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Ling-Resign

LING LIONG SIK SENDS QUIT LETTER TO PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 7 (Bernama) -- Transport Minister and MCA President Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik announced today he has submitted a letter to resign from the Cabinet.

The undated letter was sent to prime minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Aug 15 last year, Dr Ling told reporters here.

Dr Ling said at the Barisan Nasional (BN) supreme council meeting today, Dr Mahathir revealed that he had received the letter but had yet to make a decision.

"It is up to the prime minister to decide," he said.

Earlier during his press conference after the same meeting, Dr Mahathir made no mention of Dr Ling's desire to step down.

Dr Ling said that he had told the prime minister when he tendered the letter that he was ready to leave after the official opening of University Tuanku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) that was held on Aug 13, last year.

He said: "It was the perfect time for retirement. With the opening of UTAR, I have completed my long service to the country. I don't think I can do much more."

"I felt that my agenda has been completed," he said.

"I have tried to resign in 2000, and has not been successful," he said, referring to his earlier attempt to resign from the Cabinet which was opposed by his supporters and subsequently retracted.

Dr Ling first announced his intention to step down from the Cabinet on May 22, 2000, but was advised against it by the prime minister.

He said that he had no regrets of leaving the Cabinet, and was mentally prepared for the retirement.

He was asked to take two weeks' leave to rethink his intention of resigning from the Cabinet.

After his long leave, Dr Ling, on June 6, 2000, announced that he was willing to continue his ministerial post as Transport Minister which he has held for the past 14 years (until 2000).

Asked by a reporter whether he was leaving because of the pending court cases affecting him, he denied this. "I've cleared all my court cases," he said.

"They're all lies," Dr Ling added.

On his post as president of MCA, he said that it was up to the party members to decide.

Asked what he would do during his retirement, he jokingly said: "One thing for sure, I'm not going back to the medical service since I've forgotten the names of medicines."

On his political career, Dr Ling said: "I'm grateful that I'm able to be of service to the nation and grateful to the prime minister and to the country."

Dr Ling, a medical graduate from the University of Singapore, quit his medical practice in 1975 to be actively involved in politics, starting as the MCA Member of Parliament for Mata Kuching in Penang in 1974.

In 1976, he was appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Local Government and Federal Territory and more than a year later, transferred to the Information Ministry and in 1982 to the Finance Ministry, holding the same post.

On March 28, 1984, he resigned as Deputy Finance Minister following his expulsion from the MCA following a party crisis. He was among the 14 MCA

stalwarts led by Tan Koon Swan.

He was reinstated into the party on Feb 18, 1985, and was appointed as Deputy Education Minister and a year later appointed as Minister of Transport, succeeding Tan Sri Chong Hon Nyan who went on retirement.

-- BERNAMA

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