

28/03/1999

An open letter to YB Osu Sukam

Ahmad A. Talib

DEAR Datuk Osu Haji Sukam, I must first of all congratulate you for the Barisan Nasional's fine showing in this month's State election. I must also congratulate you for being appointed the 12th Chief Minister of Sabah, a position you now hold in the 50th year of your life.

God Almighty has been kind to you, as have the voters of Sabah. You must have a special feeling of the voters of Kawang. You won with a majority of 2,213 votes, beating Datuk Ariaiah Tengku Ahmad of Parti Bersatu Sabah. This must have been a sweet victory indeed.

Your record shows you have done very well. You first contested in Kawang, the same constituency, in 1985 on an Usno ticket. Your first adventure into State politics almost produced a win, having lost to Wenches B. Lajingah of PBS by only 199 votes.

But in the 1986 general election, you stood as a BN candidate in the parliamentary seat of Papar and won with a majority of 206 votes against James Haji Ghani @ Ebi, an Independent.

Your other victories were in 1990 (BN-Papar); 1994 (BN-Kawang); and April 1995 (BN-Papar).

Such a fine record must have done everyone proud, but then you had a long tutelage which started when you began work as an administration officer in the State Ministry of Development and Industry in 1972.

Your subsequent exposure to administrative work helped to propel you to bigger responsibilities.

Which was why in May 1994 you were made Minister of Land and Co-operative Development in the Federal Cabinet.

When you returned to Sabah, it was an open secret that you were being groomed to look after the State in a very senior position. Hence, your present post.

You must have received numerous congratulatory letters after the fine, if not altogether surprising big win, in the election. You must have contributed to that win in many ways and your voters now expect you to deliver on all your promises.

I suppose that's only fair. As in all elections, promises are made as candidates canvass for support. You're no different. Because of the rotation system in Sabah, you will have to start working out a practical programme that your successor can continue.

You personally will have two years to implement workable projects, or lay the foundation that your successors can build on. This means close consultation between you and members of your Cabinet.

I hope you will not build a wall around you that may make it difficult for the rakyat to meet you. We often hear that politicians seeking votes are easier to meet than after they become a Minister.

I hope this is not true in your case. But perhaps you can tell members of your team that winning an election is only half the job - they must fulfil the trust of their voters, they must help realise the dreams of the ordinary folk who endorsed their candidacies.

Yang Berhormat, the voting folk are not asking for the moon. They only want good roads, basic amenities such as electricity and piped water, decent schools and good health facilities.

On a recent trip to Sabah, I saw that the road to Kiulu was in bad shape - some parts had caved in, reducing the road to only one lane.

This is unforgivable. The BN will not likely win in Kiulu if nothing is

done to improve living conditions.

YB, I'm sure you realise that you are the CM of the whole of Sabah, not just your constituency. The people of Sabah expect leadership, motivation, exemplary behaviour and vision from you.

You've benefited from the vision at the Federal level, and now it's time for you to translate this at the State level. Your predecessors may have made a few mistakes in their time, and you are expected to rectify them.

Two years is not a long time for you to make an impact at the highest level in Sabah, but it is enough to cause your ruin if you fail to heed the words of the rakyat.

Once again, I wish you all the best as you settle down to your new job. I don't think you'll have much of a honeymoon in the coming weeks since there's mounting speculation of a general election.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has until April next year to call for one and I'm sure he'll be relying on you to deliver sufficient seats for the BN in the Dewan Rakyat.

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