

Schools and the narrow-minded

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon.
— Education Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamed appealed to the public today not to let personal sentiments interfere with the Government's education programme.

Parochial attitudes would only retard Government efforts to provide the nation's young with a better education, he said.

Dr. Mahathir was speaking to reporters after meeting a delegation from the Sekolah Kebangsaan Jalan Raja Muda Parent-Teacher Association at his office here.

The delegation appealed to the Ministry not to go ahead with its plan to turn the school into a training centre for temporary teachers.

In rejecting the appeal, Dr.

PAROCHIALISM WILL HARM OUR POLICY: DR MAHATHIR

Mahathir said the objections were based largely on the assumption that the change would be a setback for education in Bahasa Malaysia.

The school was one of four selected to be teacher-training centres because of the already declining enrolment. It now has only 374 pupils. Next year it is expected to have only 280 pupils.

However, if the school is turned into a teacher-training centre, it would be able to train about 350 temporary teachers each year.

This would benefit about

14,000 pupils each year, calculated at the ratio of one teacher to 40 pupils.

Dr. Mahathir said the Government had to take firm action in training more teachers in view of the increasing dependance on untrained temporary teachers, who this year alone numbered 12,000.

The Government also needed to recruit an additional 40,000 teachers in the next 10 years. At present there were 30,000 teachers.

There was also a need to increase the present ratio of 1.2 teachers per class to 1.4 per class.

NOTE: The three other schools to be turned into training centres next year are the Sekolah Kebangsaan Perempuan in Kangar, the Sekolah Kebangsaan Teruntum in Kuantan, and the Sekolah Rendah Jenis Kebangsaan Perempuan Jalan Northam in Penang. These centres will train 560 teachers a year.