

17 JUN 2000  
Ling-Settle  
LING-LIM RIFT SETTLED

KUALA LUMPUR, June 17 (Bernama) -- MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today he and his deputy Datuk Lim Ah Lek have resolved their differences as they have reached an understanding on matters they had disputed.

" Things have cooled down and it will take a very short time for things to come back to normal.

"There is no more rift, everything has been settled and the case is considered close," he told reporters after the 47th MCA General Assembly, here.

Asked to explain the reasons for the rift, Dr Ling said: " Things between two people should not be talked about."

On the package deal they had agreed upon, Dr Ling said there was no such package which had actually been misunderstood literally.

" We want to pave the way (to settle) a succession problem whenever it becomes necessary and finally decide who will take what posts. And who will decide is the right of delegates because they have the final say," he said.

Lim, who was also present at the news conference, said he was happy with the settlement.

" We agreed that the matter on the party's leadership succession should be decided by delegates," he said.

Dr Ling said if anybody makes a decision in between, it was only temporary as the General Assembly was the highest decision-making body.

He said MCA leaders should not insult the rights of the assembly delegates.

Asked how long they took to reach an understanding, he said: " About five, 10 minutes."

He said credit must be given to members who have unity in their hearts, friends and family who made the settlement possible.

Asked if there would be a smooth leadership change in MCA, Dr Ling said: "I don't think there is anything permanent in life, circumstances change, minds change. So, as things stay as they are, there should not be .. as things are I don't foresee any changes."

On whether MCA would ask for an additional Cabinet post now that the rift between them was over, Dr Ling said: "This is something which is not possible."

"I believe Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has given an explanation on the composition and distribution of Cabinet posts among the Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties. We will not make changes as it can upset the equilibrium," said the Transport Minister.

On the General Assembly, Dr Ling said it was a success with the delegates giving a clear message that they do not wish to see a split in the party as in the 1980s.

"The delegates have sent out a strong and clear message. I believe the Central Committee will take the message seriously and we will take steps to avoid anything unforeseen happening in the party," he said.

He said the split in the 1980s had caused the voters to lose faith in MCA and as a result, the party only managed to garner 22 per cent of the Chinese votes in the general election held in the following year.

-- BERNAMA  
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