

Book on PM launched

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Mohamed Zahir Ismail tonight launched the book *Mahathir: Epitome of a Statesman*.

Zahir also presented a copy of the book with the serial number "2020" to Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, who represented her husband, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The book was published by the Malaysian Women's Advancement Institute. President of the institute, Datuk Siti Zaharah Sulaiman, who is also Deputy Public Enterprises Minister, said in her speech that the institute was proud to put on record the life journey of Dr Mahathir.

"It is difficult to ignore Mahathir as a leader and a visionary. Often misrepresented and misunderstood, he is an enigma yet drawing respect and curiosity from many.

"With moral purpose, keen political sense and confident redefinition of the economic order, he speaks out against injustices and double standards where lesser persons seek safety in silence.

"It was he himself who said: 'I am not here to be popular'. Thus, his stewardship has awoken Malaysia from its slumber, opened it up to exciting possibilities and achieved success that many admire," she said.

She said the institute published the book in appreciation of Dr Mahathir's significant contributions to the advancement of women including changes in family laws, legislation protecting women and children against abuse and violence.

Zahir, in his speech, said many photographs of Dr Mahathir had been taken over the years and the book featured some of the most important aspects of the Prime Minister's life includ-

ing his schooldays, his youth, his political activities and his life as a statesman.

Zahir recounted that in 1946, it was Dr Mahathir who got the students of Sultan Abdul Hamid College in Alor Star to demonstrate against the formation of the Malayan Union.

Pointing to the replica of a kampung house which was on stage, Zahir said:

"It was in a house like this, except that it had attap

roof and an elevated verandah, that Dr Mahathir got the students to form a committee to protest against the Malayan Union.

"We printed posters ... since we could not go to the printing presses ... the students carved out the letters using potatoes, inked them and stamped them on paper which were displayed in many parts of Kedah.

"Everytime the police tore them down, more posters were put up. A demon-

stration involving 50,000 people was also organised in Kedah to protest against the Malayan Union," he said.

He added that under the leadership of Dr Mahathir, the students travelled all over Kedah and even to Perlis on bicycles to gather support for the movement against the Malayan Union and added that although pictures of these events were not available, they remained fresh in the minds of all those who were involved.

In congratulating the institute for publishing the book, he said it would provide an insight into Dr Mahathir's life.

The book, apart from portraying Dr Mahathir's life story in words and pictures, also contains some of his early writings in *Darulaman* — the magazine of Sultan Abdul Hamid College and also excerpts of his writings in the *Straits Times* under the pen name of C.H.E. Det.