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Kit Siang: Remark not personal attack on Senators

PENANG, Tues. - Opposition leader and DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang said today he was not making a personal attack against any particular Senator when he said in the Dewan Rakyat that the Senate "is a rubbish bin for political has-beens, rejects and deadwood" on Dec 17.

Lim said he made the remark when proposing to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to tap experts from the private and public sectors who were not Members of Parliament, by appointing them as Senators to raise the standard of the Senate.

"It was at this point that I described the Senate at present as nothing more than a rubbish bin for political has-beens, rejects and deadwood."

Lim was commenting on a motion passed by the Senate yesterday demanding an immediate apology from him and that he retract his derogatory statement about the Upper House and Senators.

Senator Hamzah Mohd Zain had tabled the motion under House standing rule 17(2) saying that the matter was specific, of public interest and urgent.

Nine senators who debated the motion were visibly annoyed by Lim's statement in the Lower House and described the statement as uncalled for, unethical and running counter to the Federal Constitution.

Lim said: "As for the demand for an apology, there is nothing to apologise for speaking the truth."

He said it was the Senators who should apologise to the nation and the people for being a burdensome national irrelevance and for wasting more than an hour debating about him instead of focusing on the people's problems at a time of unprecedented economic and financial problems.

Lim added that he would repeat outside Parliament what he had said in the Dewan Rakyat on Dec 17 as challenged by a Senator.

"I hereby give notice to all Senators that they, or their legal representatives, could attend a media conference at noon tomorrow at the DAP headquarters where I would repeat what I had said in the Dewan Rakyat and they could take whatever legal action they like."

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