

23 NOV 1999

Osman-Circle

A COMPLETE CIRCLE FOR OSMAN AROFF

By: Jamaluddin Mohamed

JITRA, Nov 23 (Bernama) -- In the 1959 general election, he was a candidate's representative for federal minister Datin (now Tan Sri) Fatimah Hashim who contested the Jitra/Padang Terap parliamentary seat on the Alliance ticket.

In this 10th general election, exactly 40 years later, he is still a candidate's representative, but this time for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the Kubang Pasu parliamentary constituency.

"It is a complete 40 years' circle as a candidate's representative for me," Tan Sri Osman Aroff told Bernama.

In fact, he was also the candidate's representative for a Kedah exco, the late Omar Salleh (the father of Deputy Human Resources Minister Datuk Affifuddin Omar) in the Jitra state constituency in the 1959 general election.

Osman, 59, the former Kedah Menteri Besar and currently the personal representative of Dr Mahathir in Kubang Pasu, said he could become a representative for two candidates, Fatimah and Omar, because parliamentary and state elections were held separately in 1959.

"It is a miracle. I did not expect this (circle) to happen," he said.

He said that working as a candidate's representative was so different now compared in 1959.

"In 1959, we don't have a proper operations room. So I have to use a hired car as my operation centre which also carried posters and "E" forms," he said.

(An "E" form is an Election Commission form issued to election workers and speakers, signed by the candidate's representative)

"Look, I am still signing the "E" form. Just like in 1959," he said while signing some forms during the interview.

He said at that time, he had to hire a driver as he could not drive.

"It was very tough to reach voters then because of the remote areas and no proper road and lack of communication facilities.

"Imagine trying to reach voters in a big area such as the Jitra/Padang Terap parliamentary constituency which consist parts of Jitra and Padang Terap districts," Osman said.

He was State Assemblyman for Jitra before the dissolution of the Kedah State Assembly on Nov 11.

Osman, who has been an elected representative for the past 30 years, since 1969, said there was a proper operations room with all the state-of-the-art office equipment, communication facilities and a lot of manpower now.

"So it makes the job of a candidate's representative much easier now.

"However, it is much easier to campaign then as the voters' mind were not being "poisoned" compared to at present," he said.

-- BERNAMA

JM RM