

— Rich richer, poor poorer' a fallacy — Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Deputy Prime Minister Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad

warned Umno members today against thoughtlessly using cliches like: "The poor are getting poorer, the rich are getting richer."

Speaking at the Umno general assembly here, he said such a statement would imply that Umno had failed completely to fulfill its promises to improve the lot of the poor.

"There is evidence galore to show that this is a fallacy," he added.

"This year alone the Government is sending 680 bumiputras to Europe on various courses of study — and if these were from 680 rich bumiputra families, the Government must have had astounding success in its efforts to make bumiputras rich."

The fact was that these were mostly from poor families, as were the thousands of students given the chance of tertiary education each year.

A glance at convocation pictures in the news-

papers is testimony to the truth that university graduates did not come from wealthy backgrounds.

He was replying to points made during the debate on a motion by the Temerloh Division to support the policy address by the acting Umno president Datuk Hussein Onn when he opened the assembly on Friday.

Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir said Umno's efforts in its 31 years of life and 21 years of power had indeed given the poor opportunities to become rich, through education, through trade and through other channels.

"Those who doubt this need only walk a few steps out of this hall and see the delegates' cars," he added. (laughter)

He said that the glib repetition of such false and irresponsible statements could do serious harm to Umno in a set-up where continuance of power depended on continuance of popularity with the people.

Forces' pay

"We want to retain power, not because we

are power-crazy but because we want the chance to go on fulfilling our promises to the people."

Replying to a question from Datuk Syed Zain Shahab of Johore as to why the Government was "forgetting" the armed forces when it came to salary revisions, the Deputy Prime Minister said this was far from the case.

It was because the Government was fully aware of the special risks and sacrifices involved in this field of service that it had not included the armed forces in its general salary revisions.

A special new salary scheme for the armed forces was being studied and he hoped it would be ready as soon as possible.

On the question of "lowered-standards" in teacher-training colleges brought up by a delegate from Malacca, Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir who is also Education Minister, said that while a study was need to establish that, it could not be denied that teacher trainee in-take this year was 10,000 including temporary

A question of teacher training standards

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teachers as against last year's 3,000, and that there had not been any increase in the number of colleges or lecturers.

"It would not be surprising, therefore, if results now were not as

good as they were when some of you were undergoing training as teachers.

The rapid increase in teacher trainee in-take was necessary, however, to solve the problem of overcrowded classrooms. There were classes that had more than the maximum 50 pupils and there were even cases of one teacher having to teach two classes at the same time.

There were now 94,000 teachers and, "the electorate willing", Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir planned to increase the number by 40,000 in 10 years.

Even more important than the academic quality of teachers was their moral quality and adherence to the party's and the nation's ideals.

Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir had conferred with the Head of Teacher Training on ways of ensuring this at every level.

"Those in teacher training are the ones who will in turn decide the calibre of future citizens who will take over the ruling of the country when we are gone."