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Parliament-Debate

KEEP TAB ON OFFICERS VULNERABLE TO BRIBES

KUALA LUMPUR, May 16 (Bernama) -- A government backbencher said today civil servants empowered to grant approvals and those in enforcement units be kept under close surveillance to prevent them from getting involved in corruption.

Dr Haji Yusof Yacob (BN-Sipitang) said government agencies vulnerable to abuse of power like the Road Transport Department, Immigration, Customs, Police and local authorities must also be on constant scrutiny against malpractices.

The Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) must station its officers in such agencies in line with the recent proposal by ACA director-general Datuk Shafie Yahya that a watchdog panel on corruption be set up at department level, he said when debating on the Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996-2000) at the Dewan Rakyat.

He said ACA officers can also go undercover in government agencies in efforts to stamp out wrongdoings.

If corruption is left unchecked, it will severely hamper the country's administration and tarnish its credibility, he said.

He also said those appointed as chairman of tender committees with the authority to grant approvals must be of those with a clean service record.

He said government officers authorised to give approvals including tender committee chairman must be transferred regularly to prevent them from having links with certain groups who lead them to malpractices.

Although the government will incur more expenses due to frequent transfers, it can help to check unhealthy practices in the civil service, he said.

He also proposed properties of those convicted for malpractices be seized.

Although government officers are sincere in discharging their duties, they are victimised by certain groups who influence them to accept bribes, he said.

He also suggested land schemes modelled after that of Felda and Felcra schemes be opened in Sabah as there are vast tracts of idle land.

Abdul Rahman Sulaiman (BN-Parit Buntar) urged the government to set up a special fund for rural areas soon to relieve the government's burden to provide infrastructure facilities to such places.

He said the private sector should also contribute to the fund to meet the financial cost of providing the facilities like building roads in villages.

He proposed the fund be managed by the Rural Development Ministry or other related agencies.

On efforts to trim the country's current account deficit, he urged the government to control the entry of luxury cars into the country.

He also urged the government not to rely too much on foreign consultants and experts but instead make use of local experts.

He said operators of entertainment outlets and hotel owners also preferred to hire foreign artistes than locals.

He also questioned the attitude of certain groups who are never grateful with the country's prosperity but continue to condemn the government.

Chia Kwang Chye (BN-Bukit Bendera) questioned on the role of the National Productivity Centre which he said is not respected by the private

sector.

He said the centre has yet to boost the productivity level among employers and officers in the private sector.

Chua Soon Bui (BN-Tawau) urged the government to seek the cooperation of neighbouring countries like the Philippines and Indonesia to control border crossing to resolve the illegal immigrants problem in the country.

This is to ensure only those with valid entry passes be considered for work permits, he said.

He suggested the government issue a "working order paper" to foreign workers entering the country legally or "identification papers" bearing the assurance of their respective employers to ease manpower shortage in the country.

Datuk Yap Pian Hon (BN-Serdang) urged the opposition to come up with constructive proposals at the Dewan Rakyat.

Dr Tan Kee Kwong (BN-Segambut) said Malaysia is not ready yet to absorb the inflow of technological changes due to manpower shortage.

He said the country's education system, which is undergoing changes, must give more emphasis to science and technology aspects.

He suggested computer literacy be introduced at all levels of education.

Michael Lisa Kaya (BN-Bukit Mas) took to task parliamentarians who took advantage of the 7MP debate to criticise the government.

He referred to Karpal Singh (DAP-Jelutong) who condemned Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad using unparliamentary words saying his actions are unbecoming of an experienced parliamentarian.

He should not hide behind the immunity of the House, he said.

Michael also suggested the Ferry Malaysia service be revived to enhance national integration between the people of Sabah and Sarawak with those in the peninsula.

He said the ferry service is much cheaper than the air fare.

Datuk Hanafi Ramli (BN-Jerlun) urged the Information Ministry to improve radio and television transmission frequencies to avoid overlapping with programmes aired by neighbouring countries.

He also suggested an International Malay University using Bahasa Melayu as the medium of instruction be set up to enhance the dignity of the language.

Dr Tan Yee Kew (BN-Klang) suggested that the government set up a Small-and Medium-size (SMI) Development Corporation which is very much needed to help build a strong SMI sector.

She said it could not be denied that the SMI's were created to complement the development and growth of the national industry but the existing 12,000 SMI's felt that they were segregated from the mainstream of industrial development.

On women's participation in the labour market, Dr Tan said women workers should be encouraged to take up professional courses or training so that they could go for better jobs.

Housewives with grown-up children should be encouraged to attend courses before entering the employment market, she said.

Datuk Qamaruz Zaman Ismail (BN-Bagan Serai) said the village heads' service allowance should be increased to RM250 monthly from the RM50 they received now.

Dr Lee Chong Keng (BN-Bukit Mertajam) proposed a few steps to overcome traffic congestion such as upgrading the public transport system, reducing the number of hawkers selling by the roadside and stopping heavy vehicles from parking at the roadside.

He also opposed the construction of a toxic waste station in Bukit Minyak in the Bukit Mertajam area because he said it would pose a danger to

the locals.

The federal and Pulau Pinang governments should instead look for an alternative site for the station, he said.

He also suggested that the government move the detention camp for illegal immigrants in Bukit Mertajam because a Clean and Beautiful project was being implemented there and the presence of the camp which accommodates about 700 inmates would mar the view.

Badrul Hisham Abdul Aziz (BN-Hulu Langat) wanted the Education Ministry to give a new life to the country's education system and think of ways not to fail students sitting for examinations.

He said that under the present system students who failed certain examinations were not allowed to continue their studies, resulting in their being involved in social problems like loafing which would ultimately cost the government a lot of money to resolve.

Students who failed should be channelled to other classes which were suitable for them, he said, adding that the vocational schools should not be abolished and students with the aptitude could be sent to these schools to acquire technical skills.

The Dewan will sit again on Tuesday. -- BERNAMA

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