

House pays tribute to Tunku

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — The Dewan Rakyat today paid tribute to the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-haj for his contributions to the country. Members of Parliament also extended their condolences to his widow, Tun Sharifah Rodziah Syed Alwi, and family.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tabled a motion recording the Dewan Rakyat's grief over the demise of the Tunku on Dec 6 and extended Parliament's deepest condolence to Tun Sharifah Rodziah and family.

The motion was later passed by the House. Earlier, the MPs also observed a minute's silence in respect for the late Tunku.

Dr Mahathir, when tabling the motion, said the nation had lost a loved and respected leader and statesman.

His sacrifices and struggles in the political field and his administration of the country will remain an inspiration and example to Malaysians.

"Born a prince, he developed a character and personality as a leader of the people. He freed us from the chains of colonialism and gave us dignity as citizens of a sovereign and independent country.

"The late Tun Dr Ismail (Abdul Rahman — former Deputy Prime Minister) had described the late Tunku's character as warm and unassuming and said the Tunku was equally at home in the palace or in the kampung, with the upper strata of society or common folk, with the rich or the poor."

Dr Mahathir said the late Tunku had also laid the foundation for several national institutions from which Malaysians continue

to benefit.

He added that through the efforts of the late Tunku, Malaysians had inherited the constitution, political institutions and administrative structures.

Describing the late Tunku as a lover of peace, Dr Mahathir quoted the Tunku to have said: "I believe in giving the people clothes instead of uniform; houses instead of barracks; food instead of bullets."

Dr Mahathir said the late Tunku had also contributed towards the spread of Islam in the international arena and also contributed to the development of sports in the country.

The Prime Minister advised Government and Opposition MPs, who are keen to debate the motion, not to take the opportunity to voice the political interests of any party.

"As a mark of respect to the Tunku, who led the

Government for 13 years, and for his numerous contributions to the nation, let us convey our condolences to the family of the Tunku without acrimony," he said.

Seconding the motion, Transport Minister and MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the late Tunku — as Father of Independence, the first Prime Minister of Malaysia and the pioneer in establishing the Alliance — was a symbol of unity for multi-racial Malaysia.

"For Malaysians, especially the Chinese, the late Tunku is known as a statesman who understood the importance of being tolerant, respectful and having a give-and-take attitude."

MIC president and Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said the Tunku's demise was a big loss as he had contributed much towards the nation and its people.