

Dr M: People will be served better

THE new electoral boundaries which will provide for an additional 12 parliamentary and 43 State seats will enable the people to be more effectively represented in the Dewan Rakyat and the respective State assemblies, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

The Prime Minister said the Government had studied in detail the Election Commission's report on the re-delineation of constituencies for Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah and decided to accept the recommendations in full.

He said the re-delineation exercise for Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah was required once every eight years. Sarawak was not included in the exercise which

commenced last year, he added.

The creation of new constituencies and changes to existing ones were necessary in view of the economic and social changes that had taken place during the past eight years, he said when tabling the report.

If the report is adopted by the Dewan Rakyat, there will be a total of 192 parliamentary seats (now 180) and 394 State seats (now 351).

The debate on the report will continue today following which the Prime Minister will reply to points raised. This will be followed by the MPs voting on whether to approve the report.

Dr Mahathir said the total number of registered voters for the Peninsula, including the Federal Territories of

Kuala Lumpur and Labuan, was now 6,839,844.

He said in 1984 there were 5,239,278 voters, adding that there was a 30.5 per cent increase in the number of registered voters in the peninsula, including Labuan and Kuala Lumpur.

"Sabah has an electorate of 598,312 and based on the 20 parliamentary and 48 State seats, the average total number of voters for a parliamentary seat is 29,915 and that for a State seat is 12,464," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that although the Sabah parliamentary and State seats were still being retained at 20 and 48, respectively, the Election Commission had taken into consideration certain criteria and guidelines and had found it neces-

sary to modify the boundaries in the State.

He said this was done to bring about a more balanced distribution of voters and for the people to be better represented.

He said the report on the proposed new electoral boundaries was submitted to him on March 11 as required by the Federal Constitution.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, in supporting Dr Mahathir's proposal for the report to be approved, said the country had undergone rapid economic and social changes over the past 10 years.

He said the population had also increased, resulting in more registered voters, and the new electoral boundaries were necessary.