

Rulers, Alliance Reach A

Compromise On Religion

MALAYA TO BE MUSLIM NATION

KUALA LUMPUR, WED.—THE NEW FEDERATION OF MALAYA WILL BE LAUNCHED AS A MUSLIM STATE ON AUGUST 31 THIS YEAR, WITH THE DECLARATION THAT ISLAM IS THE STATE RELIGION WRITTEN INTO THE CONSTITUTION.

THIS DECISION IS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN REACHED BETWEEN ALLIANCE LEADERS AND RULERS' REPRESENTATIVES IN THE WORKING PARTY NOW STUDYING THE REID CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS.

The Rulers, who had stood against a declaration about religion in the Constitution because it would compromise their position as religious heads of their own states, are reported to have accepted an Alliance compromise proposal.

Alliance leaders are reported to have convinced the Rulers that beyond a formal declaration in the Constitution—as desired by Mr. Justice Hamid of Pakistan—there will be no change in the established position of the Rulers as head of the faith in their own states.

To Strengthen Islam

The Alliance leaders have insisted that its plea for such constitutional provision is intended only to strengthen the position of Islam and the right of State governments to deal with questions of the Muslim Faith.

Alliance leaders had also pointed out that without a formal acceptance, it might be difficult either to unify Islamic Laws throughout the Federation or safeguard the position of the Faith in the Settlements of Penang and Malacca after independence.

They are said to have pledged also that there shall be no Federal Ministry of Religious Affairs or Department to deal with religion at the centre.

Accordingly, they are reported to have urged the Rulers' representatives to withdraw their objections to the declaration.

Alliance leaders were today said to be agreeable to trying out an "Electoral College" system for the Senate for a short period, with a rider in the Constitution that "if deemed more appropriate, members of the Upper House may be elected directly from the State or otherwise in future."

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Dual citizenship within the Commonwealth as proposed by the Reid team is believed to be unacceptable to the Alliance on the ground that it may compromise the principle that Malaysians should owe undivided loyalty to the Federation, recognising the Queen only as the head of the Commonwealth.

Transport Minister Mr. Ong Yoke Lin who is one of four Alliance members on the Constitution Working Party declared at a civics course for Chinese village headmen today: "we must all give our absolute loyalty to Malaya."

The Alliance Government, he said, had aimed at orderly progress towards Merdeka and thereafter a stable, democratic and just administration.

"The Alliance Party has achieved independence by constitutional means with the full backing of the overwhelming majority of the people. There should be ever-increasing mixing and getting together of races because all are Malaysians" he said.

UMNO Joins 'Come Back' Plea To Ruler

JOHORE BAHRU, Wed.—UMNO here is backing the move by Chinese and Indian communities in the State to get 83-year-old Sultan Ibrahim back to the throne of the country.

Dr. P. Ramaswami Svarneyam, UMNO's spokesman, said: "We Malays in Johore feel it will be an honour for us if Sultan Ibrahim accepts this supreme post."

He said if there was any "right" before, it was only temporary and it was now over.

He was referring to the boycott of the Sultan's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1955 by Alliance members, following the Ruler's throne room speech.

The Sultan, who is now in England, has ruled Johore for more than 62 years.

The Standard Bearer, one of many close friends of the Sultan in Singapore and the Federation, have written to him personally urging him to accept the Paramount Rulership of independent Malaya.