

Dr M disappointed

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed disappointment over the decision by the Rulers Council to reject the constitutional amendments.

He said the Government felt it would be meaningless to hold further discussions on the issue.

The Prime Minister said following lengthy discussions and after the Government had agreed to accommodate the Rulers' requests, the latter had rejected the proposed amendments.

"From our discussions, at

least six of them had expressed they were agreeable to the amendments but it is a different view they expressed today.

"We had accommodated their wishes.

"We had discussed in detail their proposal for a Special Court but it looks like all these discussions are meaningless.

"To me if someone has agreed to a decision they must hold on to it.

"At the moment I do not see any meaning in holding further discussions with the Rulers on the issue.

"After we had discussed

and obtained agreement we find that the agreement was meaningless and is not abided by (the Rulers) — then what is the use of discussing any more?" he said in response to reporters' questions in Parliament House.

He said the amendments would be put to the vote in the Dewan Rakyat and if two-thirds majority is obtained, it would be tabled in the Dewan Negara for approval before being submitted to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong for the Royal Assent.

When asked by reporters the Government's next move in the event the King

does not give the Bill the Royal Assent, Dr Mahathir said that in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, the Bill would return to the Dewan Rakyat for further debate.

He said after that the amendments would become law in 30 days, with or without Royal Assent.

He said the Government took action based on the law that was passed and if anyone wanted to dispute it they could take it to the courts.

Dr Mahathir said sufficient time had been allotted to the Rulers to make a deci-

with decision

sion on the issue and added that the issue was a simple one and not complicated.

He said that after the Bill is passed and while awaiting the Royal Assent, the Rulers could think over the issue and make a decision.

The Government has no doubts that the procedures it is following are allowed under the law and the Constitution.

The Constitution states clearly that Parliament can meet and discuss any issue and the Constitution does not state that the Rulers' consent is needed for Parlia-

ment to sit.

The Prime Minister said the rakyat need not worry over the issue, especially since the Government's decision to amend the Constitution was to protect the people.

"This is to ensure that nothing is done to the people where there is no way for the people to seek redress for any wrongs.

"We want to guarantee that the rakyat is protected by the laws and that is why we are finding ways to implement it."

When asked to comment on the Rulers' Council state-

ment that the changes were radical, he said there was nothing radical about it especially since there were many who said that Rulers were not above the law.

The Government will table amendments on the Special Court and other new additions tomorrow when the debate continues at the committee stage.

This is in accordance with existing procedures.

The Government will go ahead and introduce additional amendments agreed to following discussions with the Rulers because the Government is willing to lis-

ten to ideas to protect the status of the Rulers.

Dr Mahathir said when the Rulers suggested they should not be tried in an ordinary court, the Government agreed to establish a special court.

When asked about the proposal by the Rulers Council to establish an Advisory Board to remove a Ruler before he can be tried in court, the Prime Minister said:

"We don't think it will work because Rulers are related to each other, and they may have vested or personal interests."