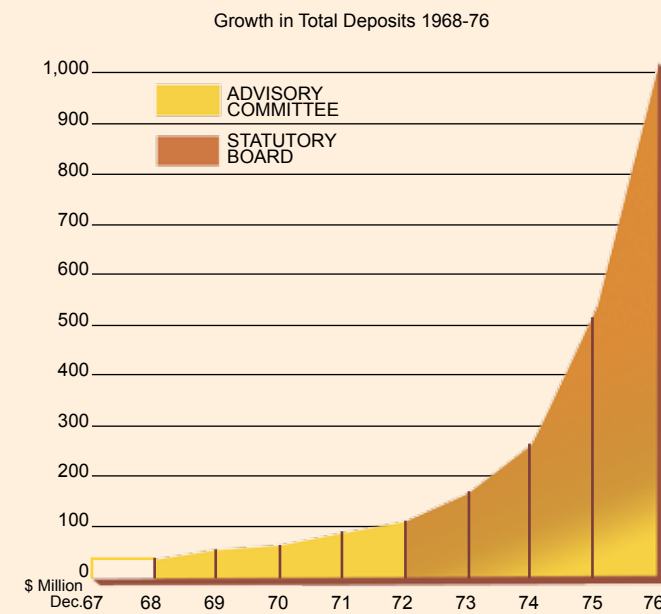
That significant event has passed into history but the Bank retains its appeal for the people by promoting its services and offering incentives through attractive campaigns in the press, TV and through the annual Lucky Draw. Over the years, the Lucky Draw programme has gained in popularity as the number of qualifying depositors — each with a minimum of \$500 in his account during the qualifying three-month periods — has increased.

Elsewhere, the POSB is building relationships with its active involvement in the community. The Bank offers scholarships and study loans free of interest to student depositors and to children of depositors to help them continue their studies at local institutions of higher learning. Scholarships are also offered through the Public Service Commission for study overseas under the Donated Overseas Merits Scholarship Scheme.

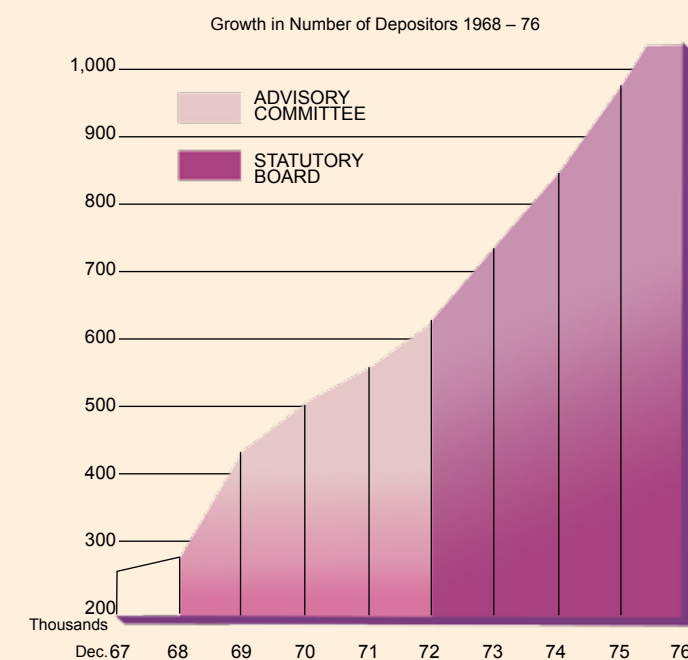
The POSB has involved itself in the national fitness programme by sponsoring the National Aerobic Fitness Award Scheme and contributing to a half-marathon jog event in 1976. It has also sponsored several cultural programmes.

To mark its centenary, the Bank has instituted its most ambitious programme for community welfare. A POSB Charitable Trust Fund has been created under which \$500,000 will be set aside. Interest earned on this amount will be directed to suitable charities and for scholarships. A Board of Trustees will administer the Fund.

Despite the growth of recent years and the new responsibilities it has been called upon to shoulder in the greater interest of the nation, the POSB remains very much a Bank of the people. With well over a million people calling it "Our Bank", it could hardly be otherwise.



