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MP: Reward departments, staff who perform

GOVERNMENT servants and departments that performed efficiently should be rewarded, a backbencher proposed yesterday.

Thong Fah Chong (BN-Ipoh Timur) said recognising and rewarding individuals or departments would increase productivity and efficiency in serving the people.

Debating the Budget 2002, he said, Government policies, no matter how good they were, would be meaningless unless they were implemented.

While efficient civil servants were praised, Thong complained of some who regarded MPs as trouble-makers. He said MPs had encountered difficulties meeting some heads of departments, although the MPs were representing the rakyat.

"If we Yang Berhormat find it difficult to meet these heads of departments, we can imagine the fate of the ordinary people."

Thong said he was made to understand that some civil servants adopted a cold attitude towards MPs as they were of the opinion that MPs "come and go".

On the economy, in spite of the move towards high technology production methods, the Government needed to boost domestic industries and create more jobs so that more Malaysians could afford to spend thus keeping the economy afloat.

While acknowledging that the Budget was comprehensive, Datuk Suhaili Abdul Rahman (BN-Labuan) said its objectives would not be met as long as there were elements of sabotage among senior civil servants.

Expressing his frustration against bureaucrats who seemingly want the Government to be blamed for failed or delayed development projects, Suhaili urged Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the ministries to monitor the Economic Planning Unit and the Treasury.

Backbenchers Club president Datuk Dr Jamaluddin Mohd Jarjis (BN-Rompin) said it was common for people to hope for speedy implementation of projects and asked Suhaili to clarify that only a few people were to be blamed.

"The senior officers are the culprits," Suhaili responded. For example, the Prime Minister had advised beautifying Labuan through landscaping, but the latest allocation of RM10 million was not even enough to maintain the previous landscaping.

As for the ferry terminal project in Labuan to bring in passengers from Brunei, Limbang and Kota Kinabalu, design plans were approved and tender documents sent to prospective contractors but the RM68 million allocation was then reduced to RM30 million, he said.

Ramli Ibrahim (Keadilan-Kota Baru), said civil servants do not derail policies and that major decisions depended on political instructions.

Billy Abit Joo (BN-Hulu Rajang) appealed for subsidies for farmers in remote areas of Sabah and Sarawak, saying that they were already paying high transportation costs and that the new fuel hike would cost them even more.

A majority of these people do not have public transportation to carry their produce to town or bring their children to clinics or hospitals, he said. For example, speed boats are the only option for travelling between Kapit and Belaga during the dry season and a boat would use more than 700 litres of petrol per journey, he added.

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