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Dr M: Group trying to gain power

BALING, Mon. — A group of intellectuals is trying to make use of former leaders and the Press to gain power in Malaysia, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said this group of about 200 to 300 people claimed to represent the rakyat. "But where is the evidence to support its claim?" he asked.

He said the group was "frustrated" because it could not rule the country.

This group could give its views and present memoranda to the Government but it should never portray itself as representing the majority, Dr Mahathir told about 5,000 people at the opening of a mini-estate in Kupang.

Dr Mahathir said only elected representatives had the right to formulate policy and not intellectuals who, he said, represented only a minority in the population.

"These so-called intellectuals wanted to

change the Constitution for their benefit. If that were to happen, the people would lose their democratic rights."

He said the group wanted the Government to listen to its views and to formulate policies accordingly because it claimed to represent the majority.

"The Government serves the people and not any particular group. But if the people are divided and the Government is weak, this group will try to grab power."

He said this group would set aside the rights of the people if it came to power. "If they succeed, this will be the end of democracy," he added.

"If the intellectuals want to represent the people, they should stand for election. But they dare not do so for fear of losing. Not one of them stood for election last year or even supported any political party."

He said the group "will try to seize any

opportunity to grab power, especially if the Government and Umno is weak and the people divided."

Dr Mahathir urged the people not to be influenced by these intellectuals but to support the democratic system in the country.

"Since Merdeka, the Government has brought much development to the people, especially the villagers who were neglected during the colonial era."

He said the mini-estates project was one of the several hundred programmes carried out by the Government to better the lot of the people.

The New Economic Policy, he said, had also been criticised by this group, who claimed the programmes benefited only a handful of people.

Later, Dr Mahathir visited the Taman Ria housing estate in Sungai Petani, the largest privatised scheme in Kedah.