

# Tussle that led to MCA 7 SEP, 1985 CRISIS

THE MCA crisis was caused by a power struggle between two parties and not by the "phantom members" issue.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the "phantom members" issue was just an excuse.

He said that when former party president Datuk Lee San Choon stepped down and appointed Datuk Dr Neo Yee Pan as acting president, "I had my doubts that Dr Neo would be able to get the support of the majority of MCA members."

The Prime Minister said: "The MCA crisis started because of a tussle for the post of acting party president. It is normal practice that when a president resigns, an acting president is appointed.

"Although I was not very confident that Dr Neo could command majority support in the party, Datuk Lee repeatedly asked to be released from his post as Minister.

"I was forced to accept Dr Neo as acting party president and an MCA Minister in the Cabinet.

"The problem now is the MCA does not have an effective leadership. MCA members are divided and whichever leader is chosen, the other faction will continue to oppose him.

"With this, the MCA will become weaker. Therefore, we have to take the middle road so that both factions support someone who is from neither side.

"A weak MCA would threaten the Barisan Nasional's strength because the MCA is the second largest party in the coalition.

"The MCA crisis would also affect various aspects of the nation, such as its economy. And the Barisan would also be affected in the elections because of this crisis."