

PM hits out at rival politicians

THE Prime Minister yesterday hit out at Opposition politicians, especially elected representatives, for interfering with Government officers discharging their duties.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Government was aware that these officers had always been under pressure from Opposition politicians and this was why some could not perform their tasks properly.

He was replying to Mr S.S. Subramaniam (BN-Hulu Selangor), who had asked whether loyalty to the Government was an important element of public service.

Mr Subramaniam had also asked whether the Government was aware that there were Government officers who were indirect supporters of Pas and Semangat 46 and who had stood in the way of projects which were to benefit the people.

"These Government officers cannot be blamed because this problem arises from the politicians themselves.

"Far from taking action against such officers, the Government actually sym-

pathise with them. "The Government only regrets that the principle of administration, that is permanent officers must be loyal to the Government chosen by the people, has been violated by the Opposition."

The Prime Minister replied that the Government had, up to now, not had clear evidence to show there were such officers in the public service.

Dr Mahathir said such a violation could have an adverse effect on the national system of administration which had, so far, been well-known for its separation of political beliefs and official duties of officers.

He said if the Opposition succeeded in destroying this system of administration, then the people would no longer have a Government which could meet the aspirations of the people.

"In other words, the democratic system and election of Government by the people will be eliminated."

Opposition Leader, Mr Lim Kit Siang, in posing a supplementary question, alleged that it was politicians from Barisan Nasional component parties

who had interfered with the official duties of Government officers.

He said this was substantiated by the former State Secretary of Perak, who retired recently. He added that the former civil servant had stated that local and State leaders from the ruling parties had interfered with the administrative machinery of the Perak Government.

Mr Lim (DAP-Tanjong) asked what steps had been taken by the Government to defend and protect these officers from interference by Barisan Nasional politicians.

Dr Mahathir replied that all Barisan Nasional Members of Parliament and State Assemblymen had their roles to play.

He said as members of a responsible Government, these elected representatives had to ensure that administrative officers implemented projects to fulfill the aspirations of the people.

"They will be of no use if we elect them to the Government and they cannot do something for the people.

"But Opposition politi-

cians are different from Barisan Nasional MPs and State Assemblymen. They disturb the Government officers to the extent that they find it difficult to carry out their duties and fulfill the directives of the elected Government."

The sole Pas MP, Haji Nik Abdullah Arshad (Pengkalan Chepa), complained that some Government officers had been under tremendous pressure from Barisan Nasional politicians.

"Some officers have been sent on transfers at 24 hours notice while others have been forced to fill in Umno Baru forms."

To this, Dr Mahathir replied that a Government duly elected by the people had the right to transfer officers.

He said Government officers found it difficult to carry out their duties because of Opposition politicians.

He added that those in the Opposition would course not be able to direct Government officers.

Those in the Government could, he said. "We do it . . . but it is through the proper channels."