

18 MAY 1998

Yong-tribute

SABAH CHINESE ASSEMBLY HALL PAYS TRIBUTE TO YONG

KOTA KINABALU, May 18 (Bernama) -- The Sabah Chinese Assembly Hall today paid tribute to Datuk Yong Teck Lee for his "most outstanding achievement" during his two-year term as Chief Minister under the rotation system.

Hall Chairman Datuk Mohamad Sari Tan said Yong had successfully dealt with the large number of illegal immigrants in Sabah and also ensured that people worked in close cooperation with business and economic groups.

"Datuk Yong also has had the courage to take long term measures to protect the natural resources of the state by implementing sustainable forest management policies," he said at the swearing-in of the Hall's new office bearers. The out-going Chief Minister was present at the ceremony.

Mohamad Sari said Yong's other achievements included helping the people to get rid of bad habits such as gambling as well as making a special effort to boost food production in Sabah.

Yong's term as Chief Minister under the Barisan Nasional's rotation system in Sabah, expires on May 28.

Under the system, Barisan Nasional Chairman and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad appoints a Chief Minister from each of the three major communities in Sabah -- Muslim Bumiputeras, Chinese, Non-Muslim Bumiputeras -- to serve for a two-year term.

It was introduced to reduce politicking and to ensure that each of the communities' leaders had a chance to lead the state.

Speaking later, Yong said it was wrong for anyone to think that by May 28 when his two-year term as Chief Minister ended, it meant "Goodbye"

"No, much is left to be done. I will continue to serve the state and the country. Whatever the post I may hold, I will continue to struggle and face the challenges," he said.

"Ahead is a new chapter, new opportunities and new challenges," he added.

-- BERNAMA

JS AAM