

PM: WE'LL LOOK INTO POSTINGS

1022154 OCT 1987

'Difficult to make language a requirement'

By M. VEERA PANDIYAN and
NORAZIAN ABDUL RAHMAN

KUALA TERENGGANU, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Government is looking into protests against the appointment of non-Chinese educated teachers to administrative posts in Chinese primary schools.

The Prime Minister, however, said the Government would find it difficult to make proficiency in Mandarin as a requirement for promotions in Chinese schools.

"What is happening now is that we are promoting Chinese teachers who can understand some Mandarin and are fluent in Hokkien or Cantonese," he said when asked to comment on protests by several Chinese groups against the Education Ministry's move.

Dr Mahathir said that as far as the Government was concerned, it was the right of those teachers to be promoted to the posts of headmaster and senior assistant in Chinese national-type schools.

"As far as I know, the Government has not put any non-Chinese teacher in Chinese national-type schools," he added.

Yesterday, MCA president Datuk Dr Ling Liong Sik said the appointment of



● FLASHBACK... our report yesterday

non-Chinese educated teachers as headmasters and senior assistants in Chinese national-type schools went against the "solemn promise" contained in the Barisan Nasional general election manifesto.

He said the MCA could not accept the posting of such teachers who were not suitably qualified in the language to these administrative posts.

He had also said that the postings would change the character of the schools.

In Malacca, a committee was set up to "protect the character of national-type Chinese schools."

The committee — comprising members of the MCA, Gerakan and the DAP and four Chinese organisations — was formed dur-

ing a protest rally at the Dewar Hang Tuah which was attended by about 1,500 people.

The rally was called by the Malacca Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the Malacca Chinese Teachers Association, The Malacca Amalgamated Chinese School Old Pupils' Association and the Malacca Chinese Education Progressive Association.

Four resolutions were passed, calling on:

- POLITICAL organisations to work together to rescind the appointment of teachers who were not well-versed in Mandarin to administrative posts in Chinese schools;

- PARENTS to be prepared to boycott the affected schools if necessary;

- THE Malacca Education Director to resolve the issue within 14 days or "face the consequences;" and

- HEADMASTERS to ignore the newly-promoted teachers and not assign any work to them.

During the rally, United Chinese School Teachers Association deputy chairman Loot Ting Yee shaved bald in protest against the promotion exercise.

Mr Loot, 57, who was the last of three speakers at the rally, said he was shaving his head to show his opposition to the "erosion of the character of Chinese schools."