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1957 social contract adhered to, says PM

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THE social contract entered into by the country's founding fathers in 1957 need not be reaffirmed as the working of the present administration is consistent with it, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

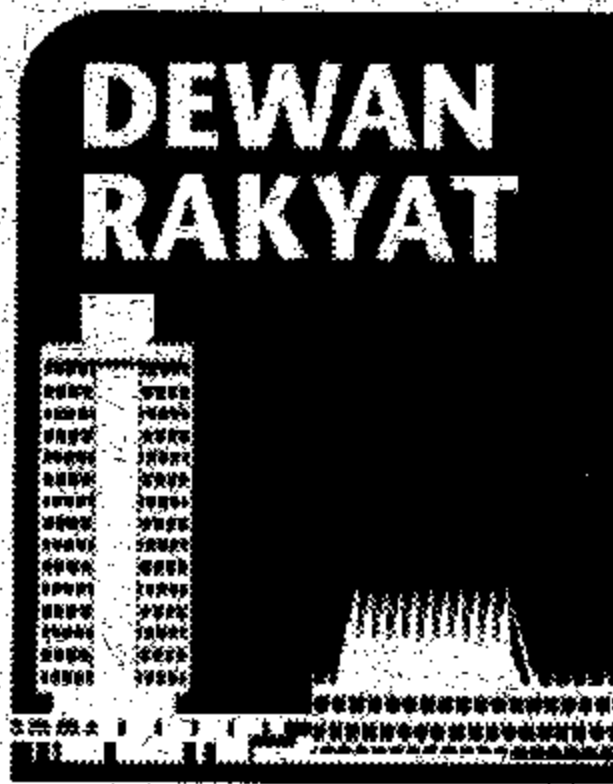
The government's approach also conformed with the Federal Constitution agreed to by the three main communities 50 years ago.

Abdullah said the application of Islamic principles was not in conflict with the Federal Constitution.

"Malaysia is not a secular or theocratic nation. It is an Islamic nation, governed by Islamic tenets but adhering closely to democratic principles in line with the highest laws of the land, the Federal Constitution.

"This unique formula has been successfully tested and I do not see why such a government cannot continue to rule.

"I reject all claims that our method



■ Reports by V. Vasudevan, Anis Ibrahim and Eileen Ng

of governing is in conflict with the social contract agreed to by our past leaders."

Abdullah said the Federal Constitution was drafted before independence, based on the compromise and co-operation of the three main races.

"Although Islam is the official religion, everyone is free to practise his own religion."

He said the opposition appeared to be raising issues such as the social

contract and Malaysia's status as the country's 50th anniversary was approaching.

"Although I have spoken on this many times, these issues keep being raised. This leads me to conclude that the opposition's intent is merely to gain political mileage."

He was replying to a question by Lim Kit Siang (DAP-Ipoh Timur) who had asked whether the social contract would be reaffirmed on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of independence.

Lim also asked whether the Malaysia Agreement that Malaysia was not an Islamic nation but a secular one with Islam as its official religion, would be reaffirmed.

In his written reply, Abdullah said the Islamic principles applied were based on Islam Hadhari which he introduced.

"This approach also maintains harmony among the various races and religions in our country."