

28/03/2002

Party responding positively, says Ling

PUTRAJAYA, Wed. - MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today the party was "responding positively" when it asked the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister to help resolve the MCA crisis.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi were very concerned with developments in Barisan Nasional component parties, he said.

"It is for the common good of the BN and MCA. Surely they want to help," said Dr Ling, who is also Transport Minister, before his Ministry's post-Cabinet meeting here.

He was asked to comment if the party's decision to resort to outside intervention to resolve internal problems had set a bad precedent.

On Monday, MCA elections steering committee chairman Datuk Seri Dr Ting Chew Peh said based on a report by the National Registration Department, allegations of widespread phantom members in the party were unfounded.

Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, had asked the NRD to verify MCA's new members' list against the department's database.

The findings showed that only 905 "identity cards discrepancies" were detected from its 135,700 new members or 0.6 per cent. This was contrary to claims by the party's Team B faction that there were over 20,000 phantom members in the list.

Dr Ling said he and several party leaders held a series of meeting with the Prime Minister and his deputy because they wanted to respond to Team B's complaints to the country's top two leaders.

Team B, he said, should stop complaining about phantom members as the report by the NRD showed that the allegations were not true.

"They (Team B) alleged there were 20,000 non-Chinese names in the list of new members. This turned out to be not true, as shown in the NRD findings."

Dr Ling said that he had responded three to four times to fulfil Team B's demands, including extending to 21 days the period for members to review the membership list although the faction had asked for 14.

Asked if he would advise Team B to stop complaining and show proof of wrong-doings, he said:

"They will continue to be like a gramophone record."

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