

# Our experts swayed by British style

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By JOAN LAU

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Malaysian professionals are conservative because they are still very much influenced by the British way of doing things, spokesman for the Master Builders Association said today.

He said the British way of thinking, which he said was a conservative one, had made our professionals reluctant to try new methods.

He was commenting on a statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad who said Malaysian professionals were "conservative, orthodox and reluctant to accept new methods."

The spokesman said Malaysian professionals such as engineers and architects were mostly trained in Britain or the Commonwealth countries.

"Other professionals trained in countries such as Japan are just not recognised in Malaysia.

"Methods which are more advanced are just not accepted because

## 'They are reluctant to try new methods'

they are not British.

"We are too tightly wrapped up in the colonial past," he added.

He also said the contractors could only do those things which these professionals had specified.

He felt that to change this conservative trend, the government had to take the first step.

"The public will follow what the government says."

And what do these professionals have to say for themselves?

A housing developer Mr. David Chua said that the question of adopting new methods was a difficult one.

He said there were many local constraints

when it came to the building industry but Malaysia had done quite well.

In the last five years, he felt that there had been a large number of buildings built in Kuala Lumpur and an improvement of construction techniques.

The president of the Architects' Association of Malaysia Mr. Tan Eng Keong said that the building industry was a complex one where the work of the various components must be joined together.

"It is easy for me to sit in my air-conditioned room and come up with fantastic designs of buildings.

"Once it leaves the room, it becomes something which needs to be translated into reality by the contractors and other workers."

Mr. Tan said that for a project to be finished as fast as the Dayabumi project, all the components in the building industry must work together.

He said architects did not want to hold the country back but "fantastic designs look good on the drawing board but it is no use if the contractors cannot build it."

"If they are up to it, then we are up to it as well."

The office bearers of the Institution of Engineers could not be reached for comment.