In a few short years, POSB has grown from a small savings bank to an institution of major importance. Deposits now total well over 1,000 million dollars and the number of depositors has increased from 260,000 in 1967 to over one million at the end of 1976.



The Bank's People



"Bringing better service closer to the people remains our principal objective." The faces of these front line POSB girls reflect the friendly service depositors can expect.

The POSB owes its success largely to the commitment and loyalty of its people at all levels of the organisation. This includes the Board of Directors, senior management and employees. All are dedicated to the common objective of bringing better service to the public.

The Bank's policy is determined by an eight-member Board of Directors. The composition of the Board is intended to bring expertise from many fields to the policy-making process. Directors have traditionally included senior Government officials, educators and individuals with considerable experience in business and some of the present Board members have been associated with determining the Bank's policy for a considerable length of time.

Tan Chok Kian was associated with the Finance Ministry when he took over as the first Chairman in 1972. He is now Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Affairs and concurrently Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Culture.

Wong Lee Hoong, Postmaster-General, has been associated with the Bank since 1970 – first as Chairman of the Advisory Committee and presently, Deputy Chairman of the Board. Other long-serving Directors include Goh Mia Hoon and Hwang Soo Jin, both of whom bring their experience of the business world to bear on the policies of the Bank. Francis J D'Costa, Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, Lim Hong Keat, Ng Tee Geok and Goh Chok Tong joined the Board in 1975.

They are members of a select group of individuals who have served on the POSB's Board of Directors during the past several years, contributing in invaluable measure to the Bank's progress.

While the Board decide the Bank's policy, the implementation of policy is carried out by an equally energetic team headed by General Manager, Bertie Cheng. For Bertie Cheng, the Postal Services Department and the POSB represent a

lifetime of public service. His direct involvement with the POSB began when he headed the team which went up to Petaling Jaya to bring the Bank's Singapore records to the Middle Road Headquarters. "The Headquarters then was a converted garage," he recalls, "and we had to do some extensive renovation to the place."

Mr Cheng moved from Deputy General Manager to General Manager of POSB in 1976. As Chief Executive Officer, he works closely with the Board of Directors. He is responsible to the Board for management, administration and implementation of the Bank's policy. He is assisted in his task by Chief Manager Tan Han Meng and a compact management team which blends dedication with enthusiasm.

"Bringing better service closer to the people remains our principal objective," says Mr Cheng. "This means more branches, convenience through longer banking hours and better facilities."

With the broad policy guidelines laid down by the Board, Mr Cheng retains considerable flexibility in managing the Bank's effort to achieve maximum productivity.

"Generating interest in our services is only one part of our work. We must retain the interest of our depositors by providing a better and greater variety of services as we develop further," he says. "Ours is not a captive clientele. There is no compulsion for people to save with us. We have to compete for deposits like any other financial institution. The only way we can attract and retain our depositors is through better service."

Mr Cheng works closely with his management team to enhance the Bank's acceptability through intensive marketing, better visibility and service. In the ultimate analysis, their accountability is to the people. All indications point quite clearly to the fact that the people heartily approve of what has been and is being done.

The Bank is proud of its many dedicated long-service staff. Officer-in-Charge of the GPO branch, Ng Kim Ann, is a veteran of 25 years service.



Yet, for an institution which looks after the interest of over a million depositors with savings in excess of \$1 billion, the POSB is run by an economically small number of people. Total staff is just 314 people; fully 87 percent are women. The POSB's counter officers are all young women and 164 of them attend to the Bank's 71 outlets throughout the island.

Long hours and the high volume of transactions call for extraordinary qualities of alertness and fortitude combined with a genuine liking for people. Each girl, on an average handles 25 transactions every hour, seven and a half hours every day. Particular attention is devoted to the selection and training of counter officers. For the rest of their careers with the Bank, courtesy and patience very much become their lifestyle. The reward has been a spectacular new image with the blossoming of a splendid and friendly personality — the POSB Girl.

