

29 OCT 1997

Parliament-Debate

BEWARE THE PLOY OF THE WEST, SAYS GOVT BACKBENCHER

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 29 (Bernama) -- Malaysia should not allow the West to undermine the quality of local products and technology, a government backbencher said in the Dewan Rakyat today.

Datuk Dr Jamaluddin Mohamed Jarjis (BN-Rompin) said that claims by foreign consultants that such products were unsuitable for certain projects had resulted in the import of similar products.

Speaking during the debate on the 1998 Budget, he said that this was a ploy of the West as they could not compete with Malaysia in terms of lower cost of production.

He said that among their claims was that the technology used in the country was outdated but in actual they only wanted to sell their goods.

Dr Jamaluddin said that the International Trade and Industry Ministry and the Treasury should look into the matter especially in efforts to correct the country's balance of payment.

He also drew the Dewan's attention to the crash in the various stock markets in the world yesterday, saying that it proved the truth in Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement regarding the activities of American financier George Soros which adversely affected the stock markets.

Badrul Hisham Abdul Aziz (BN-Hulu Langat) said that the government should brief the elected representatives or district officers on the implementation of privatised development projects in areas under them before announcing the approval of such projects to the press.

He said that at present, the elected representatives only get to know about the projects through the mass media and would not be of help to the affected residents when they referred the matter to them.

Donald Lim (BN-Petaling Jaya Selatan), called on the government to review the increase for passport and driving licence fees.

He said that the hike was too high although the government's intention was to curb the outflow of the ringgit through overseas travel.

Lim said that even those earning low income need to travel for various purposes.

He said that the review could be conducted when the country's economy had stabilised.

Welcoming the move to have private hospitals set up wards for the lower income group, he said that the treatment given to them should not differ from the treatment given to those in ordinary wards of the private hospitals.

Yunos Rahmat (BN-Jelebu) said that the government should ensure that assistance under the Development Programme for the Hardcore Poor reaches the target group.

He said that low-cost houses should also be given to those who deserved them.

Touching on the Rakan Muda programme, Yunos said that events conducted under the programme did not get the support of the youths in the areas where they are held because the local youth associations were usually not informed of them.

M.Kulasegaran (DAP-Teluk Intan), in his maiden speech in the Dewan since his election, said that the government should declare the Indian community in the country as a special class and be given special assistance especially in the economic and educational aspects.

He said that this was because the Indian community was most backward in the country.

Kulasegaran suggested the setting up of a royal commission or an independent body to investigate and identify problems affecting the Indians so that they could be overcome.

He also said that the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry should require made-in-Malaysia goods to have the appropriate labels so that consumers could identify them.

Abdul Rahman Sulaiman (BN-Parit Buntar) called on the government to review the terms and conditions of concession agreements for privatised projects so that their implementation did not pose a burden to the people.

He said that the government should ensure that privatised projects implemented in future provide better services to the people.

Abdul Rahman also drew the attention of the Dewan to the sudden increase of prices of goods especially essential items recently without any apparent reason.

He said that the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry should take stern action against the errant traders.

The Dewan will sit again on Monday. -- BERNAMA

AFY/AKT RM