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The right kind of monarchy believes in modernisation

DKL

AN elected monarchy is quintessentially Malaysian and has proven to be a wise choice. The new King is people-friendly, a quality which Malaysians outside Perlis will soon recognise and admire.

The King, like Queen Elizabeth II, is a constitutional monarch, not exactly powerful. He, however, exerts influence. He has the discretionary power in the appointment of the Prime Minister and can withhold consent to dissolve Parliament (which has never happened in our history). The real power is the Cabinet, which Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has presided over since July 1981.

The diarist had a 45-minute audience with the King at Istana Perlis in Jalan Tun Razak on Tuesday to offer him congratulations in anticipation of his election. Modest he is, and said without betraying any emotion: "Don't you think it's a bit premature?"

The diarist assured him it would have to be him, as Abdullah Ahmad had written as much on Nov 5, and the diarist trusts his assessment simply because Abdullah stated that the Rulers would not break with a precedent that has served them and the nation very well.

The decision by the Rulers to maintain the tradition has strengthened the monarchy and shown repose and good judgment.

All happened as planned - all Rulers were present at the election and subsequent oath-taking ceremony. The diarist detected no airs, nor did the King expect veneration in place of traditional courtesy and expressions of normal loyalty.

The King has long experience in government since becoming Raja Muda of Perlis 41 years ago. The experience is a great asset, and judging from what the diarist knows, he will serve not himself but the nation.

The right kind of monarchy in this century is one with the King having the conviction that he is the people's King. Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Putra Jamalullail belongs to this persuasion.