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# Dr M: An acting PM is not necessary

DAT Seri Dr Mahathir told the House that it was not unusual for him not to appoint an acting prime minister during his absence from the country.

"It will be odd if there are two prime ministers at one time — one in the country and one overseas. It is best that the Deputy Prime Minister just takes over my responsibilities when I am away," he said.

Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang (DAP - Tanjung) had asked Dr Mahathir why he had not appointed an acting prime minister since the 1986 general election.

"When the MP for Kota Tinggi (Datuk Musa Hitam) was the Deputy Prime Minister he was made the

acting prime minister several times. However, since 1986 there had been no acting prime minister whenever Dr Mahathir went abroad. Is this a new government policy?" he asked.

Asked by Haji Abdullah Haji Arshad (PAS - Pengkalan Chepa) whether the Prime Minister trusted his deputy, Dr Mahathir said: "The question of whether I trust my number two or not does not arise. In the Barisan, we trust each other, unlike in PAS."

He also said the Government was aware that there were civil servants who were harassed by opposition, parties and were therefore not able to carry out their jobs well.

On the other hand, he added, the Government had no proof that there were civil servants who had obstructed the implementation of government projects because they supported the opposition.

Dr Mahathir told Mr S.S. Subramaniam (BN - Hulu Selangor) that instead of taking action against those who were harassed by certain parties, the Government was sympathetic to them.

"The Government only regrets that because of administrative principles, permanent officers who have to be loyal to any Government chosen by the people, have been threatened by the opposition," he said.

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