

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT**

[VOLUME 7]

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE THIRD PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

45th Sitting

2 p.m.

Wednesday, 30th October, 1974

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. Sase Narain, J.P.

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (50)

Prime Minister (1)

The Hon. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E.,
Prime Minister

(Absent)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Dr. the Hon. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
National Development

(Absent – on leave)

Senior Ministers (8)

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Economic Development

(Absent – on leave)

- *The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice (Absent)
- *The Hon. H. Green,
Minister of Co-operatives and
National Mobilisation (Absent)
- *The Hon. H. O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources (Absent)
- *The Hon. F. E. Hope,
Minister of Finance
- *The Hon. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Works and Housing (Absent – on leave)
- *The Hon. K.F.S. King,
Minister of Economic Development (Absent – on leave)
- *The Hon. G. B. Kennard, C.C.H.,
Minister of Agriculture (Absent)

Ministers (5)

- The Hon. W. G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour (Absent – on leave)
- The Hon. Miss S. M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information and Culture (Absent – on leave)
- The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
and Leader of the House
- *The Hon. Miss C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education and Social Development (Absent)
- *Dr. the Hon. O.M.R. Harper,
Minister of Health

Members of State (10)

- The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture (Absent - on leave)

***Non-elected Ministers**

- The Hon. O.E. Clarke,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Berbice/Corentyne)
- The Hon. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi)
- The Hon. C.A. Nascimento,
Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister **(Absent - on leave)**
- The Hon. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional **(Absent - on leave)**
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)
- The Hon. K.B. Bancroft
Minister of State – Regional **(Absent - on leave)**
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)
- *The Hon. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of State for Home Affairs
- *The Hon. W. Haynes,
Minister of State for Consumer Protection **(Absent)**
- *The Hon. A. Salim,
Minister of State – Regional **(Absent)**
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice)
- *The Hon. F.U.A. Carmicheal,
Minister of State – Regional (North West)

Parliamentary Secretaries (7)

- Mr. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and Housing
- Mr. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Housing
- Miss M.M. Ackman,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the
Prime Minister, and Government Chief Whip

***Non-elected Ministers**

Mr. E.L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

Mr. J.P. Chowritmootoo,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education
and Social Development

(Absent)

Mr. R.H.O. Corbin,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

(Absent – on leave)

Deputy Speaker (1)

Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman, Deputy Speaker

(Absent)

Other Members (17)

Mr. J.N. Aaron

Mrs. L.M. Branco

Mr. M. Corrica

Mr. E.H.A. Fowler

Miss J. Gill

Mr. W. Hussain

Miss S. Jaiserrisingh

Mr. K.M.E. Jonas

Mr. M. Nissar

Dr. L.E. Ramsahoye

Mr. J.G. Ramson

Mrs. P.A. Rayman

Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.

Mr. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., J.P.

Mr. C. Sukul, J.P.

Mr. H.A. Taylor

Mrs. L.E. Willems

Members of the Opposition – Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, Leader of the Opposition

Mrs. E. DaSilva

OFFICERS

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

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

PRAYERS**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER****Leave to Members**

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Deputy Prime Minister (Dr. Reid), the hon. Minister of Works and Housing (Mr. S.S. Naraine), the hon. Minister of Economic Development (Mr. H.D. Hoyte), the hon. Minister of Trade (Mr. G. King), the hon. Minister of State for Agriculture (Mr. M. Kasim), the hon. Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister (Mr. C.A. Nascimento) and the hon. Member Mr. R.H.O. Corbin for today's sitting.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Paper was laid:

Financial Paper No. 3/1974 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totalling \$38,619,890 for the period ending 15th October, 1974.

[The Minister of Finance]

In terms of Standing Order No. 68(1), the Minister of Finance named Friday, 1st November, 1974, as the day for consideration of the Financial Paper in Committee of Supply

PUBLIC BUSINESS**BILLS – SECOND READING****CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) Bill 1974**

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Customs Act.” [**The Minister of Finance**]

The Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hope): Mr. Speaker, in moving the Second Reading of the Customs (Amendment) Bill, 1974, I should like to explain that the bill deals with the simple matter of rectifying a position which the Diplomatic Corps found it necessary to make certain representations about.

It is, as is generally known, the law of this country, that where an individual who is entitled, obtains a vehicle, for example, a motor-car free of duty and that individual wishes to sell or, in other ways, transfer the ownership of that vehicle to someone else before the expiry of five years, then the owner of that vehicle who received the duty-free concession is required to pay to the Comptroller of Customs an amount of the original duty that is pro-rated according to the number of years less than five that the vehicle was owned by the individual.

In other words, sir, if the person keeps the vehicle for four years and is about to sell that vehicle, he is required to pay the difference between the years that he has kept it and the five, that is he has to pay one-fifth of the duty to the comptroller. That is the law as it stands now.

But the members of the Diplomatic corps have made representations, and they have been very continuous at this, to the effect that, by and large, most of the people who are stationed here to represent their several Governments, normally have a tour of duty of three years. It is rare, they claim, that they are required to stay in Guyana as long as five years.

2.15 p.m.

Their normal tour of duty being in the region of three years and they consider that is a hardship for them largely because of their diplomatic immunity, to be required to pay duty. If leaving, as they must, at the end of their tour, they then have to pay at least two-fifths of the duty.

The Government has considered these representations and has decided that in their case the period for which they must keep the duty-free article or vehicle or whatever it is, should be three years rather than five years. In order to give that decision proper legal effect, it is necessary for the House to enact the necessary amendment to the Customs Ordinance. The Bill before us, in fact, seeks just such an amendment. It is a simple Bill and I therefore commend it for the approval of the House.

