

29/07/1998

Motion to start daily sitting in the morning

A MOTION to amend the Parliament Standing Orders was tabled yesterday whereby the daily sitting of the next Dewan Rakyat will start from 10am to 1pm and from 2.30 pm to 5.30pm.

The present sitting starts at 2.30pm and ends at 6.30pm.

Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar tabled the motion on behalf of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and it was seconded by Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik.

The motion was approved by the MPs and this would be referred to the Parliament Standing Orders Committee for approval.

The committee will then refer to the Dewan Rakyat for debate later.

Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang caused a stir in the House when he alleged that the Government was "railroading" the motion without giving the MPs time to study the amendments.

To this Syed Hamid replied: "Please read carefully Article 78 (2) of the Standing Orders which requires a motion to amend the Standing Orders be made to Parliament and to be approved before it is referred to the Parliamentary Standing Orders Committee."

Barisan Nasional backbenchers jeered at Lim for making reference that the Government used its majority in the Dewan Rakyat to push through the motion, without giving proper explanation for such unusual action.

Other amendments proposed included that each MP could now submit only 10 oral questions instead of the present 20 for each Dewan Rakyat sitting and that oral questions should not exceed 40 words.

As for the private member's motion of urgent, definite and public importance, it should not exceed 300 words.

(END)