

# PM: IT CAN BE RESOLVED

STAR 8 OCT 1987

By JUNE H.L. WONG, CHAN SIEW WAH  
and ANTHONY CHEW

**KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. —** ~~Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad~~ has left it to Education Minister Anwar Ibrahim and MCA president and Transport Minister Datuk Dr Ling Liong Sik to resolve the issue of non-Chinese educated teachers being promoted to administrative posts in Chinese schools.

The Prime Minister told reporters after a lunch attended by Cabinet members at a hotel here that "Anwar and Dr Ling can resolve it." He said the Cabinet did not discuss the matter at its weekly meeting this morning.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman, confirmed that he met Dr Ling yesterday and that a "Barisan mechanism" had been set up to handle the issue as announced by Dr Ling yesterday.

Asked what this "mechanism" was, Dr Mahathir said: "The mechanism is to talk within the Barisan and not to the Press." He would not say if the "mechanism" involved a special committee within the Barisan.

Dr Ling, who was also at the lunch, declined to comment on the issue. "Ask the Prime Minister," he replied when pressed by reporters.

Dr Ling said yesterday that the "mechanism" should be given time to "expeditiously" find a solution.

The MCA, together with other Chinese-based political parties and education and community groups, has protested against the appointment of several non-Chinese educated teachers as headmasters and senior assistants in Chinese primary schools in Malacca, Penang and the Federal Territory.

Dr Ling had said on Saturday that such postings went against the "solemn promise" made in the Barisan general election manifesto last year guaranteeing the continued existence of vernacular schools in their present forms.

He added that the "character" of the Chinese schools would be changed if headmasters and senior assistants who were not proficient in Mandarin — the administrative language and the medium of instruction in Chinese schools — were appointed in these schools.

The president of the United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaysia (UCSCAM), Mr Lim Fong Seng, said yesterday that the protests stemmed from concern over the teachers' lack of recognised qualifications in Mandarin.

● TURN TO PAGE TWO

# Penang

## MCA:

STAR 8 OCT 1987

### Anwar

### misled

### by his

### officers

● FROM PAGE ONE

He added that the controversy was not over race; the Chinese schools were prepared to accept any Malay, Chinese or Indian teacher as headmaster or senior assistant so long as the person was proficient in Mandarin.

In PENANG, the State MCA claimed today that Encik Anwar was "misled" by his officers into believing that the promotions had to be carried out because of a shortage of teachers proficient in Mandarin.

Penang MCA chief Dr Sak Cheng Lum told a Press conference that 70 teachers qualified in Chinese were interviewed during the promotion exercise in Penang but they were unsuccessful.

"We learned that another 27 such teachers had also applied but were not called for interview. Six or seven of them had served for more than 10 years. Due to the creation of this artificial shortage, teachers who are not qualified in the Chinese language are used to fill up these positions," he claimed.

In Perak, 74 Chinese associations — including political parties in the State — resolved last night to organise a nationwide protest if the issue is not "amicably resolved in due course."

This was one of the four resolutions passed at a meeting held at the Koo Kong Chow Association in Teluk Intan. About 300 representatives of the associations attended the meeting, organised by the Lower Perak division of the Council of Perak Chinese School Committees.

The associations included the *Dong Jiao Zong* (Chinese educationists' movement), Kwangtung Association, Lower Perak Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Lower Perak Chinese Teachers Association.

The chairman of the Council of Perak Chinese School Committees, Mr Foo Wan Thot, said that the MCA and Gerakan were represented by Lower Perak division leaders and the DAP by Youth chief Mohamad Fadzlan Yahaya.

Mr Foo, who is also a national vice-president of the *Dong Jiao Zong*, said the resolutions would be submitted to the Education Ministry through the movement's head office in Kuala Lumpur.

One resolution urged the non-Chinese educated teachers appointed to the posts to "give up" their promotions voluntarily while other pledged support for the proposed boycott of classes by three Chinese associations in Selangor, Federal Territory and Malacca.

Meanwhile, according to Perak People's Progressive Party (PPP) vice-chairman Ho Hon Yoong, his party is seeking a meeting on the issue with Barisan secretary-general and Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ghafar Baba.