

25/11/2002

Hilmi: Two reps who abstained from voting defied State BN

PENANG, Sun. - Lim Boo Chang and Tan Cheng Liang had defied the State Barisan Nasional when they abstained from voting on a motion tabled by an Opposition member in the State Legislative Assembly sitting last Thursday, State BN whip Datuk Dr Hilmi Yahaya said today.

He said Lim (Datuk Keramat) and Tan (Jawi), the two MCA elected representatives, were among 26 backbenchers who had attended a briefing, chaired by Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, 12 days before first-term DAP State Assemblyman Law Heng Kiang tabled a motion to defer the construction of the RM1.02 billion Penang Outer Ring Road.

"They were there and all of us were told to reject the motion. We were all surprised when Lim and Tan abstained from voting against the motion," he said.

Dr Hilmi, who is also Deputy Chief Minister, said this after giving away Hari Raya gifts to the poor in Bayan Lepas here.

He was asked to comment on a news report quoting State MCA chairman Wong Kam Hoong that Dr Hilmi may have not briefed Lim and Tan in advance over the motion.

However, Wong, when relating his experience in Parliament, said all backbenchers were expected to vote with the rest of their colleagues on any issue.

Dr Hilmi said despite Lim and Tan's move on the last day of the State Legislative Assembly sitting, the State BN was still strong.

Asked if the State BN would act against the nine backbenchers who were absent when the voting was conducted, he said: "I don't think it is necessary."

He said one of them, Abdul Ro'ni A. Hassan (Umno-Permatang Berangan), was away performing the umrah, three of them were excused by Koh to attend to other functions while the remaining five were in the lobby.

The three who had sought Koh's permission were Datuk Dr Sak Cheng Lum (MCA-Bagan Jermal), Lau Chiek Tuan (MCA-Berapit) and Datuk Dr Toh Kin Woon (Machang Bubuk).

The remaining five backbenchers were Hilmi Rashid (Umno-Bertam), Syed Amerruddin Datuk Syed Ahmad (Teluk Kumbar), Lim Chien Aun (MCA-Bayan Lepas), Lee Hack Teik (Pengkalan Kota) and Lim Gim Soon (Kampung Kolam).

Despite Lim and Tan's abstention, Law's motion was defeated after 19 backbenchers voted against it.

Law received three votes, including his and that of two Opposition counterparts.

When asked if the State BN would convene over the actions of the two MCA representatives, Dr Hilmi said it was too early to decide on the matter.

"I am sending a 10-page report to BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tomorrow."