

07 MAY 1996  
Parliament-Debate  
CALL FOR PRIVATISATION REVIEW BODY

KUALA LUMPUR, May 7 (Bernama) -- Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang today called for the setting up of a Privatisation Review Body to check all charges imposed for privatised services.

The move is to ensure that consumers' interests are not sacrificed to cater to the needs of the profit-hungry corporate organisation handling facilities such as power, sewerage and telephone, he said in the Dewan Rakyat.

Debating the motion on the Seventh Malaysia Plan tabled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday, Lim said the body should have access to all documents including account statements and profit forecasts to enable it to study the charges imposed by privatised services.

He said before the government made the final decision on toll rates or other charges for privatised services, it should take into account recommendations made by the body.

At present, consumers' interests are not considered when decisions on payments involving privatised services are made, whether it is the highway toll rate or the negotiation between Tenaga Nasional Bhd and Ekran Bhd on the sale of power units from the Bakun hydro-electric dam.

Lim, who is the DAP secretary-general, also called on the government to review the North-South Highway concession agreement with PLUS.

He said it was not reasonable to allow the company to increase the toll rate 24 times during the 30-year concession period as this meant that the company stood to rake in more than RM100 billion during the period.

He also called on the Cabinet to rescind its decision to allow Kamunting Corporation Bhd to continue collecting toll at Jalan Kuching here, and instead hold an open tender for a new concession for upgrading work at the road.

"Kamunting Corporation, which was supposed to stop toll collection on Jan 8, should repay all collections illegally made in the past four months," he said.

He said Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu should table a report on why the Cabinet did not announce its decision to allow the company to continue collecting the toll and thus ignoring the concept of public accountability.

The report should also include the amount of toll collected in the past nine years as well as the profit obtained by the company.

Meanwhile, government backbencher Ruhanie Ahmad (BN-Parit Sulong) called on the government to set up a special task force to study ways to overcome the poor performance of rural students in the pure sciences, mathematics and English language.

He also said more rural students who failed the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination should be admitted into skills or vocational institutions.

Ruhanie said the private sector should retrain workers so that they could adopt to computer aided manufacturing.

Haji Abdul Hadi Awang (Pas-Marang) said the government should be fair to all people including non-government supporters.

He said projects approved without adhering to stipulated aspects would only result in losses.

The Dewan will sit again tomorrow. -- BERNAMA  
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