

22/12/1999

DAP may take legal action, says Kit Siang

PETALING JAYA, Tues. - The DAP will consider taking legal action over the convening of Parliament yesterday which it insists was not in accordance with the Constitution.

Speaking at a Press conference today, its national chairman Lim Kit Siang said the matter had to be sorted out as this issue could later be used to challenge the legality of laws to be passed by Parliament.

He also said the MPs' oath could be challenged and if later declared void, their seats could become vacant as the Constitution provides for seats to fall vacant if the MP does not take an oath within six months.

He said this matter was not a mere irregularity which could be rectified by Parliament as Parliament itself had not been properly convened.

When asked whether his viewpoint was based on his interpretation of the Constitution, he replied that it was as this issue was not specifically touched upon in the Constitution.

Over the last few days, Lim had repeatedly said the Yang di-Pertuan Agong's proclamation on Dec 9 to summon Parliament was "unconstitutional" as the King acts on the advice of the Cabinet but the Cabinet only met for the first time on Dec 15.

The Opposition MPs yesterday staged a 90-minute walkout from the Dewan Rakyat and refused to be sworn in after questioning the legality of the meeting.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad later said he believed that Lim was the "puppet master" behind the walkout as he was the first to raise the matter.

Lim today denied this.

He said if this was true, "I am now even more powerful after being booted out of Parliament ... than at any time during my 30 years as MP and 25 years as Parliamentary Opposition leader". He added that Dr Mahathir wanted to create the impression that Lim was a shady conspirator.

(END)