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Abdullah-Opposition

WALKOUT BY OPPOSITION TO CREATE POLITICAL ISSUE, SAYS ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, April 8 (Bernama) -- The "boycott" by the opposition members in Parliament during voting on the re-delineation of electoral boundaries was to create political issue and aimed at seeking support from outside the Dewan Rakyat, Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

"They are looking for political issue and with this, they hope to get support from outside the Dewan. But, the issue has been debated.

"If the opposition can't find any reason to oppose, then it means they are not the opposition. The majority has spoken...the majority has made the decision," he told reporters at the Parliament lobby, here today.

On the decision of the 144 votes that supported the motion on the review and re-delineation of the electoral boundaries for all states except for Sarawak, Abdullah said it was a good decision because it exceeded the more than 50 per cent majority vote and they all came from Barisan Nasional (BN) representatives.

He said the opposition had the right to vote on the motion at the Dewan Rakyat but they did not want to exercise their rights.

He said the opposition had chosen to walk out and protest rather than indicate their votes in opposing both motions.

"It is as though if they vote...it won't make any difference to the outcome," he said.

If the opposition maintained their decision to oppose the decision of the voting on the re-delineation of electoral boundaries, Abdullah said it was not appropriate for the opposition to stand for election in the new constituencies to be created.

"Don't contest. Let BN win unopposed," he said.

Abdullah also criticised the allegations by the opposition that the government had tabled the motion on the re-delineation exercise hastily because it wanted to announce the general election very soon.

"They don't believe (Prime Minister Datuk Seri) Dr Mahathir (Mohamad who had said that the election won't be held before October). All these are assumptions that show as though we are heartless and that we are cheating them (the opposition)," he said.

When asked whether the BN could win the election in the new constituencies, he said the government was always confident of winning in any constituency.

On the allegation by the opposition that the re-delineation would give wider opportunity to the BN to win the next general election, Abdullah said the BN would work hard to achieve victory in whatever situation.

"But the re-delineation exercise was carried out by the Election Commission (EC). They (the opposition) can make various assumptions. The opposition is always like that, we (BN) are never right," he said.

He said the regulation on the re-delineation of electoral boundaries which was made by the EC and submitted to him could no longer be amended actually.

"After looking at the regulations in the Constitution on the procedures for amendment, what's the point of my keeping them. If I keep them, then there will be accusations. If I don't take it to Parliament in April (this month), what will they (the opposition) say.

"They will say that the report has been given to Pak Lah (Abdullah) as Acting Prime Minister, why keep it too long. Then they will say that Pak

Lah does not know how to read what is in the constitution which states that I have to hand it over as soon as possible to Parliament for tabling, debate and approval," he said.

Abdullah explained that it was difficult to please everyone because it was not only the opposition who were dissatisfied, there were also a handful of BN members of parliament (who were not satisfied).

When asked by reporters why the re-delineation had to be carried out before the Constitution was amended, Abdullah said it was to ensure that there would not be problems if the amendment to the Constitution was delayed.

-- BERNAMA

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