

19 NOV 1997

Parliament-DAP

HOUSE REJECTS OPPOSITION MOVE FOR SEPARATE CONFIDENCE MOTION ON PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 19 (Bernama) -- The Dewan Rakyat, while deliberating on today's motion to express its full support for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as Prime Minister, has rejected an opposition move for a separate confidence motion.

The original motion before the House was simultaneously to object to a United States probe into Petronas' investment in Iran.

Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang's move for a separate confidence motion, which was seconded by Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong), was rejected by majority vote.

The House then continued debate on the original motion tabled by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

In moving for a separate motion, Lim said a motion of confidence in Dr Mahathir's leadership should be debated separately and comprehensively.

He said the DAP fully supported the motion to condemn the draft resolution by the 34 US congressmen and the US' attempt to impose sanctions on Petronas, but it could not support the full motion tabled by Anwar.

"This is because it (Anwar's motion) has a third element linked to a vote of confidence in the prime minister," he said.

Lim was repeatedly reminded by Deputy Speaker Datuk Ong Tee Kiat not to digress especially when Lim touched on UEM's purchase of Renong's shares.

"The honourable member has informed the Secretariat of wanting to amend the motion... But after speaking for so long the amendment is still not forthcoming... don't digress too far," said Ong.

Lim then retorted: "It's my right to choose when I want to propose the amendment."

There was commotion when several government back-benchers stood up to remind Ong that Lim was taking too long, repetitive and had digressed culminating in verbal exchanges between them and the opposition leader.

Ong had to call for order or he would adjourn the sitting.

At one juncture, Anwar stood up to explain that the motion of confidence in the prime minister was incorporated because of the US congressmen's criticisms against Dr Mahathir's leadership.

"As for the question of vote of confidence or otherwise in the country's leadership, that we'll have to wait for the next general election or any upcoming by-election.

"But as for this motion, to tie or expand it to cases of ringgit depreciation or the share market. I think it's hard for us to accept," he said.

Debate should be directed at the motion as it involved the country's sovereignty and independence and not at issues linked to other matters, said Anwar to the applause of government back-benchers. -- BERNAMA

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