

31/03/1998

`IWK dumped raw sewage in hole at housing estate'

A GOVERNMENT backbencher told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday of an incident where Indah Water Konsortium workers dug a hole measuring three by six metres wide and a metre deep and dumped untreated sewage into it at a housing estate in Lahat, near Ipoh.

Yeong Chee Wah (BN-Batu Gajah) said the incident happened at Taman Badlishah in September, last year.

"Residents in the housing estate complained to me about what IWK had done."

Debating the motion of thanks on the Royal Address, Yeong said as IWK did not have any treatment plant in his constituency, the company took the "easy way out" by depositing the untreated sewage into the man-made hole.

"This has caused an unbearable stench."

He said if the privatised company wanted the people to pay for its services, it should be more responsible.

Yeong also took to task IWK's executive chairman Datuk Ishak Ismail for the latter's recent statement that the company faced problems in collecting payments from clients who included VIPs because the people were influenced by MPs and State Assemblymen.

"I hope, he (Ishak Ismail) will rethink carefully what he has said about taking those who fail to pay IWK to court," Yeong said.

He said the Ministry of Housing and Local Government had said repeatedly that "if there are no services, then there should be no payments".

Towards this end, he said, the public was the best judge of IWK services and that elected representatives had no influence over them.

Yeong said as elected representatives, they had a duty to the people and "not to IWK".

"If IWK fails to provide an efficient service or overcharges the people, then the consumers will not pay even one sen to IWK!"

He said IWK's action in Taman Badlishah was not in keeping with its slogan "Waste water made clean".

Yeong said he had reported the matter to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, Minister of Science, Technology and Environment and the Perak Menteri Besar.

On the economic and currency problems, he commended Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for their efforts to revive the economy and strengthen the ringgit against the US dollar.

He also urged the people to support the Government's call to opt for local products, banks, tourist spots and institutions of higher learning.

On the Employees Provident Fund's intention to purchase Sime Bank shares, Yeong said the Government should exercise care as it involved the people's money.

"Such investment must see good monetary returns and must not be made in a bank which has bad debts," he said, adding that this could result in lower dividends for EPF contributors.

Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar (BN-Batang Lupar) said Malaysians and permanent residents should help increase the country's foreign reserves by saving RM1 a day in a special fund.

He said this would not be a problem as the amount was small.

For the fund to be effective, Wan Junaidi said the people should not be allowed to withdraw their savings for a specific period or until the

economy recovered.

He said the wives of ministers should lead the way by donating some of their jewellery to a national fund.

"They should lead the way and set an example to others."

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