

15 DEC 2000

Ling-Suqui

SUQUI CHOOSES WRONG TIME TO RAISE SPECIAL RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES ISSUE,
SAYS DR LING

KLUANG, Dec 15 (Bernama) -- MCA President Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the Malaysian Chinese Organisations Election Appeals Committee (Suqui) has chosen the wrong time to raise the issue of special rights and privileges of the Malays.

He said the issue could be raised in future when the Malays had significantly improved their economic standing and were no longer depended on the government for assistance.

"Who knows in 30 or 40 year's time when the Malays are economically successful, it might then be the right time for such demand," he said after opening a closed door Wanita MCA seminar here, today.

Dr Ling said, when Suqui gave the assurance that the issue relating to the special rights and privileges of the Malays was its long term vision, the government directed it to discuss the matter with the National Economic Action Council (NEAC).

"We (MCA) have also reminded them (Suqui) that such discussion must be held behind closed door in view of its sensitive nature but suddenly the issue was made public," he said.

He said the MCA had provided favourable feedback to 98 per cent of the 83 demands made by Suqui because they were well founded for political and social development in the country.

Dr Ling said it were the remaining demands that posed problems because they created uneasiness among the people.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed had recently told the Dewan Rakyat that if the government conceded to all the 83 demands made by Suqui, it would then be forced to sideline the Federal Constitution and social contract that formed the basis of existence of the federation.

The 17-point memorandum outlining the 83 demands presented by Suqui, which represented 13 Chinese associations, was viewed as challenging the social contract when it questioned the special rights and privileges of the Malays.

Earlier in his speech, Dr Ling touched on several issues of concern to the Chinese community in the country.

He said many MCA members were also concerned with the current situation where the country was faced with various issues affecting the community such as the Vision Schools.

"I explain to them that now is the best time to address all the issues since we have the time to examine them one by one, unlike during period prior to party elections or general election," he said.

Dr Ling also gave his assurance that the MCA would assist the government in realising its plan to integrate students in 1,286 Chinese schools which had rejected the Vision School concept in the country.

"Under the programme, all students, parents and teachers from schools from other medium will be invited to attend functions organised by Chinese schools," he said.

--BERNAMA

RAM ABG