

THE  
**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 3]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE FIRST  
PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA.

*11th Sitting*

*Friday, 8th September, 1967*

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

The Assembly met at 2.30 p.m.

*Prayers*

*[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]*

*Present*

*His Honour the Deputy Speaker, Mr. R. C. Tello.*

*Members of the Government*

*Ministers*

**Dr. the Honourable P. A. Reid,**  
*Minister of Trade.*

**The Honourable P. S. d'Aguiar,**  
*Minister of Finance.*

**The Honourable N. J. Bissember,**  
*Minister for Parliamentary Affairs*  
*(Leader of the House).*

**The Honourable R. E. Checks,**  
*Minister of Local Government.*

**The Honourable C. M. L. John,**  
*Minister of Home Affairs.*

**The Honourable W. O. R. Kendall, C.B.E., J.P.,**  
*Minister of Health and Housing.*

**The Honourable C. A. Merriman, J.P.,**  
*Minister of Labour and Social Security*

**The Honourable M. F. Singh,**  
*Minister of Works and Hydraulics.*

**The Honourable M. W. Carter,**  
*Minister of Information.*

*Parliamentary Secretaries:*

**Mr. D. B. deGroot,**  
*Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office.*

**Mr. G. Bowman,**  
*Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.*

**Mr. O. E. Clarke,**  
*Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education.*

**Mr. P. Duncan,**  
*Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Local Government.*

**Mr. J. G. Joaquin, O.B.E., J.P.,**  
*Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and Hydraulics.*

**Mr. C. V. Too-Chung,**  
*Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance.*

*Other Members:*

**Mr. W. A. Blair**

**Mr. J. Budhoo**

**Mr. M. Kasim**

**Mr. W. G. Carrington**

**Mr. R. G. B. Field-Ridley**

**Mr. D. Mahraj**

**Mr. H. Prashad**

**Mr. T. A. Sancho**

**Rev. A. B. Trotman**

**Mr. H. M. S. Wharton, J.P.**

*Members of the Opposition*

**Mr. A. Chase**

**Mr. Ram Karran**

**Mr. R. Chandisingh**

**Mr. H. J. M. Hubbard**

**Dr. Charles Jacob, Jr.**

**Dr. F. H. W. Ramsahoye**

**Mr. M. Hamid, J.P.**

**Mr. J. R. S. Luck**

**Mr. D. C. Jagan**

**Mr. H. Lall**

**Mr. Mooner Khan, J.P.**

**Mr. Y. Ally**

**Mr. R. D. Persaud, J.P.**

**Mr. M. N. Poonai**

**Mr. S. M. Saffee**

Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. F. A. Narain

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. M. B. Henry.

*Absent*

**The Honourable L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C. .**

*Prime Minister*

**The Honourable E. F. Correia,**

*Minister of Communications*

**The Honourable Mrs. W. Gaskin,**

*Minister of Education*

**The Honourable R. J. Jordan,**

*Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources*

- *on leave*

**The Honourable S. S. Ramphal, C.M.G., Q.C.,**

*Attorney-General and Minister of State*

- *on leave*

**Mr. J. H. Thomas**

- *on leave*

**Dr. C. B. Jagan,**

*Leader of the Opposition*

- *on leave*

**Mr. B. H. Benn**

**Mr. C. V. Nunes**

**Mr. E. M. G. Wilson**

**Mr. L. Linde**

**Dr. S. A. Ramjohn**

**Mr. E. M. Stoby**

**Mr. M. Bhagwan**

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE  
SPEAKER

## Leave to Members

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, I have these announcements to make. The hon. Mr. R. J. Jordan has asked to be excused from today's sitting as well as the Hon. Mr. J.H. Thomas and Dr. C. B. Jagan.

## Letters of Condolence

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We have received a letter from the Town Council of New Amsterdam, recording the condolences of the Mayor and Town Council of New Amsterdam on the death of the Speaker.

We have also received from the Speaker of the House of Assembly of Barbados, a resolution passed by that House on the death of the Speaker.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS  
AND REPORTS

The following Report was laid:

Annual Report of the Lands and  
Mines Department for the year 1966.  
[Minister for Parliamentary Affairs  
on behalf of the Minister of  
Agriculture and Natural Resources.]

