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MAHATHIR-WORKERS
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KUALA LUMPUR, OCT 28, (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY BLUE COLLAR WORKERS SHOULD BE GIVEN AT LEAST THE SAME TREATMENT AS WHITE COLLAR WORKERS FROM THE ASPECT OF SALARIES, PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND OTHER PRIVILEGES.

HE SAID THEY SHOULD ALSO BE APPRECIATED FOR THEIR ROLE IN PRODUCING GOODS, BUILDING OR INVENTING ITEMS AND FOR REPAIRING EQUIPMENT EFFICIENTLY AND THIS COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED AS LESS IMPORTANT.

THEY SHOULD AT LEAST BE GIVEN THE SAME TREATMENT AS WHITE COLLAR WORKERS IF THEY (BLUE COLLAR WORKERS) PRODUCED QUALITY PRODUCTS, THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO IS UMNO PRESIDENT, TOLD THE PARTY'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY HERE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SAID IF THE PEOPLE YEARNED FOR A HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING AND AT THE SAME TIME WISHED TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT, WAGE INCREASES SHOULD NOT BE TOO EXHIBITANT TO THE EXTENT OF FRIGHTENING AWAY INVESTORS.

WORKERS SHOULD NOT EASILY RESORT TO THREATS OR INDUSTRIAL ACTION WITHOUT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE LONG TERM EFFECT ON THE NATION AND ON THE UNEMPLOYED, HE SAID -- MORE
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HE SAID THE PEOPLE AND THE COUNTRY SHOULD PROVE TO INVESTORS THAT THEIR INVESTMENT IN MALAYSIA WOULD REAP PROFITS AND THERE WOULD BE AN INCREASE IN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND INVESTMENT.

+AT THAT TIME WE BELIEVE WAGES WILL INCREASE BY ITSELF. THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED IN SOUTH KOREA, TAINAN, HONG KONG AND SINGAPORE AND THERE IS NO REASON WHY THE SAME THING SHOULD NOT HAPPEN IN THIS COUNTRY,+ HE SAID.

WORKERS SHOULD REALISE THAT THOUGH THEIR INCOME WAS LOW, THE COST OF LIVING IN THIS COUNTRY WAS ALSO LOW. COMPARING THE PRICES OF HOUSES IN THIS COUNTRY AND IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, HE SAID THE PRICE OF A UNIT IN THIS COUNTRY COULD BE AROUND \$25,000 BUT 10 TIMES THE AMOUNT IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO DISCLOSED THE TACTICS OF TRADE UNIONS IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WHICH TRIED TO INCITE WORKERS IN THIS COUNTRY TO DEMAND HIGHER WAGES SO THAT PRODUCTION COSTS WOULD INCREASE AND THE ITEMS PRODUCED COULD NOT COMPETE IN THE WORLD MARKET.

THEY ALSO RAISED THE QUESTION OF HUMAN AND WORKERS' RIGHTS WITH A VIEW TO ELIMINATING GENERALISED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES (GSP) FOR THIS COUNTRY, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID. -- MORE
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→THEY DO THIS BECAUSE THEY PREFER TO SEE US UNEMPLOYED RATHER THAN COMPETE WITH THEM. HUMAN AND WORKERS' RIGHTS ARE MERE EXCUSES. WORKERS' RIGHTS WILL BE MEANINGLESS IF WE ARE UNEMPLOYED, → DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID.

HE SAID IT WAS INCREDIBLE THAT WORKERS IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES SYMPATHISED WITH AND LOVED MALAYSIAN WORKERS MORE THAN THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT ITSELF AND ASKED: →WHETHER THE CALL BY THE AFL-CIO THAT OUR GSP BE WITHDRAWN WAS A SIGN OF THEIR LOVE FOR OUR WORKERS?→

→TOUCHING ON THE QUESTION OF EDUCATION, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IN A RAPIDLY DEVELOPING COUNTRY MUCH VALUE SHOULD NOT BE ATTACHED TO LEARNING JUST FOR THE SAKE OF LEARNING UNLIKE LEARNING WITH THE AIM OF USING THE KNOWLEDGE ACQUIRED TO BRING PROGRESS TO SOCIETY AND THE NATION.

AS SUCH THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT WANT PROFESSIONALS TO BE INVOLVED IN LIFE-LONG PURSUIT OF DEGREES WITHOUT MAKING USE OF THEIR KNOWLEDGE IN SOCIETY AND IN THEIR DAILY LIVES.

→IN SHORT, EDUCATION IS PROVIDED WITH THE AIM OF PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO PRACTICAL USE SO THAT THE COUNTRY'S INDUSTRIALISATION PROCESS CAN BE STEPPED UP.→

→IN THIS CONNECTION, DEGREES SHOULD NOT BE ACCORDED VALUE AUTOMATICALLY. THOSE WITHOUT DEGREES BUT ARE CLEARLY EFFICIENT AND EXPERIENCED WILL GET THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTION AND SALARY INCREASES JUST LIKE THE GRADUATES, → THE PRIME MINISTER SAID. --
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