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Not an Umno tradition (HL)

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MALACCA, Sat. - Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today the Senai Umno division's move in passing a vote of no confidence against Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad was "inappropriate".

He said the matter should have been referred to the Umno supreme council or the Johor State Umno liaison committee to be discussed and solved amicably.

"In Umno, we do not encourage a no-confidence vote against anyone. We will look into the matter and we are prepared to hold discussions with Umno Senai to iron out the problem," he said after opening the one-day Malacca State Umno Convention attended by some 2,000 delegates. Also present was Malacca Umno liaison chief Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam.

Najib was commenting on reports that Umno Senai on Wednesday passed a no-confidence vote, claiming that Musa had failed to solve problems pertaining to Bumiputera students.

Najib, who is also Defence Minister, said the quota system for Bumiputeras was not the best solution to ensure more Bumiputeras were given the opportunity to enrol in private institutions of higher learning.

"A quota will mean that the Government will have to finance their studies although our real intention is not towards that," added Najib, who is also a former Education Minister.

Najib said the best solution would be to increase the financial allocation and study loans to Bumiputeras to ensure they could further their studies at private institutions.

In Johor Baru, State Umno information chief Mohd Khaled Nordin said Umno Senai's no-confidence motion was not an indication of the State Umno's stand on the issue of the 10 per cent non-Bumiputera quota for matriculation programmes and Mara Junior Science Colleges.

Mohd Khaled said the motion was an isolated case and the party's State liaison committee had no knowledge about it.

He said the committee had yet to discuss the issue but the indication from other divisions was that the majority supported the Education Ministry's move to introduce the non-Bumiputera quota.

"I can't speak for the State liaison committee but my stand on this issue is that the Ministry must have made the decision on the quota issue after much deliberation and considering what is best for the education system.

"I believe it is doing this to ensure Bumiputera students have the fair share of chances as those from the other races.

"From what I gathered, the State liaison committee members have not indicated they have any problem with the introduction of this policy."

He said it was nonetheless the right of any division to make their stand on government policies as such motions were considered to be an input to be considered by the party.

In Alor Gajah, Malacca, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the party welcomed the Government's move not to impose a quota system for Bumiputeras as it would only restrict opportunities for them in private institutions of higher learning.

He said the establishment of these institutions was to provide education to everyone, regardless of their race.

"I fully agree with what Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said about not imposing a quota system. The MCA views this as a positive

move," he said after officiating at the Duan Wu festival at the A'Famosa Resort.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir was quoted as saying that any move to implement the quota system at private institutions would only restrict the number of Bumiputera students at these places.

On Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman's (Utar) move to accept Bumiputeras, Dr Ling said the university was prepared to evaluate all applications.

He said the university had received four Bumiputera applications recently but only one was accepted. "As a member of the Barisan Nasional family, the MCA is open and prepared to negotiate with any party if there is any dissatisfaction over anything," he added.

In Sungai Siput, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said the party's Asian Institute of Medicine, Science and Technology (AIMST) and Tafe College did not impose a quota for the intake of Bumiputeras.

"We do not impose any restrictions on students who apply to study at the two institutes. In fact, we encourage Bumiputeras to apply," he said after opening the Teachers' Day celebrations in Sungai Siput.

"The party had set up the institutes for students, irrespective of their race, and all eligible candidates are welcome to apply," he said.

Samy Vellu, who is also Works Minister, said Tafe College in Seremban had difficulty enrolling Bumiputera students.

"We would see 20 to 30 students registering at the college but later they would leave when they are offered places at government-run colleges."

A similar situation also occurred at AIMST where only two or three Bumiputera students are studying.

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