

-Decision soon on election law change

GOPENG. Sun. — The Government will decide soon whether to amend the Elections Act to prevent elected representatives from resigning and re-contesting the same seat to test their popularity, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said it was necessary to study the issue which involved certain provisions of the constitution.

He told a Press conference after opening the Gopeng Umno division's general meeting this afternoon that the amendments were not aimed at preventing *bona fide* by-elections such as those caused by the death of State Assemblymen or MPs or their election being declared invalid.

The amendments, he said, would only apply to those who quit and were re-nominated for the same

seat.

In such a case, the Government is proposing that the representative not be allowed to stand again for the same seat.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir advised Umno members to avoid conflicts in the party by not contesting against each other in divisional elections.

They should instead concentrate on strengthening the party and ensuring unity among members.

He said a change of leaders in the party would not alter the party's structure.

He called on members to understand the lesson from the Barisan Nasional's defeat in the recent Teluk Pasu State by-election.

"Initial findings indicate that if all Umno members had voted for the BN candidate, we would have won the by-election," he said.

The Prime Minister pointed out that struggle for supremacy and power had cost the BN the seat with some Umno members discontented at not being selected as the candidate.

Dr Mahathir said it was not important who became Umno leaders as long as the members spoke with one voice and wanted unity.

Citing Umno's bitter experience during its presidential elections two years ago which led to the party's subsequent deregistration, he said it was the tussle for the leadership that almost destroyed the party.

He said it was **useless to** contest divisional posts if it threatened unity among members.

"How can Umno, which is the backbone of the Barisan Nasional, form the Government if members are disunited?"

The Prime Minister said

the Malays could accept policies benefiting all the races as they had faith in Umno as the senior partner in the Government.

He said the Malays would feel threatened if Umno was weakened.

On Semangat 46, he said its leaders were out to confuse the people.

"They claim to be fighting for Malay unity when in fact they are out for personal gain."

The Prime Minister said Semangat 46 leaders were trying to buy support from the people.

He said **such** tactics could never make them sincere leaders.

"Umno is for all and the party philosophy aims to foster co-operation among the various races and unite them under the Barisan Nasional."

Dr Mahathir said na-

tional stability can be ensured when all Barisan Nasional component parties work together under Umno's leadership.

"Umno has an important role in the Barisan Nasional and if the party is not strong, there might be unrest among the other component parties. This will not be good for peace in the country."

Dr Mahathir urged the people to value the peace they enjoy as there are several multi-racial countries which are in constant turmoil.

The people could also expect greater benefits with the current economic recovery, he said.

On the allocation of seats for the next general election, he said Umno might agree to an exchange of some seats with BN components but would not **seek** to expand its allocation.