

Mustapha's case not that pressing, says Dr Mahathir

Sun. T. 30 MAY 1973

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today there was no urgency to resolve the matter of Tun Datu Mustapha Harun having to resign as a Sabah State Assemblyman following his appointment as a federal minister.

"There is still plenty of time and there is nothing which demands urgency," he told reporters after bidding farewell to Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds at Carcosa Seri Negara here. Reynolds left for Penang.

Bernama reported Dr Mahathir as saying that Mustapha had yet to assume the post of Minister for Sabah Affairs, and that the date for him to take his oath of office had not been set.

The Prime Minister announced Mustapha's appointment on May 19. Soon afterwards, the Sabah Government said Mustapha must resign as Assemblyman as provided for by law before assuming the post of federal minister.

Dr Mahathir had also said that the government was studying several options it could take to enable Mustapha to retain his Usukan State seat, one of them being amending the law.

The Bar Council responded that any suggestion of changing the law was un-



MUSTAPHA
appointed minister

necessary, particularly so when it was to accommodate one individual.

Asked to comment on the statement of Bar Council president Zainur Zakaria, Dr Mahathir said the Bar Council should manage its own affairs before criticising others.

"They must put their house in order before attempting to teach others," he said.

Asked about the Parti Bersatu Sabah claim that it would any by-election held in Usukan, Dr Mahathir said that such claims were a normal thing.

In Seremban today, Law

Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar criticised the Bar Council for questioning the government's sincerity to amend the constitution on the position of Mustapha in the Sabah legislature.

Syed Hamid said the council was being mischievous in saying that the proposal was undesirable and aimed at enabling a particular person to overcome a constitutional prohibitions.

"The council feels that the government wants to amend the constitution because Sabah is governed by the opposition," he said, describing the council's stand as political in nature.

Speaking after opening the 19th general meeting of the Negeri Sembilan branch of the National Malay Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Syed Hamid said the council should limit its comments to the rules of law and not look at it from a political viewpoint.

If the Bar Council wanted to remain a non-political organisation, it should refrain from touching on political issues when matters pertaining to the constitution were discussed.

Syed Hamid said the government welcomed constructive and fair views from the council but it should not adopt an opposing stand.