

If you look at the back of this book you will find two appendices. Appendix I shows you at a glance the structure of the Government of Singapore. Appendix II will show you which Minister your department serves.

The Public Service of Singapore comprises all those officers, technical, professional and administrative, skilled and unskilled, who are responsible for carrying out the functions of all these departments.

The Administration has increased in size and complexity with the rapid growth of Singapore. Economic crises, world wars and greater participation in South-East Asian affairs have all hastened its development. It is interesting to trace briefly the evolution of the Singapore Public Service from 1826 to the present day, over more than four generations.

In 1826, Singapore was joined with the Presidency of Penang under the control of the Governor-General of India. In 1832, the Court of Directors of the East India Company, alarmed at the lavish expansion of the Presidency administration, reduced the status of the Straits Settlements to that of a Residency.

Singapore's total public service at that time consisted of a Governor and two Assistants, who economically shared all the various duties. They divided between them the functions of Superintendent of Lands, Chief of Police, Superintendent of Convicts, Magistrate and Commissioner of Court of Requests and Superintendent of Public Works. The Governor retained the right to act as a judge and sit with the Recorder. In certain departments this economy of staffing was too drastic and new appointments were made: a Superintendent of Convicts and a Government Surveyor in 1843; a Secretary and Aide-de-Camp to the Governor in 1851; a Commissioner of Police in 1856; and a Chief Engineer and a Postmaster in 1858.

By 1867, when the Straits Settlements were transferred to the Colonial Office, the civil service had attained high standards; it had, however, a very haphazard development. Its senior officers were recruited mainly from the Bengal Civil Service. These Indian Civil Servants saw little prospect of promotion comparable with that to be gained in India and rarely settled down with any intent to make a career in this country. Knowledge of a local language was not compulsory, and any familiarity with the native laws and customs was left to the processes of time and the routine of duty.

The era between 1867 and 1955 has been one of extremely rapid change, and every single aspect of government and administration has had to be continuously adapted to the changing needs of our time. To show the extent of those changes, it is sufficient here to draw attention to the variety of departments ranging from Social Welfare and Elections to Fisheries, to the Higher Schemes of Service open to the young men and women of Singapore, to probationary periods of service with compulsory examinations in local languages, laws and regulations and to the evolution towards full Ministerial government.