

Dr. Mahathir pokes fun at Britons

HARARE, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad lavished praises on Queen Elizabeth but could not resist poking fun at the British during a banquet given by the queen on Wednesday night.

The Queen had wished the heads of government success during the Commonwealth summit which was opened with songs and dances at the Harare International Convention

Centre.

"At this time of rapid and dramatic changes throughout the world, heavy responsibility rests on you and there is much important business to be done," she said.

Dr Mahathir, replying as chairman of CHOGM 1989, said: "When Malaysia was under British rule, we had British advisers whose advice must be obeyed.

"We had Malay sultans

who were designed the rulers who may not rule. Our parliaments are presided by Mr Speakers who may not speak."

And in times of crises, "we declared Emergencies and went about our daily routine."

Thus, he said, it was not strange that "we have a Commonwealth where the wealth is not common."

"But then we are not thinking of material wealth. The wealth that

we have in common is less quantifiable but no less real.

"It is the interest, the concern, the care and the love that your Majesty lavish on us all indiscriminately.

"Knowing that you share our aspirations, motivate us to walk that extra mile to compromise, to achieve agreement and reach consensus. For all these we thank you," he said.