

PM-DOCTORS

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KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT. 8 (BERNAMA) -- PART OF THE MEDICAL SERVICE MAY GO PRIVATE IN A BID TO OVERCOME THE BRAIN DRAIN OF GOVERNMENT DOCTORS TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD INDICATED TODAY.

"COULD THE GOVERNMENT PRIVATISE PART OF THE MEDICAL SERVICE SO THAT PRIVATE SPECIALISTS COULD RENDER THEIR SERVICE TO PATIENTS IN HOSPITALS AND AT THE SAME TIME IMPART THEIR EXPERIENCE AND SKILL TO YOUNGER COLLEAGUES?"

"SHOULD WE OFFER GOVERNMENT SPECIALISTS LIMITED RIGHTS TO PRIVATE PRACTISE?" ASKED THE PRIME MINISTER WHEN OPENING THE 17TH MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE CONGRESS OF MEDICINE AT THE HILTON HOTEL HERE.

HE SAID SUCH IDEAS HAD BEEN TOSSED ABOUT TIME AND TIME AGAIN AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD STUDY THE IMPLICATIONS AND SEE WHETHER A SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT COULD BE WORKED OUT.

EXPRESSING HIS CONCERN OVER THE SHORTAGE OF GOVERNMENT DOCTORS HE SAID THE SITUATION WAS NOW WHERE THE INSTITUTIONS HAVE SOME OF THE FINEST FACILITIES AND SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY, WHILE A LARGE NUMBER OF SENIOR AND EXPERIENCED PEOPLE WERE ENGAGED IN PRIVATE PRACTICE.

-- MORE 1909/LK

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"COULD WE HAVE A HAPPY MARRIAGE OF THE TWO SITUATIONS?" HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID INCREASED AFFLUENCE HAD RESULTED IN HEIGHTENED PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS FOR HIGHLY SKILLED MEDICAL CARE.

IT HAD ALSO CREATED A DEMAND FOR PRIVATE SPECIALIST MEDICAL CARE RESULTING IN A BRAIN DRAIN FROM PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

HE PROPOSED THAT THE MALAYSIA INCORPORATED CONCEPT BE APPLIED EQUALLY WELL TO POST-GRADUATE TRAINING FOR DOCTORS.

"IT IS TIME THAT ALL MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS, WHETHER IN UNIVERSITIES, GOVERNMENT HOSPITALS, OR THE PRIVATE SECTOR, JOIN FORCES IN A COMMON EFFORT TO LAY A FIRM FOUNDATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF POST-GRADUATE MEDICAL TRAINING IN MALAYSIA." DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR NOTED THAT THE COUNTRY NEEDED MORE HIGHLY QUALIFIED DOCTORS TO STAFF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING AND TO MAN THE MAJOR HOSPITALS.

COMPETENT SPECIALISTS WERE NEEDED TO HANDLE THE SITUATION IN THE SMALLER DISTRICT HOSPITALS WHICH ARE OFTEN NOT WELL-EQUIPPED, AND WHICH OFTEN DO NOT HAVE A FULL COMPLEMENT OF SPECIALISTS.

-- MORE 1913/LK

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"THERE IS, THEREFORE, A PLACE FOR THE HANDY-MAN TYPE OF SPECIALIST PERSONNEL. THERE IS A NEED TO DESIGN A PROGRAMME OF POST-GRADUATE TRAINING GEARED TO THE NEEDS OF THE COUNTRY," HE ADDED.

HE STRESSED THAT MALAYSIA HAD THE NECESSARY EXPERTISE TO TRAIN MANY OF ITS OWN SPECIALISTS AND WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE ROYAL COLLEGES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND AUSTRALASIA WOULD ASSIST.

THE COUNTRY NOW HAS A SIXEABLE NUMBER OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED DOCTORS - MOST OF THEM HOLD MEMBERSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS OF THE ROYAL COLLEGES.

"WE WILL IN THE FORESEABLE FUTURE, STILL LOOK TO THE ROYAL COLLEGES TO ASSIST US IN THE TRAINING OF OUR SPECIALISTS."

BUT HE SAID ALTHOUGH THE MEDICAL SERVICES HAD LONG BENEFITED FROM THE TRADITIONAL TIES WITH THE WEST, IT COULD ALSO LEARN FROM COUNTRIES IN THE EAST.

HE HOPED THE MALAYSIAN ACADEMY OF MEDICINE WOULD TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO FOSTER A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS COUNTERPARTS IN SOUTHEAST AND EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES SO THAT MALAYSIA COULD ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF MEDICINE BY MARRYING THE BEST FROM THE EAST AND THE WEST.

-- MORE 1917/LK

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ACCORDING TO HIM, THE LOOK EAST POLICY HAD ATTRACTED INTEREST FROM MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS, MEDICAL TECHNOLOGISTS AND PHARMACEUTICAL FIRMS OF JAPAN.

THE PRIME MINISTER THEN DONNED A ROBE SIGNIFYING HIS ACCEPTANCE OF AN HONORARY MEMBERSHIP OF THE ACADEMY. HIS CITATION WAS READ BY DR. MAHMOOD MERICAN.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT ALTHOUGH HE HAD NOT PRACTISED MEDICINE FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, MEDICINE WAS ALWAYS CLOSE TO HIS HEART AND HE FELT GREATLY HONOURED TO BE REMEMBERED AS A MEMBER OF THE PROFESSION.

+I MAY NOT CONTRIBUTE DIRECTLY TO THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE AS SUCH, BUT I HOPE I COULD IN SOME WAY CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THE ACADEMY'S OBJECTIVE OF PROMOTING AND MAINTAINING THE HIGHEST STANDARD OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN THIS COUNTRY.+

THE CEREMONY ENDED WITH THE TUN DR. ISMAIL ORATION BY TAN SRI DR. TAN CHEE KOON WITH A CITATION READ DR. G. A. SREENIVASAN.

ABOUT 400 MEDICAL EXPERTS AND SPECIALISTS FROM MALAYSIA, AUSTRALIA, SINGAPORE, CANADA, HONG KONG, THE UNITED STATES, SWEDEN SAUDI ARABIA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM ARE ATTENDING THE THREE-DAY CONGRESS.

ALSO PRESENT WERE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY OF THE HEALTH MINISTRY ENCIK YEOH POH SAN, THE MASTER, ACADEMY OF MEDICINE MALAYSIA DR NG CHUAN WAI AND HIS SINGAPOREAN COUNTERPART DR. CHOW KHUEN WAI. -- BERNAMA 1955/PA