

16/03/2003

Ling vows prompt action to resolve party crisis

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik promised today he will act promptly to resolve the party's crisis as directed by acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday.

Dr Ling said Abdullah told him on Monday not to allow the "politics of triad" to creep into the party as this would have an adverse impact on MCA and the Barisan Nasional.

"I thank Abdullah for his concern over the problem in the MCA. He told me in a very brotherly manner that the problem must be resolved immediately.

"I urge the Youth head (Datuk Ong Tee Keat) to come forward and furnish proof on his allegations for the sake of the MCA and the BN. One cannot just simply say anything they wish without submitting the evidence."

Dr Ling, who is Transport Minister, said this after chairing the Chang Ming Thien board of directors' meeting at Wisma MCA here.

Abdullah had yesterday said the MCA crisis, if left unresolved, would have serious repercussions on the party and the BN.

Ong, during an MCA Youth nationwide gathering last Sunday, had alleged that certain party leaders had engaged triads or Chinese secret society members to intimidate their rivals with strongarm tactics.

Dr Ling said today if Ong was willing to submit any evidence, it would be handed over to the party's disciplinary board so that investigations could be carried out and those involved could be sacked.

On the action that would be taken against Ong if he maintained his stand not to disclose any evidence, Dr Ling replied: "He has made a very serious allegation and he should submit the evidence.

"The party has a constitution and all members have to abide by it. If he (Ong) does not want to follow it, he can choose to leave the MCA and join another party where he will abide by its regulations."

On whether the presidential council meeting on Tuesday would discuss the issue, Dr Ling said: "We might if the issue is raised."

On the peace plan initiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to resolve the internal crisis in MCA last April, Dr Ling said it was difficult to proceed with it when certain quarters were making one accusation after another without providing evidence.

"We surely want to proceed with the peace plan. However, making accusations that the party is full of street fighters and not willing to submit the proof is surely not part of the peace plan.

"Maybe after this, they will come out with allegations that MCA has thousands of money lenders."

MCA deputy president Datuk Seri Lim Ah Lek, when met earlier, said all party leaders and members must be sincere in heeding Abdullah's call. He said everyone had to unite as the general election was not too far and any internal problem in the MCA would not only affect the party and BN, but would also give the Opposition an advantage.