

'THESE PEOPLE HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER THE MASSES'

By AINUL ZAHARAH

N.S.T. - 5 JUL 1978
TAPAH, Tues. — Certain opposition candidates as well as independents contesting the current election are only seeking to "improve their status" in society, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamed said here last night. "They have nothing to offer to the masses," he said.

Addressing some 1,000 National Front workers at a *ceramah* at the Dewan Merdeka here, the Deputy Prime Minister said that these candidates, some of them from mosquito parties, could not render anything constructive other than playing upon sentiments.

"Even if they wanted to serve the electorate, they could not and would not be in a position to do so," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir who is the National Front director of election for Perak, said though the people were free to elect the candidates of their choice under the democratic process, they should attach importance to the sort of Government that could come to power.

From the selection of candidates, only those from the National Front returned with good majorities would be in a position to form the Government.

A target

The National Front parliamentary candidate for Batang Padang is Encik Azharul Abidin bin Haji Abdul Rahim, who is seeking re-election and the candidate for the Tapah State seat is Mr. Lim Yoon Yook.

Encik Azharul is being challenged by DAP's Ibrahim Singgeh and Pas' Haji Mahfuz bin Haji Anuar.

In his speech, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir also criticised the DAP and Pas for using "sensitive" issues to play on racial sentiments in their campaigning — the DAP cashing on Chinese feelings and Pas on Malay sentiments.

The National Front had become a target of the two chauvinist parties because "we are always the moderates," Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir said.

The DAP had attacked the Government for

trying to help a section of the society who were lagging, while Pas on the other hand, accused the Government of neglecting the interests of the Malays.

"This shows that we are moderates — not always for one particular race," he said.

It was not practical for the party in power to be favouring one particular race to the extreme and ignoring others in a plural society.

Grim reminder

Reminding the people of the May 13 incident, he said the "grim picture of killings" in those days was the results of worked-up emotions.

In the 36 days of campaigning before the incident, Pas and DAP were playing on issues inciting the people.

No one had benefited from the incident and all the senseless killings, he added.

Recounting the formation of the Front, he said the idea behind it was to bring all the smaller political parties during the post-May 13 period to work in co-operation with the Government. This was to reduce tension.

"Unfortunately, many of the parties did not accept the concept of co-operation that was enunciated," he said.

It was Umno's love for Pas, because the latter was representing a sizeable group of Malays, that led to the overtures to Pas to be in the Government.

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir said Pas leaders were not sincere in helping the Malays realise their aspirations. Instead they went all out using their positions to increase their spheres of influence.

This was the reason that Felda which was formed to help the Malays later became a focus of Pas influence.

"As a result, many participants in the Felda schemes established Pas branches.

"Still we did not stop Pas," he said, adding that Umno was well aware of the prime intention of Pas leader Datuk Haji Asri Mohamed.

Datuk Asri was not helping the Government run the country but to expand his influence through the party "infiltration" of the people.