

02/03/1997

Ting: Aim is to provide houses for all

IPOH, Sat. - The Government aims to provide enough houses for the people, including squatters, Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh said today.

"We are not saying that everybody should own a home at any one time, as no country in the world would be able to achieve this.

"If one cannot afford to own a house, at least one must be able to rent a house," he told reporters after distributing bundles of a local Chinese daily under the "Newspaper in Education" programme to five schools at the SRJK (C) Kopisan Baru.

Ting said presently there were more than 4.5 million residential homes of all types in the country and 3.6 million households.

He said under the Seventh Malaysia Plan, an additional 800,000 units are to be built.

"If distributed equally, then these homes should be more than sufficient to house the country's population," Ting said.

He added that in reality, this was not the case, as some people could not afford to own houses or some owned more than one house.

He said the Government was concerned with the squatter issue and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had chaired a meeting last December aimed at solving the problem in the Klang Valley.

"Several proposals were put forward and the Klang Valley will be a test case. Based on the outcome in the Klang Valley, similar meetings might be held with other State Governments," he said.

Ting added that one of the proposals put forward to house squatters was the purchase of low-cost units from private developers by local authorities or State agencies to be let out to the squatters.

"This proposal has to be studied further to determine if it is feasible," he added.

On claims by certain quarters that there may be a more sinister way of getting rid of squatters, mainly by committing arson, Ting said he had not received any such complaint.

He said if there really were such instances than it would have to be brought up with the police.

Ting added that the Barisan Nasional Government promoted a caring society attitude and all efforts to reach a compromise between squatters and developers must be carried out.

(END)