

15 SEP 2003

Parliament-Debate

R&D INSTITUTE NEEDED TO CHURN OUT MANPOWER OF CALIBRE

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 15 (Bernama) -- A backbencher today urged the government to set up a research and development institute specifically to educate and train manpower of calibre in the country.

Hoo Seong Chang (BN-Kluang) said the institute would produce more manpower of quality and not merely university graduates who lacked certain knowledge and skill.

The country was still lagging behind in terms of experts in research and development (R&D) whose benchmark could be gauged from the number of computer owners and internet users which was still low compared to the developed nations, he said when debating the Budget 2004 tabled by Prime Minister and Finance Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Dewan Rakyat on Friday.

Hoo said statistics released by the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) last year showed that there were only three R&D experts for every 10,000 Malaysians compared with 73 for every 10,000 Japanese, 48 for every 10,000 people in Taiwan, 38 for every 10,000 people in Singapore and 27 for every 10,000 in South Korea.

He also wanted to know more details on the Intensification of Research in Priority Areas (IRPA) programme specifically for public research institutes with the cooperation of the private sector which had been allocated RM84.5 million.

Hoo also proposed the establishment of a central agency specifically to handle matters concerning environmental cleanliness so that all programmes and campaigns on cleanliness could be coordinated at all state levels.

He said the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in several countries recently showed the importance of maintaining environmental cleanliness.

Datuk Abdul Hamid Abdul Rahman (BN-Sungai Benut) suggested that the government gave emphasis on post-graduate training by stressing on the aspects of 'leadership and entrepreneurship' as a preparation to churn out trained manpower.

The emphasis on these two aspects was important as they were critical in the digital era besides ensuring that the government could produce manpower who were trained and capable of grabbing the opportunities in the K-economy (knowledge-economy).

The mastering of knowledge at the first degree level would only churn out manpower who were followers in the respective field, whereas in the globalisation era the country needed leaders and players.

"If we want to become a 'global player', if we want to be a producing community instead of becoming merely consumers, the strategy of churning out leaders must be intensified," he said.

He also proposed that corporate players such as Proton established the Malaysian Automobile University to explore the automotive technology more effectively.

The house will sit again tomorrow.

-- BERNAMA

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