Question proposed.

The Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. M.F. Singh): The Opposition fully supports this Bill. As I understand it, it is merely a reciprocal arrangement in respect of diplomatic, consular and international organisations, as the hon. Minister pointed out. Our Embassies and Missions in other countries enjoy similar facilities and it is only right and fair that Guyana should extend the same concession to the diplomatic, consular and international organisations in this country.

Question put, and agreed to.

30.10.74

National Assembly

2.15 – 2.25 p.m.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported with amendment, read the Third time and passed.

**2. DENTAL PRACTITIONERS (TEMPORARY REGISTRATION) BILL
1974**

A Bill intituled:

“Act to provide for the temporary registration of certain persons practicing dentistry.” [The Minister of Health]

The Minister of Health (Dr. Harper): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Dental Practitioners (Temporary Registration) Bill, 1974, be read a Second time.

The Dental Practitioners (Temporary Registration) Bill, 1974 is a Bill that is long overdue in Guyana. A person practicing dentistry in Guyana is required by law to have his name placed in the register of dentists. However, such registration can only be effected with the approval of the Medical Board of Guyana, for which purpose, the law prescribes that only diplomas awarded by certain dental institutions in the United Kingdom and the United States of America can be recognized by the Board.

To enable dental services to be available to the community over as wide an area as possible in Guyana, this Bill seeks to enable persons holding dental diplomas from institutions other than those presently recognized by the Board to have their names placed temporarily on the register and thereafter, if such persons have practised efficiently for a minimum period of twelve months under the supervision of a registered dentist, such registration can be made permanent. I should like to inform the Assembly that the Bill, as presently introduced, has been approved for the most part by the Guyana Dental Association.

Question proposed.

The Speaker: Hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Speaker, this bill before us today, as we understand it, will place the dentists in a similar position to the doctors in our medical services so far as the requirements for registration are concerned. For a dentist to be allowed to practice in Guyana, his diploma has to be recognized as having been awarded by a university or college on the roll of accepted universities and colleges.

We have suffered in Guyana for a long time in our medical services through a shortage of professional people able to practice both medicine and dentistry. Consequently, with our depleted medical services, with our depleted medical officers, citizens are not enjoying the advantages that they should have, in having regular checks on them.

The matter with regard to the doctors was corrected, along these lines, I think around 15 years ago. Doctors have been allowed to come down here and practice under supervision until their credentials and so on have been checked. If they prove satisfactory, they continue to practice. This bill, simply seeks to do the same for the dentists.

I think, actually, the total registry of dentist in Guyana – Government and private – is in the vicinity of 25 which is not a great number. Of these, we have one Principal Dental Surgeon; one post of Senior Dental Surgeon, which was a new post created last year; and ten dental surgeons. The others are private dentists. These are not enough for our country.

We all know that part of the National Service scheme is the establishment, to begin with, of six townships in the far-flung areas of our interior. These new townships, given time to develop, will have all the regular facilities of a town – banking, churches, schools, doctors, dentists and so on. Out of our small number of doctors and dentists, it is not possible to service these townships from Georgetown and even from the other areas without depleting the other areas of doctors and dentists.

So, this very worthwhile Bill seeks to help to encourage dentists to come from other countries and work and, we hope, remain amongst us.

2.25 p.m.

Not too long ago, a dentist came into this country. His credentials appeared to be in order but they were not what they ought to have been and, consequently, we have suffered from this. This is because dentists were allowed to come in and practice without having to meet the requirements of the recognized dental schools.

In this way we will be able to encourage dentists from abroad to come to Guyana. During the twelve-month period, their ability will be under supervision whilst their credentials are being checked, and at the expiration of that time, one hopes they will have met with our requirements and our standards, and they would be able to stay and serve Guyana.

I would ask the hon. Minister through you, sir – this is dealing with dentists from other countries – that we give consideration to encouraging our own Guyanese boys and girls to go

into the dental profession. It is well known that problems of finance prevent many a young person who may have the ability from being trained. The parents may not be able to afford it. It may be worth while for the hon. Minister to consider the possibility of getting scholarships for suitable young people, with proper qualifications, and good characters, and all the rest of it, who may want to take up dentistry as a profession but cannot afford to do so because of lack of finance.

I should like to suggest that maybe we can have two scholarships per year, one maybe a full scholarship, one an aided scholarship, but a start has to be made now. It is not the time to talk about something we need and say that we will do it in the future. Let us get these young people, even if we start with two per year, to go and study and qualify and come back to serve Guyana. We are building our nation and we want our Guyanese people. We do not want dentists, doctors, or anyone else for that matter, from overseas whilst our people in Guyana can do the work. Now is the time to start improving our dental services. It takes time for a dentist to be trained and if we start now, two at a time, we will, bit by bit, be able to increase the number from eleven in the Public Service.

We would be able to pay more attention to preventive treatment in the case of dentistry. I think it is well known that dentists in Guyana, especially the Government officers at the hospitals where the majority of the people will go, find it is far quicker to extract a tooth than to try and stop a cavity. If this sort of thing continues, we are going to have a lot of young people under thirty years either with wide, gaping holes in their mouths, or wearing dentures, which everyone will agree is not the most desirable thing.

We are pleased to approve of this Bill and we hope that from it will grow an improved dental service.

Question put, and agreed to.

30.10.74

National Assembly

2.25 – 2.33 p.m.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Clause 1 to 4 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 5

The Chairman: Hon. Members, I wish to announce a correction to clause 5. In line 4, delete the first word in the line, the word “on”.

Clause 5, as corrected, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn until Friday, 1st November, 1974, at 2 p.m. [The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House]

Adjourned accordingly at 2.33 p.m.
