

Dr M to MCA members: Don't open old wounds

EST 25 MAR 1985

By KONG CHUN MENG

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today advised MCA members "not to open up old wounds" that people had taken so much trouble to heal.

"I advise everyone not to do anything to open up old wounds which so many people had taken so much trouble to heal. Let these wounds heal slowly.

"The MCA should try to solve its problems amicably so that in the end we will have the whole MCA and not half of it," he said.

The Prime Minister said he had received tele-

grams concerning some "problems" in the MCA which had arisen recently.

Without disclosing what they were, he said he had taken note of them but would not be solving them "on his own."

Speaking at the MCA's 36th anniversary dinner, Dr Mahathir said the Government's objective was for the communities to have their own political parties which could work among themselves and also with other non-communal parties.

Although he did not identify the "problems" that had surfaced in the MCA, he was apparently

referring to protests from some MCA members that they had to "verify" their membership by March 19 or face the sack.

Dr Mahathir said the MCA factions should not expect to achieve "absolute victory" by "crushing the other side."

He reminded the MCA that there were "ways and means" of solving its problems and these are provided by the party constitution.

"Ultimately, your constitution will provide you with a solution.

"But before this point is reached, I hope everyone will stick to the spirit of the agreement (signed before him on Jan. 30 by leaders of both factions) which was the result of much hard work."

He said that both sides

had sincerity but could be facing pressure from their followers to obtain complete victory.

"I wish to emphasise to my MCA colleagues in particular and the public in general that the MCA is very important not only to the Barisan Nasional but also to the interest of the nation.

"It represents the Chinese in the Government. But it is quite different to have a political party but not in the Government.

"It is important that the Chinese have a voice in the Government," he added.

Earlier, MCA acting president Datuk Dr Neo Yee Pan said the Chinese community must "continue to contribute constructively in the cause of nation-building because its destiny is intertwined with that of Malaysia."

Datuk Dr Neo said that MCA members "must quickly close the bitter chapter of the party crisis last year."

"Our energy must not be dissipated through intra-party and inter-party politicking. In this respect, the MCA is working to lessen politicking between component parties of the Barisan Nasional."