

Felda suffers a shortage of workers

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By Zubaidah Abu Bakar

KUBANG PASU, Thurs. — The Government is looking into ways to overcome the shortage of workers in Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) schemes following the refusal by children of pioneer settlers to work and stay in the land schemes.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said many children of Felda settlers had done well in their studies and were working in bigger towns, leaving their aged parents to tend to the fields.

Industrial development, which saw the setting up of factories that offer a better working environment, had also resulted in the younger generation refusing to stay and work in land schemes.

"Many children of Felda settlers have done well in their studies and have become doctors, lawyers, engineers and accountants.

"Because they are highly

educated, there is a shortage of workers to work in the fields and this has resulted in Felda settlers paying others to do the job," said Dr Mahathir.

Speaking at a gathering of some 2,000 Felda Guar Napai settlers and their families at the Sekolah Kebangsaan Guar Napai, near here, today, the Prime Minister said the problem would be more acute when the third generation of Felda settlers grows up.

He said development and changes experienced by the country had made the Government's approach in the setting up of Felda land schemes unsuitable since the second-generation settlers had many other job opportunities.

Dr Mahathir said that the achievement by the children of Felda settlers also indicated that the settlers had benefited from their participation in the land schemes.

"Basic and social amenities are provided by the Gov-

ernment to Felda settlers at the land schemes, which currently cover 520,000 hectares," he added.

Dr Mahathir said another problem that needed to be resolved was the division of the land of settlers using the Islamic *faraid* system.

"As land cannot be divided fairly among the settlers' children since some parts of the land are not fertile, the Government has proposed the share system.

"If settlers owned shares, the shares could be divided among the children accordingly," he added.

Dr Mahathir also urged young people to be hard-working, diligent and become Malaysians who are willing to face challenges and problems besides possessing good moral values.

Parents should teach and encourage children to be willing to work hard while teachers guide them to become individuals who possess good moral values to prevent them turning to crime when they grow up.