

DRUM CRACKS THE WHIP

STAR AUG 1981

THE word has gone out — civil servants must buck up or face disciplinary action, including dismissal.

The new government of Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir-Mohamad is considering various steps to prod the civil service into improving its performance.

The government has been at a virtual standstill during the past few weeks because of the change in administration, followed by the fasting month.

But the Prime Minister has put the time to good use by briefing his Cabinet and senior civil servants on what his government expects.

Sources said that now the holidays and festivities are over, civil servants will have to get cracking as the government sets about implementing the Fourth Malaysia Plan.

"The Prime Minister is cracking the whip and it is

back to business. Motivation and productivity are going to be the keywords from now on as far as the civil servants and Ministers are concerned," they added.

Among the new steps being considered to buck up the civil service are:

- Implementation of a punch-card system — even for senior civil servants — to cut down on late arrivals and early departures at government offices.

- A warning to senior civil servants that an explanation is necessary for arriving late at the office, and

- Disciplinary action, including dismissal, for senior civil servants who arrive late at their offices for a certain number of times a month (probably more than nine times).

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir and Deputy Prime Minister "Datuk" Musa Hitam have set an example to the rest of the Cabinet and the

civil service by being at their desks by 8 a.m. and leaving only at 6 p.m., when there are no outside functions.

The sources said Datuk Musa will play a key role in bucking up the civil service and ensuring that the government delivers the goods.

He will be involved in the day-to-day running of the government and will visit all the States to check on the progress of projects.

His first visit is to Johore next week, followed by visits to other States, including Sabah and Sarawak. He is expected to visit at least two States a month.

The Deputy Prime Minister will also "oversee" the implementation of projects by other Ministries, apart from his own Home Affairs portfolio.

The sources said that at a recent briefing for senior civil servants, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir told the parti-

cipants (including secretaries-general of all the Ministries) what he expected from the civil service.

"The Prime Minister was very blunt and stated exactly what he wants. He told them there was to be no more going off to play

golf during working hours and that productivity must improve.

"He also told them that the civil service must be more efficient and must implement the Government's policies efficiently, thoroughly and within the target date," the sources said.

They also said that at the July 22 Cabinet meeting, chaired by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir for the first time since he became Prime Minister, Cabinet members were told that the new administration wants "less talk and more work."

"The Ministers were told that the people must see the changes and the benefits for themselves after a certain time, and that the Government must deliver the goods.

"The Prime Minister stressed that Cabinet Ministers should also get more involved in the implementation and progress of projects and not leave them entirely to the civil servants," they said.

The sources said the philosophy of the new administration is: "Get moving and deliver the goods, and don't just talk about it."