

22/07/1998

Act being drafted to protect computer users

reports on "Dewan Rakyat" by Alex Choong; Cheah Chor Sooi; Aionn Mohd A PERSONAL Data Protection Act to ensure security among computer users is being drafted and will be tabled in Parliament by the end of the year, Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Leo Moggie told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

He said this was necessary to protect users against any interceptions by others.

The Computer Crime Act, 1997, he said, was enough at the moment to protect users but a new Act would enhance this protection.

Winding up on points raised during the two-day debate on the Communications and Multimedia Bill 1998, Moggie also said that sections 234 and 238 of the Act would also provide protection for individuals.

Section 234 states: "Any person who, without lawful authority intercepts, attempts to intercept, or procures any other person to intercept any communication;

"Discloses, or attempts to disclose, to any other person the contents of any communications; or uses the contents of any communications, knowing or having reason to believe that the information was obtained through interception of any communication, has committed an offence."

A person found guilty of committing such an offence is liable to a fine not exceeding RM50,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or both.

The Bill was later passed by the House.

On the need for economic impact assessment of the Multimedia Super Corridor for the development of information technology and the National IT Agenda as outlined under Vision 2020, Moggie said:

"The development plan for the MSC is not something that is static."

MSC, he said, which is chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, together with an international panel of IT experts, continued to evaluate and make amendments, if necessary, to enhance IT in the country and in the region.

"It must be remembered that the evolution of MSC is a component of the country's IT Agenda to promote an informed society and a testbed for the latest in the information technology industry.

"As such, the MSC will be implemented nationwide, whereby the IT Agenda is vital to make it a success," he added.

On the question of whether Vision 2020 would be achieved under the present economic problems, Moggie said the success of this vision depended on the commitment of everyone, including the Opposition.

Moggie took Lim Guan Eng (DAP-Kota Melaka) to task for criticising the government and not providing any constructive suggestions.

"This is not the time to score political mileage."

The issue of Bumiputera participation in the IT industry, he said, had been emphasised in the new Act as reflected in other government policies.

Moggie also addressed the issue related to the recent retrospective billing made by Telekom Malaysia Berhad. He said: "Telekoms has given an assurance that it is taking action to improve its services.

"Telekoms is also holding talks with affected clients on the retrospective billing and will try to resolve the problems as soon as possible."

Asked whether with the passage of the Bill into law, there would no longer be an Information Ministry, Moggie said:

"The decision rests with the Prime Minister as to whether to maintain the ministry or otherwise."

(END)