

24 NOV 2002  
Hilmi-Motion

TAN AND LIM AWARE OF NEED TO OPPOSE MOTION, SAYS BN WHIP

PENANG, Nov 24 (Bernama) -- All Barisan Nasional (BN) state assemblymen, including MCA's Tan Cheng Liang and Lim Boo Chang, had been reminded before hand to oppose the two motions by the opposition in the Penang State Assembly, BN whip Datuk Dr Hilmi Yahaya said today.

He said the reminder was given by Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon before the two motions were tabled by the opposition.

Dr Hilmi, who is Deputy Chief Minister, said as such Tan and Lim had committed a blatant breach of discipline by abstaining from voting on a motion tabled by Law Heng Kiang, the DAP member for Batu Lanchang, on the Penang Outer Ring Road (PORR) project.

"Actually, at the pre-council meeting the Chief Minister had reminded all assemblymen to reject both the motions scheduled to be tabled by the opposition -- the DAP member and Abdul Rahman Abdul Kadir (Keadilan-Penanti) on the declaration of assets by all elected representatives," he said.

The meeting was held on Nov 9 at the meeting room on the 28th floor of Kompleks Tun Abdul Razak (Komtar) here, he told reporters after presenting Hari Raya aid to 276 less fortunate people at a function organised by the Balik Pulau Umno Division.

He said both Tan and Lim attended the meeting while four other backbenchers skipped the meeting with permission as they had other matters to attend to.

"The Chief Minister specifically told all the assemblymen to reject the two motions," he said, adding that it was normal practice for BN representatives to act in unison to reject opposition motions.

The motion, which was tabled on Thursday, called for the deferment of the RM1.02 billion PORR project until after the RM400 million Jelutong Expressway was completed.

The motion was rejected after 19 BN members voted against it.

Dr Hilmi said it was inaccurate of state MCA chief Wong Kam Hoong to say that Tan and Lim had not been briefed on how to vote on the motion.

However, he admitted that backbenchers were taken by surprise when Speaker Datuk Yahaya Abdul Hamid allowed the vote to be taken by name following a request by Abdul Rahman.

"We were caught by surprise. Normally, we would vote orally but Abdul Rahman asked for vote by individual count in accordance with article 114 of the House Standing Orders and the Speaker allowed it," he said.

He said it was the first time voting had been conducted in such a manner in the Penang State Assembly.

Dr Hilmi said he had prepared a 10-page report for submission to BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tomorrow.

He said the move of the two assemblymen should be viewed seriously and the appropriate action taken to prevent it from becoming a trend in the future.

-- BERNAMA  
SA YBY