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Salleh-Assemblymen

SALLEH: MCA REPS ISSUE SHOULD BE HANDLED BASED ON SABAH EXPERIENCE

KOTA KINABALU, Dec 1 (Bernama) -- The issue over two MCA backbenchers abstaining from voting last Thursday on a motion tabled by the DAP in the Penang State Assembly to defer the RM1.02 billion Penang Outer Ring Road (PORR) should be handled based on the same experience by Sabah in 1996, an Umno supreme council member said today.

Datuk Seri Salleh Tun Said said in the Sabah case, the action taken against an assemblyman for taking a different stand from the other Barisan Nasional (BN) backbenchers was clear.

"The same scenario that happened in Penang on Nov 21 occurred at the Sabah State Assembly in 1996 when an assemblyman abstained during voting on a government motion.

"It is because a precedent has been set in Sabah and we know what are the consequences, I feel the same action should be taken against Lim Boo Chang (Datuk Keramat) and Tan Cheng Liang (Jawi) for defying party discipline, Salleh, who is also Sabah Umno deputy chief, told BERNAMA.

At a Sabah State Assembly meeting in June 1996, Kudat state assemblyman Datuk Kong Hong Ming abstained during voting on the Forest Enactment (Amendment) Bill 1968.

Two months later, Gerakan expelled Kong who was then Sabah Gerakan chairman.

The enactment was one of the five state laws that was proposed to be amended when Salleh was the then Chief Minister to give more powers to the state cabinet.

The amendments were passed at the state assembly when Datuk Yong Teck Lee took over from Salleh as the Chief Minister under the unique two-year rotation system for the chief minister's post.

Salleh said Lim and Tan must take responsibility for their action.

Several groups, including Umno, had demanded for the duo to be expelled from BN.

Prime Minister and BN Chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting on Friday that Umno wants Lim and Tan to be expelled.

He, however, said Umno would leave it to BN to make a final decision on the two assemblymen. The MCA presidential council is expected to meet this week to discuss the matter.

-- BERNAMA

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