REQUESTS FOR LEAVE TO MOVE  
THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE  
ASSEMBLY ON MATTERS OF  
URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr. Chase: Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask your leave to raise a question of urgent public importance. It concerns the office of the Commissioner of Police.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member is out of order. Such questions are initiated in the Speaker's Office. I have already discussed this matter with the hon. Member and he has been refused permission. I do not think the matter is urgent. [Mr. Luck: "Refer to the relevant Standing Order."]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS—  
FIRST READING

The Minister for Parliamentary Affairs (Mr. Bissember): On behalf of the Prime Minister, I beg to give notice of the introduction and First Reading of the following Bill:

The Co-operative Societies  
(Amendment) Bill.

Mr. Jagan: I see that the Bill is to be published tomorrow. I cannot see how we can introduce a Bill before it is published. [Interruption by Mr. Luck.] [Mr. Bissember: "Are you still talking Mr. Luck?"]

The Minister of Finance (Mr. d'Aguiar): I beg to give notice of the introduction and First Reading of the following Bill:

The Capital Gains Tax (Amendment)  
Bill

Mr. Jagan: Mr. Speaker, do I understand that you had ruled on the point?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I shall give this matter a little thought and I shall see you in the Speaker's Office.

Mr. Jagan: I understand that the Bill has not yet been published and it has not yet been read. I want to know whether the Bill has been introduced.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been introduced in conformity with its position on the Order Paper.

Mr. Jagan: No—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There is nothing in the Standing Orders which prevents the Speaker from making a Ruling.

Mr. Jagan: We do not know that the Bill is introduced.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I shall speak with you as I promised. In the meantime, you yourself may have a look at Standing Order 45 (4).

Mr. Bissember: On behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources, I beg

[MR. BISSEMBER]

to give notice of the introduction and First Reading of the following Bill.

**The Petroleum (Production)  
(Amendment) Bill.**

The Minister of Local Government (Mr. Cheeks): I beg to give notice of the introduction and First Reading of the following Bill:

**The Local Government  
(Christianburg/Wismar/Mackenzie Country  
District) (Special Provisions) Bill**

The Bills were read the First time.

**PUBLIC BUSINESS  
MOTION**

**Refund of Stamp Duty to the Promoters of  
the Guyana Pandits’ Council (Incorporation)  
Bill.**

“Whereas on the 8th of October, 1966, in accordance with Standing Order No. 57(5) (b) and section 9(33) of the Tax Ordinance, Chapter 298, the Promoters of the Guyana Pandits’ Council (Incorporation) Bill, 1966, paid to the Accountant General the prescribed stamp duty of \$100.00;

And whereas section 9(33) of the Tax Ordinance Chapter 298, Provides for the amount to be remitted by the National Assembly;

Be it resolved that this National Assembly approve of the remission of the stamp duty of one hundred dollars paid by the Guyana Pandits’ Council in terms of section 9(33) of the Tax Ordinance, Chapter 298”  
[Rev. Trotman.]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member Rev. Trotman.

Rev. Trotman: The Tax Ordinance, Chapter 298 provides that the amount which was paid by the promoters of the Guyana Pandits’ Council as stamp duty when the Bill was submitted to this hon. House be remitted by this National Assembly. I can see this as a very uncontroversial matter in accordance with Chapter 298, to make the

refund provided for and I can see no reason for delaying its passing, so I very formally move this Motion.

2.40 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are you seconding the Motion?

Dr. Jacob: I am speaking for the Opposition.

Mr. Wharton *seconded*.

Dr. Jacob: My hon. Friend who moved the Motion was correct in stating that a Motion of this nature calls for no opposition. What he forgot to state, however, was that the circumstances surrounding the interpretation of the Guyana Pandits’ Council were quite different from those which surrounded the interpretation of other religious bodies. Generally, this type of Motion is never subject to debate in this House and would pass without any difficulty. But that is when the circumstances are normal.