Charm, courtesy and dedication at the front line is backed elsewhere by the maturity of experience

and the enthusiasm of youth. Youth, understandably, predominates. A majority of the Bank's people are in their twenties and joined the Bank after it was reconstituted as a Statutory Board. On the other hand, the POSB counts among its ranks several officers who have had links with the Postal Services for a quarter of a century. This balance of youth and experience is the Bank's greatest asset. An example of the POSB's human approach to its business is provided by Ng Kim Ann, a veteran of 25 years service with the Postal Services Department and the POSB. Now Officer-in-Charge of the Bank's bustling GPO Branch, Kim Ann joined the Postal Services Department in August 1951. The attractively designed GPO Branch which he supervises is among the POSB's busiest outlets and enjoys a primary position in the Bank. It was the first independent branch to be opened before the POSB became a Statutory Board. The Bank now has larger outlets elsewhere, but the GPO branch retains its flagship position and its counters are



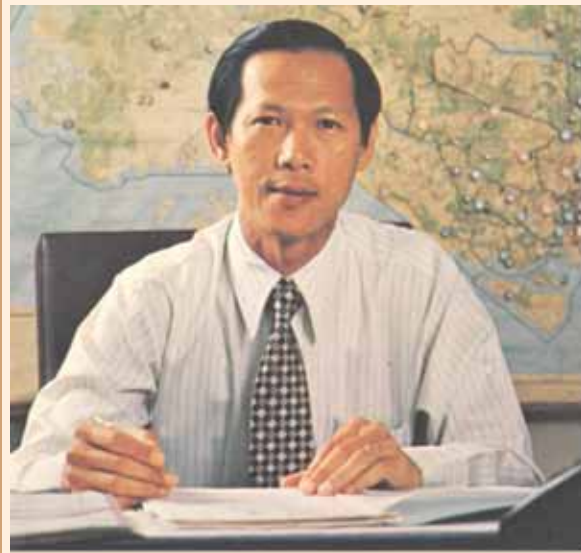
Prompt, courteous service is the key to maintaining a happy relationship with depositors.



Top: Training Officer, David Tock demonstrates the working of an On-Line computer terminal.



Bottom: "Patience for Success" is the theme of the Bank's training for the counter officers.



Mr Wong Lee Hoong



Mr Tan Chok Kian



Mr Goh Mia Hoon



Mr Hwang Soo Jin

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairman Mr Tan Chok Kian
Deputy Chairman Mr Wong Lee Hoong
Directors Mr Goh Mia Hoon
 Mr Hwang Soo Jin
 Mr Goh Chok Tong
 Mr F J D'Costa
 Mr Ng Tee Geok
 Mr Lim Hong Keat



Mr Goh Chok Tong



Mr F J D'Costa



Mr Ng Tee Geok



Mr Lim Hong Keat

open for business longer than any other financial institution in Singapore — public or private. It remains open eight and a half hours each day from 8.30 am to 5.00 pm, six days a week, Monday to Saturday, A total of 51 hours every week.

Like most POSB outlets, the GPO Branch is fully air-conditioned with four counter positions each attended by a POSB Girl. The branch bustles with activity throughout the eight and a half hours it is open. Over 600 transactions are recorded each day. The volume can double on pay-days. Over 16,000 transactions are tallied up every month.

To maintain the high quality of its service the POSB puts considerable stress on training. The Bank recognises that the quality of service is not necessarily evident in the level of efficiency. It is more often expressed in the attitude of the person attending to customers. Great stress is therefore placed on the attitude of counter officers.

“Patience for Success” is the theme of the Bank’s training for its counter officers. Operating the terminals can become a routine mechanical task after a time, but dealing with a different customer every two minutes calls for a particular attitude of mind. The Bank constantly endeavours to strengthen the positive attitudes and this process begins with the induction of every new employee.

Training in the POSB is an on-going process, in-house and elsewhere, including exposure to similar-type operations and facilities outside Singapore. Training programmes cover different levels of personnel, from new recruits to senior management. The Bank supports several professional institutions and nominates its personnel for specialised training courses and seminars, both locally and overseas.

Thus, for all its progress, the POSB is far from being a mechanical gnome. Computers, terminals and statistics notwithstanding, it remains very much a human organisation. In consequence, its image of professional competence is in every sense the image of the Bank’s people.

Some members of the POSB administrative staff at work.



