

Don't be emotional, says Mahathir

By JOE CHAN

MALAYSIANS were yesterday urged by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad not to resort to emotions in solving sensitive issues, reminding them that the real threat facing Malaysia is the current economic recession.

Opening the MCA's 33rd general assembly in Kuala Lumpur, he said among the issues which are emotional in nature are those concerning race.

In reference to the controversy which began with the Selangor MCA claiming about

three weeks ago that Malays, Chinese and Indians are immigrants, the Prime Minister said the issue had been settled and "we should not question anyone's status anymore".

He said that Malaysians of Chinese and Indian descent are not foreign immigrants. They possess the same rights as other citizens, he added.

"Historically, the Malays and the other Bumiputeras are the indigenous people of this country. This was agreed upon

consensusly and the matter should not be raised again," he said.

Malaysia is multi-racial and there are many sensitive issues which need to be solved diplomatically.

Within the ruling Barisan Nasional as well as within the Government, there are ways and appropriate channels to discuss sensitive problems and numerous problems have been solved through such channels and ways.

BT 17 NOV 1986

He warned Malaysians that if such problems are to be solved by show of feelings or emotions, they will be worsened and prolonged and those who will suffer will be the people themselves.

Speaking to reporters later, Dr Mahathir said he is happy with the leadership of the MCA and its belief in inter-racial cooperation. He also commended the MCA's moderate nature.

"So long as they hold on to this principle, they have a very good future," he added. But if there

were to be any agitation within the party itself, "it's normal."

Asked if the Government plans to do anything to prevent one race from calling another pendatang or immigrant, Dr Mahathir said it is impossible to do so.

But speaking on the Umno-MCA controversy, he said, "I think people are quite happy with the settlement and have decided not to talk about it anymore." However, he conceded that there is no such thing as 100 per cent satisfaction.