Dollah: PM's right to reject resignation

STAR - 9 JAN 2003

KUALA LUMPUR: Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said it is the privilege of the Prime Minister to decide whether to accept the resignation of Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik.

He added that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had already decided that Dr Ling should continue.

Abdullah said Umno's stand was that it was the right of the head of a party to voice out his views on wanting to leave or retire from politics.

"When that leader is no longer around, of course there will be someone else who will come up to replace him," he said, after chairing the management committee meeting.

He said Umno would not appeal to Dr Ling to stay on because it did not want to interfere.

MCA leaders thanked Dr Mahathir for not agreeing to accept Dr Ling's offer to resign as Transport Minister.

MCA secretary-general Datuk Seri Dr Ting Chew Peh said that Dr Ling , under the Prime Minister's leadership, has done well in his portfolio and this has benefited the country's economy in many aspects, including in shipping, aviation, railways and tourism.

"For example, Port Klang has emerged as the 12th largest container port in the world and is still growing very fast ," said Dr Ting who is also the Port Klang Authority chairman. Describing Dr Ling as hardworking, dedicated and very experienced, Dr Ting said his services would continue to benefit the nation.

Deputy Education Minister Datuk Hon Choon Kim said he was pleased to hear that Dr Mahathir had rejected Dr Ling's intention to resign.

"We (MCA) still need his representation in the Government," he said.

Wanita MCA head Datuk Dr Ng Yen Yen said the Prime Minister had stated that there was so much to complete before he retired in October, adding that all MCA leaders should work towards fulfilling Dr Mahathir's wishes.

It was not the time to talk about party conflicts or positions but to prepare for the challenges ahead, she said after announcing the "Fashion for Education" show on Feb 14 to raise funds for Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman.

Transport Ministry parliamentary secretary Datuk Donald Lim said: "Dr Mahathir has sent a clear signal to party members that the country still needs Dr Ling."

In Kota Kinabalu, Chief Minister Datuk Chong Kah Kiat said Dr Ling's services was still needed.

Chong, who is the Liberal Democratic Party president, added: "He is among the good leaders the country has."

In another development in Kuantan, Pahang Barisan chief Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob said the former MP in Bentong, Datuk Seri Lim Ah Lek, was welcomed to contest again in the state if he has the approval of the MCA and Barisan leadership.

"Like I have said before, Lim is welcomed to contest anywhere in Pahang. But I want to state here that I will not get involved in the MCA's ongoing feud," he told reporters after chairing the state exco meeting yesterday.