We have on many occasions in this House passed resolutions remitting stamp duties to certain religious bodies if their Bills have been considered and passed by the House. There have been a number of such resolutions. But this one, if Members of the House can remember, engendered a great deal of controversy within the House and outside of the House. Many people outside of the House, who are Pandits, were opposed to this Bill. When this House approved the remittance of funds that were paid by other religious bodies, it was done in the belief that these were bona fide religious organisations that were incorporated. This is not the case with the Guyana Pandits’ Council. It was also felt by Members of the House, when these remittances were approved, that these organisations showed no outward signs of political partisanship. They were all non-political. They may have been politically committed secretly, but that is not the concern of this House.

It also came out in the debate on the Guyana Pandits' Council Bill that the Pandits who sought and received corporate status were not representative of the Hindu community in the country. For this additional reason, it appears to me that this Council has been created for the purpose of controlling and, perhaps, even muzzling the Hindu religion in the interests of the parties that form the present Government, and this type of control, to say the least, is repugnant to the Constitution of Guyana. For all of these reasons, therefore, my colleagues and I will vote against the Motion.

I wish to refer to that fact that one of the chief promoters of the Guyana Pandits' Bill, the Secretary of the Guyana Pandits' Council, has seen the mistake he made by having this corporate body, and he has, since the incorporation of the Council, resigned as Secretary.

Mr. Persaud: The hon. Mover of the Motion said that he thought this would not be a controversial issue. The Bill was not controversial because the hon. Mr. Trotman had moved it. And the Motion for the refund of the money is not controversial because Mr. Trotman has brought. It is controversial because, by the Act, certain things are intended to be done.

The hon. Dr. Jacob referred to the fact that the Secretary of the organisation has resigned. I am in possession of the Secretary's resignation and this is what he said:

"It pains me very much to see the religious division of the Hindu community and I have also seen that the Act will be used to give power to a few Pandits and dominate others."

His name is in the Pandits' Council Act. He was one of the members who were supporting the Bill. I made the charge when the Bill was proposed to the House that the persons whose names were put in the Bill

were not consulted before the Bill came here. — *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order! Let the hon. Member make his speech, please.

Mr. Persaud: I now come to the question of examinations. This is very important. The Guyana Pandits' Council sent circulars to Pandits throughout the country inviting them to attend a conference. They were to meet Pandits from Surinam to discuss the question of — *[Interruption.]* When the Pandits turned up, not one representative from Trinidad or Surinam was present. Without any examination, certificates were given out to a number of Pandits. That is a crime. I make this charge because it can be substantiated. Those persons were requested to pay the sum of \$10 each. In other words, they were not getting certificates on merit, they were getting them on payment.

Yesterday, the hon. Minister of Education went to the Pandits' Council in East Street and handed out certificates to some Pandits, and in her statement she said that as religionists and the guardians of religion they should not practise superiority or inferiority.

2.50 p.m.

How can the Minister say this at this stage when she herself voted for superiority and inferiority in the Pandits' Council (Incorporation) Bill? Don't you see the Minister is a hypocrite?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: You will have to withdraw that remark. You cannot refer to a Minister in that way.

Mr. Persaud: I withdraw the remark. Parliament passed legislation to permit discrimination in a community, discrimination between man and man, in the name of religion. We opposed it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We are not debating the Bill again. Please try to speak to the Motion.

**Mr. Persaud:** I think that when money is being refunded to an organisation the Members of Parliament are entitled to give reasons why the money should not be refunded. We are saying that the refund should not be made because the Act is being put into operation and Parliament is being used to degrade the religion of a large section of this community.

What I want to do is to ask the Government to stop being a party to the degradation of a particular community. The Government has let Parliament put a stamp of approval on fraud committed by a group of people who are deliberately using Parliament and the Government as such to degrade. —

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I have to remind you again that this is a Private Member's Bill.

**Mr. Persaud:** I am glad that you have reminded me. If you will read the *Guyana Graphic*, today's issue, you will see that it states that before a new person can begin to practise as a Pandit he will have to get a certificate of competence from the Pandits' Council. If this is a Private Member's Bill I think it should only affect those who are members of the Council but the Registrar General, Mr. Barrow, has refused to appoint as Marriage Officers persons who are in charge of temples or persons who have been performing the work of Pandits for a number of years. The Registrar General is demanding that before these persons are appointed Marriage Officers they should go and pay \$10 to obtain a certificate of competence from the Pandits' Council.

