

SAN CHOOON TO STEP DOWN

Bahan asal dari Arkib
Negara Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Datuk Lee San Choon is to step down as MCA president and retire from active politics next month. His party post will be taken over by deputy president Datuk Dr Neo Yee Pan.

Sources said Datuk Lee, 48, is also expected to see Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad soon about relinquishing his post as Transport Minister.

He will also step down as Seremban MCA division chief.

Datuk Lee's decision to step down, probably on April 1, was conveyed to the party's presidential council meeting yesterday. He is to make an announcement on it at the party's central committee meeting on Friday.

MCA members were shocked by the decision and emergency meetings are being held by State and divisional leaders throughout the country.

A reliable source said Datuk Lee has indicated that he had fulfilled his role as a party leader to the best of his ability and that the party had achieved a high degree of stability to enable a smooth transition of leadership to take place now.

He also indicated to the presidential council that the time was right for him to make way for others, with the next general election only scheduled for 1987 and party elections more than one-and-a-half years away.

Party insiders said that Datuk Lee had indicated several times that he would like to retire from active politics.

However, he felt unable to phase himself out as long as conditions for a smooth transition to the leadership were not present, they said.

Datuk Lee became acting MCA president in 1974 when Tun Tan Siew Sin retired and was confirmed as president the following year.

Born in Pekan on March 20, 1935, Datuk Lee work-



Flashback . . . Datuk Lee after his victory in Seremban in last year's general election.

ed in the civil service and at the age of 21, entered politics and rose from the ranks to become MCA president, well accepted by both branch and divisional leaders.

He was elected MP for Kluang Utara in the 1959 general election. In the 1964 elections, he won the Segamat Selatan parliamentary seat and retained it in 1969.

He was appointed parliamentary secretary to the Labour Ministry in 1965.

Four years later, he moved up to Assistant Minister for Special Functions, and acted as Labour and Manpower Minister on several occasions.

He later became a full Minister, and during the 1973 Cabinet reshuffle was

appointed Minister of Technology, Research and Co-ordination of New Villages.

After the 1974 general election, he was made Labour Minister and in 1978, was given the Transport portfolio which he still holds.

Datuk Lee, who won the Segamat parliamentary seat with a majority of 17,180 votes in 1978, was re-elected party president the following year.

In last year's April 22 general election, he contested in the DAP stronghold of Seremban in response to a challenge by DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang and beat DAP chairman Dr Chen Man Hin.



Datuk Dr Neo . . . to be acting president