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MCA has a good and capable team in Cabinet, says Dr Ling

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Former MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, who resigned as Transport Minister last month, said today the MCA has a good and capable team in the Cabinet.

"I think MCA has got a good team in place. Party members should be happy that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has given the party a bigger role, now that we have an extra Deputy Minister (post)," he said at the Parliament lobby.

MCA deputy president Datuk Chan Kong Choy has been made Transport Minister in a minor Cabinet reshuffle today. He was Deputy Finance Minister.

Asked if he has any advice for Chan, Dr Ling, who was Transport Minister for 17 years, said: "No. As I said, I am very confident he will do well."

He had earlier said he believed Chan would do a very good job as Transport Minister as he is a capable leader.

Dr Ling, however, declined to comment on whether the appointments of the party leaders were a move to reunite the party except to say that they were the results of consultations between Dr Mahathir and MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting.

"Dr Mahathir had discussions with Ong. This is obviously the result.

"Although it is the prerogative of the Prime Minister to make appointments, I think it is the result of close consultations between the two of them. To me, it is a good team."

Dr Ling said he was happy to be back as a backbencher, the position he started in Parliament in 1974.

"Now in the twilight of my political life, I have returned as a backbencher.

"My feeling now is one of happiness and gratitude that I had been given a chance to serve so long, to do national service, to help the country for so long and in such high position. I am very, very grateful."

On the appointments of other party leaders, Dr Ling expressed confidence that they would perform well.

He said he had no doubt that Wanita MCA chief Datuk Dr Ng Yen Yen would perform well as Deputy Finance Minister II.

"I always said women handle finances well. Dr Ng had done very well in tourism (as Deputy Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister) and I'm sure she will bring into the Finance Ministry her enthusiasm and capability."

He added that Dr Ng would ably assist Dr Mahathir who is also the Finance Minister.