That is what we are complaining about. If, as you said, sir, and as the hon. Mover said when he was introducing the Pandits' Council (Incorporation) Bill, this was a Private Member's Bill, then it should only affect those who are on the Pandits' Council and that is all right. We have seen that the Act is being misused and Pandits are being told that unless

they come within the fold of the Pandits' Council they will not be allowed to carry out their work in this community. I have nothing against the Mover of this Motion, but let him reiterate his statement that the Pandits' Council (Incorporation) Act can only affect those who are within the fold of the Pandits' Council.

Now I come to the question of the College. I am making the point to show that we are refunding money to an organisation that is guilty of misusing the processes of Parliament and is violating an Act which we opposed when it was before Parliament. When the Governor-General visited the institution during last year and distributed certificates it was reported in the *Guyana Graphic*. I think it was on March 5th, that the Principal of the College was knowledgeable, that he had certain qualifications and would be in charge of this institution which would impart knowledge and teach people so that they could qualify themselves at examinations.

Mr. . . . was a tenant in the building and was actually paying a rent of \$50 a month. He was not employed by the Pandits' Council as Principal or to give instructions to these Pandits. In a function before his departure from the country he made this point clear.

We are seeing degradation of people in a religious community. Pandit Sharma, who was to teach in the College, has resigned and will tell the country that at no stage was he conducting examinations. He said so in writing. No examinations were held, but certificates were issued. What is happening now is, that the Pandits' Council is telling the Hindu community — it is time that people knew this. I don't want members to be emotional about this matter, but persons on the Government side who belong to religious communities ought to have respect for their own religion and particularly they

should have respect for the religion of other sections of the community. I have respect for religion. I am saying this, where the Hindu community is involved, but if a matter involved the Christian community I would also speak about it. This is not a matter for emotion; it is not a matter at which persons should make fun. It is a serious matter which affects the very foundation of the Hindu community in this country. The Government must put an end to it, but instead of putting an end to it, the Government is helping to degrade people. It ingratiates itself with all who are making mockery of the Hindu religion. This is my charge and I think it is fair.

I say that at the moment there is no Principal and no Deputy Principal of the College. Ramnarine Sharma is residing with his family at the place where the College is. No instructions have been given; nobody went there for training. People went there to collect their certificates and to have it published in the newspapers so that the public could be led to believe that there was a Pandits' College.

The Pandits' Council has written to all the temples in the country — and I am in possession of one of the letters — telling them that Government has given an ecclesiastical grant to religious denominations. The Council asked the people in charge of temples to submit certain information to it, so that it could approach Government for a portion of that grant. This is another dishonest act of the Pandits' Council because there is no such grant. I had to point this out over and over again to the Hindu community and I published an item in the Hindu organ informing the Hindu community that there is no such vote in the Estimates. It cannot be denied.

I am saying that if the Government continues to give the official stamp to the Pandits' Council, the members of the

Council will use it to mislead and fool the Hindu community in the name of religion. This is very wrong and I think something must be done to put an end to it.

As I said, the Council speaks about a College but the building is the residence of a priest. I also have in my possession a letter signed by this particular priest. I am told he is not Assistant Secretary and he is not acting Secretary of the Pandits' Council. Apparently this man officiated at a ceremony for a member of the Hindu community. It is the custom that no charge is made at such ceremonies. A priest officiates and if the person cares to give him something, he gives it; if he does not want to give, he does not give. This is how the Hindu ceremonies are conducted.

When this Pandit departed from the home of this Hindu in Albouystown he wrote this letter dated 25th July, 1967:

“353 East Street,  
North Cummingsburg,  
Georgetown.

“Please make an early settlement,  
It is a very long time now. Ceremony  
was performed 24, 25, 26 March,  
1967.”

He goes on to detail the ceremonies —

“One Matceer, two Mahabeer Jandie,  
one Suraj Jandie, one Suraj Poran  
Kahata and one wedding.

All of these ceremonies were  
performed by Pandit Ramnarine  
Sharma, Marriage Officer, Minister of  
Religion. The minimum price for all  
these ceremonies is fifteen dollars.  
You have seven days to pay same  
from date. Failing to do so the  
matter will go to court.”

