

Dr Mahathir: Leaders must know

Democracy not for

**By K.P. Waran
and James Ritchie**

KUCHING, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said democracy did not mean leaders should be replaced for the sake of change, especially if they are capable and have good qualities.

The Prime Minister then repeated his earlier advice that leaders who are not capable should step down and the people should not hesitate to criticise them if they do not live up to expectations.

Speaking at the opening of Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu's triennial delegates' conference at the Santubong Resort, he said the people should know what was good for them and whether leaders were working for the benefit of the people and the nation.

"Change is good only if it is necessary, especially since leaders need time to implement new ideas, policies and programmes. During this time the people will also be able to judge the capabilities of the leaders.

"If, after giving ample time there is no progress, then changes may be necessary but such changes should follow procedures and be done through the proper channels," he said.

Later, responding to reporters' questions, Dr Mahathir said party members should not shy away from criticising if there were genuine reasons to do so. But they should express their views through the proper channels, he added.

At the same time, he said, members should ensure that they were not influenced by those who were out to grab power and were willing to use money and "dirty tactics" to bring down leaders.

"We should not change

leaders for the sake of doing so and, at the same time, we cannot insist on retaining those who are frozen, bad and incapable of doing anything.

"Sometimes people choose those who offer money for their votes. These type of leaders should not be supported at all," he added.

Asked whether his advice was aimed at any particular group of people, Dr Mahathir said: "I am merely giving advice in general. You should not read all kinds of things into what I say."

Earlier, Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan Nasional chairman and Umno president, said members of political parties should always be wary of people who used money and "dirty tactics" including concocting lies about leaders in their bid to gain power and influence.

Urging them to reject such people, he said, if they assumed power it would be detrimental to the people and the nation.

He said when people used corrupt practices to gain power, the party would become corrupt eventually and the Government formed by the party would be one run by corrupt people.

He cited as example Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini and Josef Stalin as leaders who assumed power and, instead of bringing progress, caused the people to suffer.

He said capable leaders have to prove their capacity and ability to carry out programmes to benefit the people and thus let the voters choose between them.

"Choosing a leader is a heavy responsibility and thus the people should have a clear conscience that they are voting for leaders who are capable of leading them and the nation to progress.

when to step down
change alone

"Making a mistake and choosing the wrong leader can jeopardise the interests of the people, the country and future generations."

He said Malaysians should retain good and capable leaders and discard those who were incapable especially after getting "cushy in their seat".

Dr Mahathir also congrat-

ulated Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu which, he said, had contributed much to the progress of Sarawak and its people for the past 35 years.

He said the PBB had capable leaders who knew what was good for the State and the people and that was why the party was popular.

Present at the ceremony

were PBB president Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud, Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Alfred Jabu, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, Gerakan president Datuk Seri Lim Keng Yaik, Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak president Datuk Leo Mogie, Sarawak United People's Party president Tan Sri Dr Wong Soon Kai,

Umno secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat and leaders from other Barisan Nasional component parties.

Dr Mahathir, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and the invited guests were given a colourful welcome at Santubong Resort with cultural performances. The Prime Minister also re-

ceived a RM1 million cheque from Taib for the Boshian Fund. The money was collected from Islamic associations in Sarawak.

Earlier on arrival at Kuching airport, Dr Mahathir and company were flown to the Santubong Resort, 34km from here, by five Hornbill Skyways helicopters to attend the conference.