

Dr M: Important that MCA has post in Home Ministry

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The MCA has been given the post of Home Ministry parliamentary secretary because it is important that the party is represented in the ministry, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister did not elaborate, but said there was no particular reason the Government decided to appoint someone to the post after having left it vacant for many years.

"Just because it has been vacant for so long doesn't mean that we cannot appoint somebody to the post. I think it is important that someone from MCA is there (Home Ministry)," he told reporters at the MCA open house at Wisma MCA here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said Mr Ong Ka Ting would not have any specific role to play in the ministry, adding that he would be required to assist Deputy Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob.

Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid announced the appointment on Thursday.

It is understood that this is the first time an MCA representative has been appointed to the post.

Tan Sri Ahmad Sarji also announced that Dr Sak Cheng Lum had been made parliamentary secretary to the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry and Tapah MP Datuk K. Kumaran as parliamentary secretary to the Health Ministry, re-

placing Mr Ong.

Mr Ong, when interviewed at the open house, said he expected his post to be "very challenging."

"It is heartening that the prime minister has decided to allocate the post to the MCA," he said.

Mr Ong, the MP for Pontian, said that he was confident he would be able to discharge his duties to the best of his abilities.

In Ipoh, Datuk Kumaran said he would concentrate on rural health projects to uplift the living standard and socio-economic status of rural folk.

He would pay special attention to health programmes for kampungs, villages and estates under the Sixth Malaysia Plan, he added.