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KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 29 (BERNAMA) -- THE GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE A LOOK AT THE ENTRENCHED CLAUSE IN THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION PERTAINING TO REDUCTION OF PENSIONS FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE CONSTITUTION CONTAINED PROVISIONS SPECIFYING THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT REDUCE THE PENSION.

+THIS IS BECAUSE WE ARE TRAPPED IN A SYSTEM THAT HAD BEEN DETERMINED BY THE BRITISH COLONIALISTS FOR THEIR OWN INTERESTS SO THAT THEIR OFFICERS WOULD NOT LOSE THEIR PENSIONS,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS DURING A RECESS OF THE UMNO SPECIAL ASSEMBLY HERE.

HE SAID THE BRITISH HAD ADVISED THAT WHEN DRAWING UP THE CONSTITUTION FOR THE COUNTRY, THIS PROVISION BE INCLUDED WHILE IN THEIR OWN CONSTITUTION THEY HAD PROVISIONS WHICH PROVIDED FOR PENSIONS TO BE REDUCED OR REVOKED. -- MORE
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TO ILLUSTRATE THE UNSUITABILITY OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS, HE CITED THE ONE FIXING THE ELIGIBLE AGE FOR RETIREMENT AT 55.

HE SAID THIS WAS ALL RIGHT IN THE PAST WHEN PEOPLE WHO REACHED THAT AGE WERE CONSIDERED ALREADY OLD AND IT WAS FITTING THEY RETIRED AND GET THE PENSION.

BUT WITH TODAY'S MODERN MEDICAL AND OTHER TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT, THOSE WHO REACHED 55 WERE STILL HEALTHY AND CAPABLE OF CONTINUING TO WORK BUT UNFORTUNATELY HAD TO RETIRE, HE SAID.

ON THE FRINGE BENEFITS ENJOYED BY MINISTERS, HE SAID THESE WERE NORMAL AND SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS WERE ALSO ENJOYING BENEFITS COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR POSTS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE MATTER SHOULD NOT BE QUESTIONED BECAUSE WHEN COMPARED WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES, THE SALARIES AND FRINGE BENEFITS OF MINISTERS HERE WERE LESS.

FURTHERMORE, HE SAID, HIS OWN SALARY AND FRINGE BENEFITS WERE LOWER THAN THOSE OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS APPOINTED TO SEVERAL CORPORATIONS LIKE PETRONAS AND MALAYAN BANKING. -- MORE
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IN RANKING, HE WAS MORE SENIOR THAN THE DIRECTORS BUT HIS SALARY AND ALLOWANCES DID NOT COME TO ONE-THIRD OF THEIRS.

+THERE ARE THOSE AMONG THEM WHO GET NEARLY \$1 MILLION A YEAR,+ HE ADDED.

HE ALSO SAID THAT UNDER THE PRESENT SCHEME OF SERVICE IN THE GOVERNMENT, THE JUNIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS WERE FORTUNATE BECAUSE THE SCHEME PROVIDED FOR BETTER SALARIES AND FACILITIES FOR STAFF AT THEIR LEVEL THAN THOSE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

HOWEVER, FOR THE SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS, THE REVERSE WAS THE CASE AND BECAUSE OF THIS THE GOVERNMENT WAS LOSING ITS OFFICERS TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR WHICH MADE THEM MORE LUCRATIVE OFFERS. -- BERNAMA
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