

BAKUN PROJECT WILL BENEFIT THE POOR: PM

32 DEC 1985

P
KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — The Bakun hydro-electricity project in Sarawak will help the poor because it will provide a cheap source of power, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The rich did not mind the high cost of electricity as they could afford it but not so the poor, the Prime Minister said.

The implementation of the proposed \$8 billion project, the largest of its kind in Asia, had been agreed to in principle by the Federal Government.

This decision was announced by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Musa Hitam yesterday when opening the \$33.5 million Wisma SESCO — the headquarters of the Sarawak Electricity Supply Corporation — in Petra Jaya, Kuching.

"If you want cheap electricity for the people then you must develop a cheap source of power," he told reporters when entertaining 30 children to a tea party at Sri Perdana — the official residence of the Prime Minister, here.

The children from various parts of the country had been adopted by Umno Youth under the programme known as "Rancangan Tunas Harapan" organised by the Yayasan Gerakbakti Pemuda.

The Prime Minister also

said he would definitely be visiting Sabah. "It's also part of Malaysia. It's just that I don't have the time now."

Earlier at the function, Dr Mahathir commended Umno Youth for "doing something" to help the poor through its adoption programme.

"This is a positive way of helping the poor instead of merely shouting slogans for political reasons," he said.

He also noted that some of the children would be staying with families of other races. This, he said,

would enable them to understand the cultures, customs and values of others.

Such understanding was important in a multi-racial society where it was regarded as disrespectful to make fun of the norms and values of others such as the importance attached to the head and feet among the Malays and the great respect accorded to ancestors among the Chinese.

"This understanding is easier to inculcate among the young than the old and will foster goodwill and unity among the people," he said.

During the function, Dr Mahathir received donations in cash amounting to \$52,000 from various private companies for the Yayasan Gerakbakti Pemuda.

Several other companies donated textbooks, batak and shoes to be distributed to the needy by the foundation.

Also present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah and Agriculture Minister Anwar Ibrahim who is Umno Youth head and chairman of the foundation. — Bernama.