Yours Pandit Ramnarine Sharma  
Marriage Officer  
Minister of Religion.”

3 p.m.

This is what is happening in the Hindu community today. Never before has a priest threatened to take to court a devotee of the religion, but because the members of the

[MR. PERSAUD]

Hindu community are left to believe that there is an Act in Parliament which gives certain rights to the Pandit, they are being fooled.

This woman came to me trembling; she was terribly afraid. She said: "My husband is very ill, he cannot work. I myself am ill. Where will I find the money to pay the Pandit? He will take me to court." I told her: "Let the Pandit take you to court if he wishes." I can go on and name a number of incidents that have occurred since the passage in this Assembly of the Guyana Pandits' Council (Incorporation) Act.

I will therefore suggest that the hon. Mover review the position in the light of what is happening in the Pandits' Council, in the light of positive evidence that has been presented to the Government, and bring a Motion before Parliament to nullify the Guyana Pandits' Council (Incorporation) Act. This will be a good gesture on the part of the Government. As I said before, I speak with no emotion; I speak purely because I see that this Bill has done great harm in the community.

The hon. Leader of the House (Mr. Bissember) moved certain Amendments and voted with the Opposition. [Mr. Bissember: "The Opposition voted with me."] The point is that the hon. Leader of the House recognised that the Bill was against the interest of the Hindu community. It is not too late for the hon. Leader of the House to ask his colleagues to examine this matter with a view to correcting it.

I also wish to call the attention of the hon. Minister of Health and Housing (Mr. Kendall) who is in charge of births and deaths, to the point I made with respect to the Registrar General, I am prepared to go to his office and give him letters written to us by the Registrar General refusing to appoint two Pandits as marriage officers. One Pandit

is from Berbice and the other is in charge of the Bartica temple. He is the only Hindu priest in Bartica at the moment, and he is prevented by the Registrar General from legalising marriages.

I have no intention of compromising on this matter. All marriages should be legal. By refusing to appoint someone who is in charge of the Bartica temple, someone who is appointed by the leading members of the Hindu community in Bartica — C.D. Persaud, Sookraj and a number of other people — the Government is preventing Hindu marriages from being legalised. This Pandit's name is Doobay and he is recommended by the Maha Sabha that speaks for 99% — if not a 100% — of all the temples in this country. I speak without contradiction and it is only fair that the organisation be free to appoint Pandits to officiate in the temples. This man is not allowed to legalise marriages and I would appeal to the Minister concerned to look into this matter. I am prepared to go to him and put the matter clearly before him.

I am asking for this man to be appointed under Chapter 104, the Indian Labour Ordinance, which has nothing to do with the Guyana Pandits' Council (Incorporation) Act. In another case, I am asking for another man to be appointed under Chapter 164, the Marriage Ordinance, which has nothing to do with the Guyana Pandits' Council (Incorporation) Act. These are not laws for a few Pandits and the Registrar General is taking directions from the head of the Pandits' Council in this matter.

At the appropriate time I will bring this evidence before the Minister but one can see how far-reaching this Guyana Pandits' Council (Incorporation) Act is. It is for this reason that the members of the Opposition are concerned about this matter and it is for this reason that we oppose the Motion to refund to the Pandits' Council the sum of

money which is normally refunded to all religious organisations. If this organisation was really concerned with the promotion of religion and if it was prepared to respect the very Bill which it proposed before this House, perhaps some consideration would have been given, but we have seen that, as a result of this Bill, this organisation and its officers have been misusing the process of Parliament by misleading and fooling the Hindu community.

The time is ripe for that Act to be removed from Parliament. The continuation of this Act will mean that Government is sowing the seeds of division in the Hindu community, that Government is guilty of partisanship, that Government is bent on creating religious conflict in Guyana. This country is divided and only a person with cobweb in his eyes will deny this.

The Government wishes all organisations to play their part so that there will be some form of cultural and religious standing. As a result of this, I myself went on G.I.S. programmes to speak with representatives of the various religious denominations so that all in Guyana can be educated in the various concepts and ideas of the many religions in this country. While we are willing to do this, this Government, on the other hand, is sowing the seeds of dissension and confusion in the community.

