

18 AUG 2003

Lim-Contest

LIM KENG YAIK TO CONTEST IN NEXT GENERAL ELECTION

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said today that he will seek re-election for the Beruas parliamentary seat in the coming general election.

He said that he has the input and experience to provide continuity to the Barisan Nasional (BN) and promised to leave the party and active politics after a "certain period".

"I'm not saying I won't go, but this is not the time to consider it, although I've considered it four years ago. But as all things start happening, you want to do something, you've got to hold back," he told reporters here today.

Dr Lim, who is also Primary Industries Minister, was asked if he would step down to pave way for new leaders to take over the party leadership as well as his earlier intention to retire from politics in 1998 and 2002.

He explained that in 1998, he wanted to retire from the party but the country was struck with the economic crisis, prompting him to stay back. However in 2002, his intention to retire was rejected by the party's Central Committee.

"In 2002, when Dr Mahathir announced his retirement (in 2003), (I also got) to hold on because as a responsible leader, we have to see everything is smooth (the transition period), then when the time comes to go, we'll go," he said.

Dr Lim said that "the longest serving politician" tag among BN component parties attached to him would not deter him from contesting in the next general election as there is no age limit for politicians.

"Even though I'm old in politics, in terms of age, I'm still young. I'm just six months older than Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi," he said.

Dr Lim became Gerakan president in August 1980 when the post fell vacant following the retirement of Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu. He has retained the Beruas parliamentary seat since 1986.

Asked if his deputy, Datuk Kerk Choo Ting, would also be contesting in the next general election, Lim said: "Oh yes. There is no problem on that."

On MCA-Gerakan relations, Dr Lim said that he has no problem in terms of his working relationship with MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting and his deputy, Datuk Chan Kong Choy.

"I do not fish in troubled water, not taking advantage of it," he said, adding that there is a need for the MCA and Gerakan to exercise "self discipline" in order to have genuine cooperation.

He said that the leadership of both parties should talk to each other if there are problems existing between the two parties at grass-root level.

"We watch all the time, told the MCA leadership, if there is any problem from the grassroots, let me know...if not, how do you want to shake hands while the other hand holds a knife," he said.

He said that as political parties, both sides should have mutual understanding and sincere cooperation.

"You don't have to sign a memorandum of understanding to have such cooperation among political parties," he said.

-- BERNAMA

AT AHH RM