

Dr M. Sabah can ask for commission of inquiry

HST 17 MAR 1990

SHAH ALAM, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he has no objections to the setting up of a Federal commission of inquiry to investigate allegations that forged identity cards are being issued in Sabah.

However, the Prime Minister said that this process should be initiated by the State, and not the Federal Government.

He said the Government was willing to carry out investigations if the commission submitted its report to the Home Ministry.

He was replying to questions on the motion which was unanimously passed by the Sabah Assembly yesterday calling for the setting up of the commission.

(Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Joseph Kurup, who

tabled the motion, had stated that the State Government had evidence to show that certain quarters were involved in an ambitious scheme to register 60,000 illegal immigrants in Sabah to enable them to qualify as voters.

He stated that the illegal immigrants were to be issued fake blue identity cards. He also added that the State Government had evidence that a major opposition political party and certain officials in the National Registration Department were involved in the scheme.

Usno, the only major opposition party in Sabah now, has denied involvement in the alleged scheme.)

The Prime Minister was speaking to newsmen after

the official ground breaking ceremony of the Proton engine parts, machining and transmission assembly plant here.

Asked if he thought that the motion implied that the problem of forged identity cards was serious, Dr Mahathir, who is also the Home Minister, said: "I don't consider this problem as serious. Well, not in Peninsular Malaysia.

"But in Sabah, there are cases of people making forged identity cards."

He added that the National Registration Department could conduct investigations to determine the seriousness of the problem.

To a question, the Prime Minister said he had no objections to the commission being set up as the Government understood the

problems faced by Sabah over its immigrant population.

He said Filipino and Indonesian immigrants now accounted for 50 per cent of the State's population.

"We have carried out efforts to send them home but we are faced with some problems. But whatever it is, they must all go."

Meanwhile in Kuala Lumpur, Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob said today that police and the National Registration Department were investigating the matter, including allegations that some NRD officers were involved.

Speaking to reporters after a Pemadam committee meeting here, he said it was routine for the police to investigate such reports.