I sincerely appeal to the Government to review this matter, to examine the Guyana Pandits' Council (Incorporation) Act and to carry out in Parliament the necessary process for the nullification of this Act. If the Government does not do this, it must be charged with religious discrimination and with creating religious confusion and chaos in Guyana, particularly in the Hindu community. I do not want to bore the Members of this House but I hope I have made myself clear. I hope the Government

will give consideration to this matter. I oppose the Motion and I will vote against it.

Mr. Ram Karran: The hon. Mover of the Motion, contrary to what he saw, unless he is blind, suggested that this measure is not controversial. The observation has also been made that measures of this kind are usually not opposed, that the passage of Motions for the refund of stamp duty is automatic. Your Honour was present in the mother of Parliament when a similar observation was made relating to the grant of Independence to our territory. But we saw an exception there, we saw Members of Parliament giving reason after reason — even rattling off the names of terrorists, including no less a person than the Prime Minister who headed the list and, who had subverted the Constitution of Guyana — *[Interruption.]*

My friend makes the very valid observation that these statements are being recorded. They should be recorded. It should also be recorded that this House and this nation have been sadly divided on this issue.

The hon. Member Mr. Persaud has made certain valid observations.

3.10 p.m.

It is no use saying that it is a private Member's Bill unless we are so blind not to see what took place in the Gallery. There was not a single dissident vote. Members were called from the Corridors to give support to this measure which was supposed to be a private Member's Bill. The whole Hindu community is upset by the bunch of racketeers who used the Government to divide the community. These people walk around and call themselves Brahmins but they are just what the Indians call — "rakshases". It is a perfect description of the hon. Minister of Education and the hon. Mover of the Motion. This Minister goes to a Pandits' Council meeting to award certificates for an examination that was

[MR. RAM KARRAN]

never held. This Parliament and hon. Members here should not be brought to that level.

We cannot, at this moment, or in this Session, or at this time, urge the withdrawal of this measure but we can with as much strength at our disposal denounce this measure. No self-respecting Pandit, who wishes to do something in the name of the Lord, would pay \$100 for that benefit. Ten people must have paid \$10 each, put it in a property, controlled it themselves, and called it a Pandits' Council. Now they are trying to save the \$100. Some of them hold professional status. Some of them hold property in their own names. These men propose to benefit personally from this measure. This venture is a racket and this Government — allegedly private Member's — Bill will create dissension and difficulties for people in Guyana.

One can understand how strongly the hon. Prime Minister and the Government feel about this measure. When an eminent member of the Hindu community came to this Country and expressed his personal views on this Bill, he was threatened with expulsion from Guyana. I went to his lecture at the Town Hall; his standard was high. The Deputy Lord Mayor expressed the same view, yet such a person having come to this country was threatened with being hounded out by the hon. Prime Minister, who seemed to have had a one-sided picture of the story. This shows how strongly they feel about this Bill.

I wish to emphasise that this claim for the automatic refund of this money to the Pandits' Council should not be supported by this House. I think the hon. Members on the Government side do not know the damage that this Bill has caused up to the present day. People at Bartica are being denied the right of being married according to the rites

of their religion because a senior Government Official refuses to give the Pandit there the authority to carry out his work. The only thing for this priest to do is to go to these bogus Pandits but he does not want to do that because he happens to be a true supporter of the Sanatan Dharma, which is the premier organisation representing Hindus in this country. It can be so arranged for him to fail this alleged examination. Unless he can pass this examination he has to stay at Bartica without being able to perform his functions.

We seem to have gone back to the days when Indians had to join the Christian religion to get employment as teachers. At that time an Indian had to change his name and his religion. All the Hindus on that Side of the House should be ashamed of themselves. All of those who call themselves into the court of the Pandits' Council will find the truth when the time comes.

Mr. Hubbard: I warned the hon. Members on the opposite Side when the Bill was introduced that they were mixing themselves up with a bunch of rascals and they would find out. One of the promoters of this Bill has already cut and run and the reason for that is, that there are no decent people there. They are rascals and the rascals cannot get away with it.

We have here today, assisting the hon. Mover of the Motion, a Pandit who became a Brahmin by Deed Poll. He went to the Courts, had his name changed to a Brahmin name, and the Reverend Gentleman, whose tenet is that he must do unto others as he would have them do unto him, is defending a rascal and assisting that rascal to rob the Exchequer of this country of a hundred dollars.

