

# Big yes to extra powers

**KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — The Dewan Rakyat tonight passed the Constitutional Amendment Bill by an overwhelming 118 votes to 12. Prime Minister Datuk Hussein Onn was present in the House to vote for the amendment.**

This was only the second time he was present during the current meeting following his recent coronary bypass operation.

When the division was called at 9.05 p.m., only 12 MPs, eight from the DAP, and the four from Pas, stood to oppose.

The voting was 15 votes more than the required two-third majority.

Earlier, in winding up the debate on the Bill, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said the proposed amendments were not aimed at destroying democracy in the country or to weaken the opposition.

He said the amendments were proposed to safeguard the nation from subversive elements who were threatening the security of the country.

He said the situation in the country was not 100 per cent safe as there were armed terrorists who were killing and injuring members of the security forces.

said by the opposition because they would stick to the image that "because they are the opposition they must oppose everything."

Referring to the points raised by Datuk Haji Abu Bakar Umar (Pas-Kota Setar), Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir said the Pas member did not support the good things provided for under the amendments such as the clause on Malay reserve lands.

He challenged Datuk Haji Abu Bakar to use the Constitutional amendments as a genuine issue in the next election.

"I know he will fall back on deviationist religious issues such as wrong Quranic interpretations".

Giving the background to the justifications for the amendments, he said if the proposed emer-

He said there were no ulterior motives in the proposals for the amendments.

"We can see this from the past record of the Government," he said.

Dismissing the allegations that the proposals were meant to destroy the opposition, he said "we do not need to use the emergency powers do that."

The Deputy Prime Minister said Datuk Haji Abu Bakar's opposition to the amendment prohibiting the Dewan Rakyat Speaker and the President of the Senate from doing business reflected the old habit of Pas in Kelantan".

## Business

When they were in power there, their State Exco members were

Constitution has taken two years to be formulated, after the Cheng Poh case, he said.

If the Government was so eager to change the Constitution to suit its needs, the amendment would have been made sooner.

"This shows that we don't amend according to our whims and fancies but only after deep and long thought," he said.

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir said the Government would have to carry out the responsibility that had been given to it whether it liked it or not in order to maintain peace and order.

This included carrying out capital punishment such as hanging of those who committed heinous crimes such as dadah trafficking which destroyed 300,000 youths

stability and the able administration," he said.

These views were that of genuine investors and not like the views of members of Amnesty International who were out to only make bad comments.

"Why don't they comment on cases of oppression in their own countries," he asked.

On the role of the Bar Council, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir said the Government did not have to follow the body's advice.

The Deputy Prime Minister questioned the Bar Council on its protest "at the gates of Parliament."

As practitioners of law, they should know that no person should disturb the House when it is in session, he said.

# Terrorists

The Deputy Prime Minister said it was not true that there was no longer any democracy in the country under the present Government as alleged by the opposition.

"The opposition was given a lot of opportunity to debate the Bill in the House and had spent much time to deviate from the actual issue," he said.

"If this is not democracy, then I don't know what democracy is."

"If I know the DAP, democracy in the party itself is not maintained. Anyone who opposed the leader is sacked.

He said he knew the history of the DAP's democracy and if it had its own way and won an election, the only party left in Parliament would be the DAP.

He added there was no need to accept the things

agency powers had been introduced earlier, the May 13, 1969 incident could have been avoided.

Recalling the May 13 incident, he said it all started with the killing of an Alliance Party worker and a demonstration by extremist leftist groups which jeered at the police.

"If we had used emergency powers when there were signs of trouble we would have avoided the May 13 tragedy and prevented the loss of hundreds of lives, he said.

He said the amendments were more of a preventive measure than a curative measure.

He added it was better to prevent a crime than to penalise a criminal for having committed a crime.

very fond of business and some sought the seats for this end, he said.

"The Government feels it is better for the person who has been elected to the Speaker's chair to concentrate fully on his job," he said.

"If Pas wins the next time and it has a two-thirds majority, it can always change the Constitution and go back to business," he added to loud applause from backbenchers.

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir said the Constitution of any nation needed to be amended because the situation of the country did not remain static.

"Perhaps we feel that we have made amendments too often," he said, "but that is because the situation in the country changes very fast and very often."

The proposed amendment to Article 150 of the

who were the hope of the nation.

The laws of the country could not be changed just because a lawyer sent a telegram to him or an organisation such as Amnesty International protested against it.

## Comments

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir criticised the organisation saying that it did not make any appeals or judgements on incidents in other nations, such as Afghanistan where injustice and killing of the innocent were being carried out.

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir said Malaysia was not a laughing stock of the world but was highly respected and admired.

"During my investment trips overseas, I was told of how much Malaysia was admired...its political

The Government, he said, did not have to follow the advice of a pressure group such as the Bar Council.

"If they think that we must follow a pressure group, then they must follow the views of say 40,000 Umno members if they demonstrated at the Bar Council's office."

On opposition leader Lim Kit Siang's allegation that the separation of powers had been eroded and the Executive had taken over the power of the judiciary, he said this had not occurred in the country.

"But the officers of the courts (lawyers) have tried to be legislators...they don't respect the sovereignty of Parliament."

"Their duty is to enforce the law, and it is the duty of MPs, who are elected by the people, to make the laws."