

Table talk: Yes Confrontation: No

DR M: WE MUST GIVE AND TAKE

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The Barisan Nasional prefers to solve its own and national problems at the table rather than through confrontation, the Prime Minister said today.

Opening the MCA's 34th general assembly at the party headquarters here, **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said the success of the Barisan in running the country since Merdeka had been due to the fact that it comprised moderate groups.

Other parties, he said, would not have succeeded in running this multi-racial country because they preferred to quarrel rather than seek consensus.

"These groups in the country like to make extreme claims which cannot possibly be agreed to by the others.

Practise moderation

"Our success has not been without sacrifices. To a greater or lesser extent, we have all made sacrifices.

"We do not want to win the battle but lose the war. We realise that half a loaf is better than none.

"However, the leadership in the country is prepared to lead it in the direction of moderation so that at least 'half a loaf' can be gotten for some and the other half sacrificed for the others."

Dr Mahathir urged Barisan component parties to practise moderation and adopt a rational attitude when fighting for the advancement of the communities they represent lest they be charged with being extreme.

It was not wrong for these parties to fight for the socio-economic and political advancement of their communities.

"As we all know, the Barisan acts based on, among others, the principles of co-opera-

tion, consensus and mutual help," he said.

"However, in my view, the principles of tolerance, give-and-take, and co-operation have recently been undermined.

"There are quarters in the Barisan component parties who often raise certain matters loudly without considering the results of their rash actions.

"I am of the opinion that if there is any dissatisfaction on any matter, the component parties should use the existing channels between the parties to voice such matters.

"We in the Barisan can then discuss among ourselves in a disciplined, orderly and rational manner how to deal with these issues.

"Otherwise, the public posture factor will

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only complicate efforts towards resolving problems."

The Prime Minister said that legal action would be taken against elected representatives who accepted bribes to switch parties.

"If it is suspected that elected representatives changed their loyalties because they were induced to do so by bribes and similar means, investigations will be carried out on them.

"If this is found to be true, legal action will be instituted against them."

The Prime Minister said a political symptom in the country that needed to be checked was the switching of loyalties of elected representatives from one party to another.

"If this switch is because of differences of opinions or ideology, it is all right although it is rather unethical.

"Elected representatives are chosen by the people because, among other reasons, they had been nominated by their parties.

"If they do not agree any more with their parties, they should vacate their seats.

"What is becoming increasingly clear is that these switches have taken place because the elected representatives had done so because they had been bribed or had been promised money.

GOVT AGAINST SPREAD OF MONEY POLITICS

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"These actions are no different from the corrupt receiving of bribes for certain purposes.

"However, corruption in whatever form should not be viewed lightly by society or the Government and money politics should not be allowed to spread in this country.

"If the Government can be bought, not only will democracy no longer be meaningful but the country may be controlled by the rich, and worse still, foreign powers.

"Because of this, the Government takes a serious view of any attempt to overthrow the Government through the use of money."