3.20 p.m.

The other pleader, Mr. Trotman — Rev. Trotman I believe he is — had the inspiration some time or other to join a faith but he did

not have to pass any examination because, in this country, one can incarnate oneself into Christianity any time. I can see a number of faces over there who, when hard times hit them after the wrath of the people descends, will dress themselves up and turn their collars backwards and become Christian Priests.

I ask the hon. Mover of this Motion not to further strain the tolerance of the people of this country, and not to further stain the integrity of this House by pressing this Motion. We had all the evidence in this House that a bunch of rascals are using an Act which may or may not have been presented in good faith to plunder poor people. Look at Reverend Trotman who calls himself an instrument of justice! He ought to be ashamed of himself! He, and the whole bunch of them!

It is traditional that matters such as this should not be controversial, and if there is strong opposition, then they should not be proceeded with. The head of this movement for Pandits was warned and advised that, rather than have his dirty linen dragged into the House, he should forget the hundred dollars because he has made more than a hundred dollars from it. But so grasping is he that he is using the Reverend Gentleman to rob the Exchequer of this country. I thought that the Members of the front and back benches of this House would have shown a little more respect for this House now that the facts have come before them.

Rev. Trotman (replying): I have listened to many speakers who, today, have changed their attitudes towards Mr. Oudit Narine Sharma. I am satisfied that the expression "evil thinks he who evil does" is truly applicable to this case. Mr. Oudit Narine Sharma is no longer a rascal since he has submitted to pressure by the P.P.P. vandals — *[Interruption]*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order!

Rev. Trotman: It was I who, in this House, advocated that no pressure should be brought against this gentleman when they sought to bring pressure against him. And this is factual. Those who once blamed him severely have today stood up to bless him because he submitted to the pressure of the "boys". He is no longer a thief and a rascal. Today the hon. Reepu Daman Persaud brought a letter which he read to this House. It is my privilege to ask that the letter be submitted. If the letter cannot be submitted, then it is right for us to ask that it should not be considered. Whatever was contained in the letter should not be recorded. I have asked for that letter because I hold in my hand another letter. If the Speaker is satisfied that that letter should be submitted, I should like to read mine. It is a letter written by Pandit Oudit Narine Sharma of Sandy Babb Street, Kitty.

3.30 p.m.

I quote:

"To N.P. Sharma,  
President,  
Guyana Pandits' Council,  
353 East Street,  
Georgetown.

Dear Sir,

I regret very much to tender my resignation as Secretary of the Guyana Pandits' Council, to take effect immediately, as through circumstances beyond my control I am forced to send in my resignation. I am also resigning as a member of the Guyana Pandits' Council, and do not desire to have any connection whatsoever.

I therefore request you that in future my name must not be used in any correspondence whatsoever.

Thanking you, and my Pranam to all.

Yours truly,  
P. Oudit Narine Sharma."

This letter was sent to the President of the Guyana Pandits' Council under registered post.

[REV. TROTMAN]

Religion should be made of sterner stuff than some people in this House seem to make of it. I listened to lips that ought to be somewhat sealed on the point of religion as they gave utterance to statements. Let us think of these religious leaders who are here today seeking to criticise. Now, I am a religious leader — [Mr. Hubbard: "Religion must be very poor to have you as a leader."] — but I maintain — [Mr. Hamid: "Shame, shame."]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, order.

Rev. Trotman: It takes a lawyer to be a magistrate and when I hear criticisms coming from the hon. Member Mr. Hubbard I marvel to think that he too criticises. It is noteworthy that the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran brought into this debate reference to Swami Chinamayananda — [Interruptions.] This gentleman, who, we are told, is far above anyone in this country as a religious leader took pains to advise the leaders of the Maha Sabha, of which body the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud is a member. This is what he said to them, "If you want to lead Hindus, you will have to set your house in order." It was reasonable to advise leaders of religion to live such lives that their wives do not have to bring writs against them for divorce. [Interruptions.]

