

A code to stop the moneybags

Q: Will Umno be able to keep money politics in check at its next election?

A: There's a need for an on-going campaign against this, because the crux of the matter is that there are smart alects who feel that the easiest way to gain votes is to buy them. The tendency is there, and for some people who have the money this is the norm.

Q: Your committee is revising Umno's code of ethics, which some had complained wasn't clear enough. Is it ready?

A: In Parliament, a Bill only goes through two readings, but the draft of the revised code that my committee is working on has already gone through four.

We have to be specific. We need to define all that we mean by money politics, all that a member can do, all that he cannot do.

When you interpret something as money politics, a smart alect will twist tilings and ask. "How come this is money politics?"

Someone approached me once to say. "I am an Umno Youth central committee member. Why is it wrong for me to go to the division and give money to the division Youth head?"

These grey areas means our committee cannot just define "offence". We must give examples.

But examples are not exhaustive. You can give 10 examples (of corrupt practices), but there will be 30 more you didn't think of.

We found that if we kept including more

and more examples, the code was in danger Of being diluted. This is an issue we are looking at.

Q: Will candidates be allowed to campaign in the next Umno election?

A: We, feel there: should be some form of campaigning in the next election, a managed campaign, not a free-for-all campaign.

Why not free-for-all? For obvious reasons. In Umno, when you say free, then everything really goes free, there's no stopping them.

We've seen the effects of a free-for-all campaign: money politics became rampant, and a lot of allegations and insinuations.

But we can allow a limited form of campaigning organised by the state liaison committees.

Q: Will this stop illegal campaigning?

A: Everyone knows that there was always campaigning going on despite the curbs.

But it was low-key, low profile, and under

control, until someone in the party made the statement, *bolehlah, sikit-sikit* (a little bit is all right).

This person said, "*Bolehlah, sikit-sikit, tak apa, bagi duit sikit-sikit tak apa* (a little bit is all right, to give a little money is all right)."

As far as the Malays are concerned, when you say *sikit-sikit tak apa* they take it to mean *banyak pun tak apa* (even a lot is all right).

The floodgates open, and things soon turn into a free-for-all. We were not consistent, even among ourselves, on what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. It creates confusion, and some take the opportunity to campaign.

We've suggested that action also be taken against those who file a complaint with the disciplinary board which is proved baseless.

Sometimes the person who loses or his supporters, cook up stories and accuse the winning candidate of offences they themselves were guilty of.

Politics is not like law. When someone says something bad about you, maybe it

isn't true, but when someone else believes it, it tarnishes your image. It's very difficult to recover your reputation.

It might lead to a situation where people say, "He may have been let off by the board but he really is guilty." Umno politics is very peculiar when it comes to things like this.

Q: Will the method of election be changed in the next party polls?

A: There were several views after the last party election two years, ago on how we could change the way we voted. I was keen to look into it.

I suggested that we elect supreme council members at the division level instead of at the general assembly.

Others, like Tengku Razaleigh (party veteran Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah), suggested that all party members vote en bloc.

We have not heard anything more on this from the party. Until I got a serious proposal from the state liaison committees, or unless I get instructions to look into it by the supreme council or management committee, the current system will be left as it is.