

30/10/1998

Be fair to police and public, protesters told

reports on "Dewan Rakyat" by Rashid Yusof; Alex Choong; Ainin Mohd  
A GOVERNMENT backbencher said people behind the recent spate of  
demonstrations in Kuala Lumpur and the demonstrators need to be fair to  
the police, the public and petty traders.

Noh Omar (BN-Tanjung Karang) said the police on duty, for instance, had  
made sacrifices like being away from their families.

Noh said demonstrators should also consider the image of the country and  
the need to attract foreign investments.

He spoke for more than two-and-a-half hours during which several MPs and  
a deputy minister sought clarification from him.

Noh defended the Internal Security Act, describing it as the last weapon  
in safeguarding the nation's security.

At one time, he appeared to be co-ordinating "indirect" exchanges  
between Lim Hock Seng (DAP-Bagan) and Liew Ah Kim (Ind-Seputeh).

It started when Lim - on the issue of demonstrations - proposed that a  
spot be designated for peaceful gathering. Liew, previously with DAP,  
wanted to know whether the DAP itself would allow such gatherings.

The exchanges dragged on. At one point Liew stood up to describe the  
manner with which he was suspended by the DAP's central working committee  
at its meeting on June 3. "It only took the CWC (Central Working  
Committee) one minute to suspend me," said Liew.

Then Mohamad Sabu (Pas-Kubang Kerian) asked Noh whether the Government  
had identified those behind the spate of demonstrations.

In turn, the presence of the DAP and Pas in Malaysian People's Justice  
Movement (Gerak) was also raised, with Datuk Jamaluddin Jarjis (BN-Rompin)  
suggesting that while it appeared Pas leaders from Kedah seemed to accept  
the DAP, those from Kelantan did not.

When Noh continued after lunch break, Deputy Housing and Local  
Government Minister Datuk Azmi Khalid, Datuk Badruddin Amiruddin (BN-Yan)  
and Karpal Singh (DAP-Jelutong) got into the picture.

Karpal, debating the Supply Bill 1999, got involved in a verbal exchange  
of words with Datuk Sukri Mohamed (BN-Machang), Noh and Wan Hanafiah Wan  
Mat Saman (BN-Pokok Sena).

Despite repeated reminders from Deputy Speaker Datuk Juhar Mahiruddin,  
Karpal refused to withdraw unparliamentary words like "gila" (mad) when  
referring to Wan Hanafiah who had pointed to the Standing Orders to stop  
Karpal from reading a letter written by Sukma Darmawan to Datuk Seri Anwar  
Ibrahim, his adopted brother.

Karpal, who has been appointed by Sukma's sister as one of his lawyers,  
had attempted to read a letter by Sukma, when both Sukri and Noh objected  
that it was subjudice.

They claimed as Sukma had filed an appeal, it should be left to the  
court to decide and that Parliament was not the right forum to raise the  
issue.

Karpal had earlier labelled Shukri as "unprincipled" in view of his  
crossing over to Umno from Semangat 46.

To this Sukri replied: "You (Karpal) are a hypocrite of the highest  
order".

Sukri told Karpal: "It was you who had brought up an affidavit by one  
Azizan and had questioned why no action was initiated then".

Earlier, at the onset of his debate, Karpal again raised the validity of  
Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to table the 1999 Budget

last Friday as the First Finance Minister.

"The question is whether the Yang di-Pertuan Agong had terminated the services of Anwar."

To this Sukri said Dr Mahathir had also informed the King and the matter was already gazetted, adding that it was no longer an issue.

Karpal will continue his debate on Monday.