

**DPM: Interlok walkout due to misunderstanding**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**March 17, 2011**

Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin today insisted that the ethnic Indian members of the evaluation committee on the Interlok novel are still in the committee, saying that yesterday's turn of events was a "misunderstanding".

"There was a misunderstanding yesterday... I was informed by (MIC president) G Palanivel that he is now speaking (to the three members)... Palanivel has given his assurance that he will make sure that they will stay in the committee," he told reporters at the Parliament lobby today.

Denying that he had rejected the 100 amendments to the novel suggested by the committee, Muhyiddin claimed that he had in fact called for a review of the amendments as he believed that they were "minute" issues which ran away from the "isu pokok (main concern)".

"The issues brought up were not pertinent and not sensitive. (The committee members) are just bringing it up because they had the opportunity. For example the word 'Tuhan' should be spelled with a capital T and several other non-important things.

"So I advised them to look at the proposals again. We don't want to reject them but...(these) are very minute things," he said.

**Muhyiddin: It's a good novel**

He added that the ministry has no intention to remove the book from the Form Five syllabus, as it is a "good novel".

"For us, there is no problem. The novel is already in use. It's a good novel, many people read it without any problems, but there seem to be issues brought up by the Indian community.

"It's not the entire book, so we address these specific issues," he said.

Yesterday the three ethnic Indian committee members quit the panel citing disillusionment after a large portion of their 100 proposed amendments by the panel were rejected.

This include misspelled words, wrongly translated Tamil-language idioms and mistakenly-described Indian customs.

Muhyiddin said that he advised the committee not to be sidetracked by "minute" issues so that "we can put a full-stop" to the long-drawn out matter.

"It is better if we can take a bit more time and be more specific to make sure that everyone is satisfied. Things will crop up in the discussion process but I hope it can be solved soon," he said.

He said that the "main issue (the use of the word 'pariah') appears to have been solved but that would take some time (to iron out)."

However, he said, the matter cannot be resolved if "certain parties" continue to "stir up the issue" with no intentions to offer a solution.

"Those who say that the Indian community have lost faith in (the evaluative committee) is doing so with ill-intentions," he said.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/158901>