

21 DEC 1999
Parliament-EC
DAP DESCRIBES EC AS TOOTHLESS TIGER

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 21 (Bernama) -- DAP secretary-general Kerk Kim Hock, in his maiden debate at the Dewan Rakyat today, described the Election Commission (EC) as a "toothless tiger" for failing to ensure that the 10th general election was conducted in a clean manner.

Kerk (DAP-Kota Melaka) said the EC should have been prepared as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had given warning several months before parliament was dissolved that the election this time would become the dirtiest election in the country's history.

"The EC which should play the role of an independent referee to ensure that the election was conducted fairly and in a clean manner was not able to take preventive measures to ensure that the warning did not become a reality. The EC seems to be like a toothless tiger in the country's democratic system," he said.

He said this when debating the Supplementary Supply Bill (1999) (No.2) 1999 in the Dewan Rakyat, here.

He said the people's confidence in the EC was being eroded following its move not to allow 600,000 new voters to vote.

"Although the EC had clarified why the new voters who had registered this year did not have the right to vote, the people still do not understand why the EC is not efficient in this era (of information technology)," he said.

He said the DAP was also not satisfied with the Barisan Nasional (BN) advertisements which portrayed street demonstrations on television and major newspapers throughout the campaign period for the general election.

Kerk said the DAP was also pressing for an independent investigation to check sources of campaign funds for all political parties so that the people would know if there were political parties that received assistance from foreign missions and private companies.

The investigation should also involve the Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties because the DAP estimated that the BN had spent RM50 million to finance its scare campaign including advertisements on television and the newspapers, he said.

The call by Kerk later drew reaction from Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar who stood up to seek clarification, saying: "After every general election, the opposition parties will call for an investigation. This is because they lost in the general election."

This was followed by an exchange of words for 10 minutes between Syed Hamid and Kerk when the DAP secretary-general accused the government of being afraid to conduct the investigation for fear that their secrets would be exposed.

-- BERNAMA
NY AO