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Expressions of love on TV `excessive`

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RTM came under scrutiny by several MPs during the debate on the Supply Bill for the Information Ministry at the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Issues ranged from local television dramas, need for a standardised use of Bahasa Malaysia in the broadcast media, the ministry's pamphlets that never got to the people, to the corporatisation of government television stations.

There was the issue of local television dramas showing unnecessary and excessive expressions of love which would do no good to the morals of the young.

This point was raised by Datuk Badruddin Amiruldin (BN-Yan) who complained that too many local dramas were portraying love scenes that were excessive.

"There are many other ways of expressing love for one another," he remarked.

In fact, he said film producers and script writers should not include such love scenes which depict a man embracing a woman.

He also said young people might imitate what they saw on television as something that was acceptable.

Badruddin also touched on the use of Bahasa Malaysia over the television networks, saying that it differed on RTM and TV3.

He said TV3 newsreaders used Bahasa Baku while TV1 and TV2 maintained the normal Bahasa Malaysia, adding that this could cause confusion among the school children.

Badruddin also called on RTM to reinstate the "Parliament Report" after the prime time news at 8pm.

Dr Nungsari Ahmad Radhi (BN-Balik Pulau) also called on RTM to provide coverage for the Parliament sitting.

He spoke at length on the importance of the elected representatives in passing important legislations.

"We do not want the people to have the wrong perception that MPs only drive big cars or even have two or three wives," he said, which brought laughter among the backbenchers.

Nugsari said this was a serious matter of the dignity and integrity of MPs who must earn the respect of the people.

He also disagreed with the move to corporatise TV1 and TV2 as this could change the present format of disseminating information to the public.

Barisan Nasional Backbenchers Club president Ruhanie Ahmad (BN-Parit Sulong) pointed out that the Information Department was incurring a lot of wastage by printing magazines, booklets and posters that were not distributed to the people but left idle in the various district offices.

He said there was a need to look into the practicality of printing such items now.

The department could look into electronic publishing and downloading such materials that could be distributed to the people.

Datuk Yap Pian Hon (BN-Serdang) urged RTM to allocate time for MCA leaders to explain to the Chinese community, particularly on TV1 or TV2, on the country economic issues.

He also complimented Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for, despite his busy schedule, meeting representatives from the Federation of Chinese Associations Malaysia recently to explain the country's economic problem.

Yap also asked whether the Ministry had received feedback from Malaysians overseas on its overseas transmission through the International Broadcasting Centre.

Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong) asked about the role of RTM now given the setting up of the Ministry of Energy, Communications and Multimedia.

"Will TV1, TV2 and its radio channels be corporatised and later privatised?"

Describing the Information Ministry as a Government propaganda machinery, M.Kulasegaran (DAP-Teluk Intan), said the television and radio broadcasts were always used to provide the public with a one-sided picture.

He cited as an example the last by-election in his constituency when the Information Department's vehicles and staff turned up in full force to support the ruling Government's candidate.

"But despite all this effort, they still lost," Kulasegaran said bringing laughter to the House.

He also questioned the rationale behind the Ministry's leasing of vehicles from SPANCO Sdn Bhd.

He described it as odd that Government owned-vehicles were handed over to the company, to be later leased from them at rates ranging from RM3,000 to RM5,000.

But, he added that the board of directors was public knowledge.

Yunus Rahmat (BN-Jelebu) questioned the training programmes for the Ministry's staff, drawing attention to a plot of land set aside for the Ministry's training centre in Negri Sembilan which had not been used.

He also spoke on the attitude of certain Ministry staff members who were more occupied with fulfilling their political ambitions than their work.

Not only that, when not busy with politics, they were busy playing chess or checkers during office hours.

Lim Kit Siang (DAP-Tanjung) raised the issue of attendance of members of the frontbench during proceedings, remarking that full attendance could probably be secured if the proceedings were carried live.

"Even as we speak none of the frontbench members are present."

Mohamad Sabu (Pas-Kubang Krian) questioned why the four-day Umno general assembly was given full coverage when this was not so for those of MCA, MIC, DAP and Pas.

"Even the keynote addresses of these party leaders were not provided full coverage."

He said when the Kelantan Menteri Besar sought three-minute air time to extend Hari Raya wishes, the request was turned down.

But, he added, a radio broadcast from a neighbouring country provided full coverage for the Menteri Besar.

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