

# Passed — Bill to bar MPs from resigning

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THE Federal Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 1990, which bars MPs from resigning their seats to effect by-elections, was passed by the Dewan Rakyat with 125 MPs voting for it and 26 against.

The Bill needed at least 118 ayes as a two-third majority was needed to amend the Federal Constitution.

Winding up the debate on the Bill, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Government was reviewing several Emergency Ordinances which were in effect.

"Whether one legislation or all are being reviewed, I will not say yet but a review is certainly underway."

The Attorney-General is studying the matter.

He said the Opposition was running out of issues to highlight and had chosen the amendment to the Federal Constitution as a big issue.

"This is not a new issue as this was first said about a year ago

during the Johor Baru by-election. The Government had made it clear that it does not subscribe to the idea of by-elections being called for without any good reason.

"We do not want money, time and energy wasted. Being the Government, we have a responsibility to ensure that something that is not beneficial to the people is changed."

He said Malaysians were allowed to democratically choose the Government of their choice and added that if the public was unhappy with the laws, they would not have continued to support the ruling Government.

"In the DAP, the secretary-general decides everything. It is not like that in the Barisan Nasional. The DAP should also give chance to Lam Thye and Dennis to express their views."

At this juncture, Mr Hu Se-pang (DAP-Rasah) urged the Prime Minister to refrain from calling the members by their names as the Standing Orders stated that they should be addressed by the constituency they

represented.

"I know that but I know the member from Bukit Bintang (Mr Lee Lam Thye) very well and also the member from Seremban (Dr Chen Man Hin) who had studied with me. I know him by the name Dennis — not Dennis the Menace," he said to the amusement of members.

On judicial independence, he said the removal of former Lord President Tun Salleh Abas had nothing to do with politics but added that since then, it was clear that he had become a supporter of the DAP.

"This is clear from the 100 per cent support he receives from the DAP," he said.

On DAP's allegation that the Election Commission was not independent, Dr Mahathir said this was an Opposition ploy to equip themselves in case they lose the coming general election.

"They will then blame the Election Commission for being bias. If somebody writes a letter mentioning the Commission, it does not mean that the Commission is biased."

He said if the ruling Government could influence the Election Commission, then there would not be so many Opposition members in the House.