

PM: Government doesn't want to be held to ransom

1 OCT 1990

By K.H. Lim

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — The Barisan Nasional wants to win two-thirds of the 180 parliamentary seats at this Sunday's general election to form a strong and stable Government which will not fall even if several MPs defect to the Opposition.

Its chairman, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said tonight that a strong and stable Government would be able to earn the respect of everyone in the country.

The Prime Minister said he did not want the Government to be held to ransom by some MPs who demand favours.

He cited the example of Semangat 46 president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah who led a group of 12 disgruntled MPs out of the Government.

"We had 148 seats and even with the 12 MPs leaving us, we still had 136 and we remained strong. With two-thirds majority, we were not afraid of people crossing over to the Opposition."

He said if the Government only had a slim majority, there would be many cases of MPs "leaping" from one side to another.

He said if this happened, Parliament would be a *Parlimen Katak* (Parliament of Frogs) with MPs leaping from one side to another.

Dr Mahathir was speaking at a *ceramah* in Jinjang here. Also present were Barisan Nasional candidates for Batu, Datuk Alex Lee, and for Kepong, Lee Kim Hoe, and Datuk Bandar Tan Sri Elyas Omar.

Dr Mahathir criticised Tengku Razaleigh for his

attacks on the Press and TV3.

"These people talk about a free Press but they burnt newspapers and chased out TV3 crews.

"They have not yet become the Government and they are already doing this. They want the Press to keep on praising them.

"If they come to power, they may close the *New Straits Times*, *Berita Harian* and *Utusan Malaysia*."

Dr Mahathir announced that 2,600 low-cost houses would be built in Kepong constituency and a similar number of medium-cost units.

He also promised that if the Barisan Nasional won Kepong from the DAP, the Government would make more efforts to develop the area.

He said the Barisan Nasional was the party which could deliver the goods. "We don't make promises

like Semangat."

Referring to promises made by Semangat to abolish road tolls and road tax, to introduce a \$100 monthly allowance for those above 55 and a \$60 civil service allowance, he asked how this could be financed without further borrowing.

He said it would not be strange for Tengku Razaleigh to be borrowing more to pay for these benefits as he had been the "expert" in borrowing money when he was Finance Minister.

On the \$100 allowance for those above 55 years of age, he asked: "Why 55? Fifty may be better or in short, no need to work...the Government will give money."

He described Semangat leaders as ingrates. He said even Tengku Razaleigh owed his rise in Umno because it was through the party that he became a Minister and achieved positions of power.

"His friends (in Semangat) are also the same. (Datuk) Harun (Idris) went to jail because of cheating.

"He was pardoned but it did not mean he did not sin. (berdosa). He has sinned and we have pardoned him."

Later, at a *ceramah* in Kampung Batu Muda in Batu, more than 100 people in the area who were former members of opposition parties including Pas and Semangat, handed over application forms to join Umno to Dr Mahathir.

The Prime Minister said the incumbent Barisan Nasional MP for Batu, Datuk Alex Lee, had done a lot for his constituents and, therefore, the voters should return him with a convincing majority.

Datuk Lee is being challenged by Parti Rakyat Malaysia candidate Dr Sved Hussein Ali