The Years Ahead

During the course of its colourful and changing history, the Post Office Savings Bank has had a single reason for its being: to bring service to the people. More than ever before, its interests are intimately linked with the interests of the people and the nation it serves. It cannot be otherwise in the future.

They include queue-breaking systems which would considerably facilitate deposits and withdrawals and an entirely new generation of equipment with the flexibility to meet customer requirements five years from now.

The destiny which was mapped for it in 1968 when it was set on a new path has been eminently fulfilled. So have the objectives which it outlined for itself following its new stature as a Statutory Board in 1972. In that year, the Bank received deposits from the public amounting to \$87.3 million and by the end of 1976, this figure had multiplied to over \$1 billion. In the same period the number of accounts increased from 622,714 to over a million, while the amount standing to the credit of depositors grew from \$125.2 million to over \$1 billion in 1976. The Bank, simultaneously, had expanded the scope of its services and brought the benefits of its presence to countless people in many ways.

Simultaneously, the Bank accepts that it will be called upon in greater measure to help expand and strengthen the overall financial sector both onshore and offshore. In keeping with that need the Bank is already seeking greater sophistication in both its funding and investment policies.

The tributes to the POSB on its achievements are many. But the POSB cherishes most of all the silent tribute it receives daily and its counters from its depositors. To justify that confidence, the POSB recognises that it will have to provide better and even more efficient service in the years ahead. Future plans are geared towards an enlarged branch network and further development and improvement of existing branches and outlets.

The Bank anticipates that its services will be welcome in high population centres, new townships and Housing & Development Board estates. There is a need to open branches close to industrial centres and commercial areas with high volume of transactions. To provide the complete range of services the POSB is already looking five to ten years ahead. Under study are several proposals which may require implementation in the near future.



One is never far from a POSB branch and its warm, friendly service.



One of the Bank's latest branches at Marine Parade serves a new housing estate of about 8,000 families.



For the POSB, as it completes a hundred years of service, it is not the road's end but a bright new beginning.

The Post Office Savings Bank of Singapore has in many ways influenced the lives of millions of people through the first hundred years of its existence. In the light of the conspicuous benefits which have accrued from its presence it cannot be looked upon as just a financial institution. The Bank is more than that. It is a create partnership between people of many races over many generations highlighting a concept close to the heart of modern Singapore.

It might not have been thus but for the dedication of the many individuals who have guided its growth over the decades. Nor would it have been thus except for the confidence and faith which so many people from so many walks of life have placed in the Bank over a hundred years.

For the people who continue to guide the Bank into its second century, as well as to those who will benefit from its continued presence in the years ahead, the Post Office Savings Bank has a special significance. For them, it is an extension of the nation's trust in the future. Long ago, their ancestors chanced their fate and came to Singapore in search of the rainbow's end. That golden rainbow may not yet have come full circle. But the quest remains. In that tantalizing quest, in a measure far greater than it ever has done in the past, the Post Office Savings Bank embodies the hopes and aspirations of future generations.

The hopes and aspirations of Singapore's young population – and those of POSB's are shared in a creative partnership.



POSB - The Key To Savings
10¢ SINGAPORE



On-line Banking Service
35¢ SINGAPORE



GIRO Service
75¢ SINGAPORE

*Commemorative stamps
issued to celebrate the
centenary of the Post
Office Savings Bank.*

Principal Officers

Mr Bertie Cheng	General Manager
Mr Tan Han Meng	Controller <i>(Finance & Operations Division)</i>
Mrs Dorothy Ng	Head <i>(Development & Property Dept)</i>
Mr Teo Sok Nguang	Head <i>(Loans Dept)</i>
Mr Vincent Sebastian	Head <i>(Training & Security Dept)</i>
Miss June Shyu	Head <i>(Client Services Dept)</i>
Miss Chong Moon Moi	Head <i>(Personnel & Administration Dept)</i>
Miss Chua Bee Choo	Head <i>(Finance Dept)</i>
Miss Nelly Menon	Head <i>(Public Relations & Marketing Dept)</i>
Mr Cheah Pin Thong	Head <i>(Operations Dept)</i>
Mrs Margaret Koh	Head <i>(Investment & Credit Dept)</i>