I maintain that leaders of religion must live moral lives and must not expose themselves to disrespect and still hope to continue to hold religious groups together. [Mr. Hubbard: "You are speaking against your Pandits."] I am speaking against the leaders of the Pandits on that side of the House. You know that two or three of them have writs filed against them by their wives for divorce. [Mr. Hubbard: "Didn't the Prime Minister get a divorce?"] [Mr. Poonai: "What is immoral about a divorce?"] The Prime Minister is not a religious leader.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, order.

Rev. Trotman: It was mentioned that the Government is dividing the Hindu populace but this Government was not in Clonbrook when the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud was chased out of his own temple, and —

Mr. Persaud rose —

Hon. Members (Government): Sit down!

Rev. Trotman: This is not the only Hindu temple out of which he was chased. I desire to present this magazine which is published by Pandit Oudit Narine Sharma, who has just been forced to resign. In this magazine —

Mr. Deputy Speaker: What is the name of the magazine?

Rev. Trotman: The name is *Dbarmodaya Yats Dbarmo Tato Jayab*. This is Volume 1, No. 2 and it is the official organ of the Guyana Pandits' Council. In this magazine the gentleman referred to, who was Secretary of the Guyana Pandits' Council until the date of his resignation, upheld the caste system and the duties of those who are members of a caste.

3.40 p.m.

[Mr. Luck: "Read away."] This is the same gentleman whose principles were so tedious and so wrong and who ought not to have been supported. He is now being taken into the arms of the others. Here he writes about the importance of performing the duties of one's caste. It means that he still stands out for caste and in the Act which gave incorporation to the Swatantra Vidwat Parishad it is known that the greatest controversy took place around the caste system when the word "Brahmin" was attacked. Today he is no more a sinner and the caste system, which these gentlemen objected to, is all right.

I heard the hon. Member Mr. Persaud say that the Pandits' Council is not a *bona fide* organisation. I should like to repeat that this is a registered body. It is registered under the

Friendly Societies Ordinance, 1953. [Mr. Hubbard: "That is before the court now."] Many threats were made against the foundation members of the Pandits' Council and it would not be amazing if one day we were to hear of certain felonious acts committed by some of "the boys" against them..

I should like to answer these nincompoops on another matter.

Mr. Jagan: On a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member must withdraw that word.

Rev. Trotman: I stand corrected. [Mr. Jagan: "Apologise."] [Mr. Hamid: "Are you following the Ruling of the Chair?"] It was said that I, a Christian minister, have been made a minister of an incorporate body of Guyana without having passed an examination. I should like to inform hon. Members that no incorporate body here accepts a minister capable of exchanging pulpits unless he has been properly made a minister in this country. The body to which I belong is one of the oldest incorporate bodies in this country. [Mr. Jagan: "You have not answered the question."]

I desire to say that Chapter 298 provides for this stamp duty to be remitted by the National Assembly and I can see that there is nothing else that this honourable House can do but accept the claim for refund.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Hubbard: Division!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Let the Division be taken.

Assembly divided: Ayes 21, Noes 13, as follows:

| Ayes             | Noes                |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Mr. Wharton      | Mr. Saffee          |
| Rev. Trotman     | Mr. Poonai          |
| Mr. Sancho       | Mr. Persaud         |
| Mr. Prashad      | Mr. Ally            |
| Mr. Mahraj       | Mr. Lall            |
| Mr. Field-Ridley | Mr. Jagan           |
| Mr. Carrington   | Mr. Luck            |
| Mr. Kasim        | Mr. Hamid           |
| Mr. Budhoo       | Dr. Ramsahoye       |
| Mr. Blair        | Dr. Jacob           |
| Mr. Joaquin      | Mr. Hubbard         |
| Mr. Duncan       | Mr. Chandisingh     |
| Mr. Clarke       | Mr. Ram Karran – 13 |
| Mr. Bowman       |                     |
| Mr. deGroot      |                     |
| Mr. Merriman     |                     |
| Mr. Kendall      |                     |
| Mr. John         |                     |
| Mr. Cheeks       |                     |
| Mr. Bissember    |                     |
| Dr. Reid – 21    |                     |

Motion carried.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Tuesday, 12th September, 1967, at 2 p.m." [Mr. Bissember.]

Adjourned accordingly at 3.48 p.m.