MISSING OUT AS CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY – WHITHER MALAYSIAN ENGINEERS?

By: Ir. Prof. Abang Abdullah bin Abang Ali, IEM President

Last year, the World Federation of Engineering Organisations (WFEO) in its general assembly in Tunisia installed the first Malaysian, Y. Bhg. Academician Dato' Ir. Lee Yee Cheong as its President, giving recognition to Malaysian engineering in the eyes of the world engineering body. Earlier, a Malaysian was for the first time appointed President of the Federation of Engineering Institutions of Islamic Countries (FEIIC) and a Malaysian was the President of the Federation of Engineering Institutions of South East Asia and the Pacific (FEISEAP). A Malaysian was the founding head of the ASEAN Engineers Register as well as the APEC/EMF International Engineers Register. It appears Malaysians are conquering the world in the engineering field.

But down in Malaysia, Malaysian engineers missed out from important appointments on their own turf. Engineers were recently replaced by non-engineers in the appointment of heads of engineering-based GLCs, namely Telekom and Tenaga.

And when cracks appeared at the piers of the MRR2, first an Australian and then a German engineer was called in to investigate. And when the two reports differed, a British consultant was asked to give a third opinion. It is as if there are no equally qualified local Malaysian engineers who can do the job. And this happens while the Board of Engineers, Malaysia has recently invited registration for Structural and Geotechnical Engineering Accredited Checkers.

The irony is while Malaysian engineers gain recognition at the international and regional levels, down in Malaysia and perhaps true to our backroomboys image, engineers are denied important appointments which would give them good opportunities to contribute to the development of our country.

The time has come for the government to recognise that Malaysian engineers are as good as their foreign counterparts and to accept that engineers can perform as well if not better in heading large corporations, particularly in engineering-based ones. This practice of denying Malaysian engineers from taking up or holding important positions or appointments in the government and industry would not augur well with the effort taken by The Institution of Engineers, Malaysia in promoting Malaysian engineering expertise locally and abroad. ■

CORRECTION

In the September 2004 issue of Jurutera, **Ir. Tang Kam Kok (F00737)** was erroneously listed in the Condolences section on Page 16 in the Blue Pages section.

The Editorial Board apologises for the error, and deeply regrets to have distressed and upset Ir. Tang Kam Kok and his family.

The Institution will investigate the slip-up and take steps to ensure that this will not occur again.

Chief Editor
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