

Abdullah: Keng Yaik speaks from the heart

NST-3/9/2006

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik may be brutally frank and given to becoming emotional on some issues.

But the Energy, Water and Communication Minister is essentially a good man with the interests of the people and the nation at heart.

This is Datuk Seri Abdullah's honest opinion of a man who has shocked many with his frankness, earthy language and "swearing and cursing" on issues.

The Prime Minister, who has known Dr Lim since both were young politicians, said the Gerakan president was equally quick to apologise for over-reacting.

"He is quick to say 'sorry, sorry' if he knows he has gone overboard with his swearing and cursing," Abdullah said at the Gerakan's 35th National Delegates Conference here yesterday.

Describing Dr Lim as a man who spoke from the heart and, at times went overboard, he said the former always did everything in good faith.

He said Dr Lim was also very careful about the Prime Minister's time, "assuming that he was disturbing me by inviting me to Gerakan or ministry functions".

"Actually, I have never turned him down. I am here as the chairman of Barisan Nasional to fulfil my duty to open this congress."

Abdullah was saddened by the fact that this would be Dr Lim's last speech as president at the party general assembly.

"I have known him for a long time. I have known him since I was a civil servant. I knew him as an angry young man for which he had to pay a price." (Dr Lim was expelled from the MCA after resigning as minister over the expulsion of MCA reform movement leaders).

Abdullah said he had seen Dr Lim's ways and views in BN meetings and as a counterpart in the Cabinet.

"I know that when speaking, Dr Lim is always brutally frank and curses and swears at times. That is when he gets overly passionate with the issue."

Abdullah admitted that while Dr Lim appreciated the BN concept, as Gerakan chief he always presented views from the point of his party.

"But when the time comes to making a decision, he will take a stand that will ensure the primacy of the BN Government.

"He will also take into considera-

'But when the time comes to making a decision, he will take a stand that will ensure the primacy of the BN Govt'

tion the interest of the people when a decision has to be taken."

On Dr Lim's impending retirement as party chief, Abdullah said it was neither too late nor too early to thank him for the co-operation rendered to him and the BN.

Abdullah said that although there were all sorts of problems in the BN, there should be discussion and co-operation among components to overcome issues together.

"We have to show to the people and the Yang di-Pertuan Agong that we are united. We (BN) exist because of the people. They elected us and gave us a mandate.

"We have to carry out our responsibilities to the best of our abilities. Our priority is the country."

He said it was his sincere hope to see Gerakan grow in strength under the leadership of Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, who will take over as acting party president.

"In fact, it is my wish to see all BN components in a strong position so that they can contribute positively to the success of the coalition."

Abdullah said that there should be sincerity in politics as it is "the responsibility of elected leaders to create a stable and strong country".