

14/12/2002

MCA disciplinary board not satisfied with duo's reasons

Chow Kum Hor; Patrick Sennyah

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The MCA disciplinary board today said it was unhappy with some of the reasons given by the two MCA Penang Assemblymen for abstaining in a motion tabled by the Opposition at the State Legislative Assembly meeting on Nov 20.

Board chairman Datuk Kam Woon Wah said Lim Boo Chang (BN-Datuk Keramat) and Tan Cheng Liang (BN-Jawi) were given the opportunity to explain their actions at the two-hour meeting at Wisma MCA here.

"Though we are happy with some of the explanations given, we are also unhappy with some others," he said.

The board also recorded statements from Penang MCA adviser Datuk Dr Sak Cheng Lum and secretary Datuk Koay Kar Huah.

Penang MCA State chairman Wong Kam Hoong was unable to attend as he was overseas.

"We have completed our investigations and will recommend to the presidential council by Monday the action deemed suitable," said Kam.

The other board members are Datuk Dr Wee Khoo Hock, Datuk Wong Seng Chow, Datuk Chan Kit Chee and Wang Choon Wing.

Asked if the duo would be sacked, Kam refused to comment, saying any announcement on the action to be taken against Lim and Tan would be made by the presidential council.

The council is expected to meet at noon on Monday.

Kam said there was no urgency in making a decision against the duo today as there was no danger between now and Monday of any elected MCA representatives abstaining in the legislature.

However, it is learnt that the board is considering suspending the duo from the party for between six months and a year.

Lim and Tan came under fire from fellow Barisan Nasional component parties after they abstained from voting against an Opposition motion to defer the RM1.02 billion Penang Outer Ring Road (PORR) project.

The Umno supreme council had asked for their sacking.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said although BN could not act against Lim and Tan, the coalition was empowered to determine the membership of parties in BN.

At the board's first meeting, Kam wrote a letter asking Penang Chief Minister and State BN chairman Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon to explain the eight unaccounted-for BN votes when the motion was tabled.

Of the 30 BN representatives in the Penang State Legislative Assembly, 18 voted against the motion, two abstained, one was on leave while the other was the Speaker.

Responding to the request contained in a letter, Koh said it was procedurally wrong to send him the letter, and that it should have been addressed to the State BN secretary-general instead.

Gerakan secretary-general Chia Kwang Chye has since said that the board's request smacked of a delaying tactic.

Kam, when asked if Koh had replied to the board's letter, said the Penang BN secretary-general had done so on behalf of Koh and that the board was satisfied with the reply.

Meanwhile, Lim said he appreciated that the party had given him an opportunity to be heard and that he was prepared to abide by whatever decision taken by the party.

"I do not want to say much as it may be prejudicial", said Lim.

Tan, when asked what action would be taken against her, said: "I do not want to speculate. We will know in due course."