

**Pakatan fails again to have minister's salary cut**  
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The opposition today attempted again in vain to tarnish the credibility of a minister by tabling a motion in the Dewan Rakyat for a salary deduction.

However, the attempt to penalise Health Minister Liow Tiong Lai backfired when opposition MPs became the target of criticism from BN backbenchers who alleged that they were only wasting time in the house by tabling such "useless" motions.

parliament 2008 first day 280408 jayakumarThe motion was tabled by Dr Jeyakumar Devaraj (PSM-Sungai Siput, right) who blamed the minister and the ministry for having failed to help a single mother who had allegedly become blind and paralysed after being administered the wrong medicine by the Ipoh Hospital in 2003.

Mohamad Aziz (BN-Sri Gading), debating on the motion, asked whether the opposition had nothing else to do but table motions to slash the salary of ministers.

He said he did not deny that such cases could have occurred in hospitals, but added that the health minister was committed to helping the people and the matter could have been raised with him in person.

"I feel the minister is open-minded and attends to everyone ... it is improper that his salary should be deducted," said Mohamad, who was supported by Bung Moktar Radin (BN-Kinabatangan).

"We should be discussing how we can help the ministry to resolve problems related to hospitals," said Bung Moktar.

Other MPs who also spoke against the motion included Lilah Yassin (BN-Jempol), Shamsul Anuar Nasarah (BN-Lenggong), Azmi Khalid (BN-Padang Besar), Abdul Rahman Dahlan (BN-Kota Belud), Baharum Mohamed (BN-Sekijang) and Ismail Abdul Muttalib (BN-Maran).

NONEThe repeated verbal assaults by the BN MPs resulted in several opposition MPs, including Dr Siti Mariah Mahmud (PAS-Kota Raja) and Khalid Abdul Samad (PAS-Shah Alam), coming to the defence of Dr Jeyakumar and accusing the BN MPs of being arrogant and not understanding the issue.

Winding up debate on the motion, Liow (left) explained that the ministry was not in a position now to resolve the problem because the woman had brought the matter to court, and he asked Dr Jeyakumar not to manipulate the facts and accuse the ministry of ignoring poor patients.

"We do not do such things. We help poor patients. We have the aid fund. As such, it is not true that the ministry exploits poor patients referred to government hospitals," he said.

Of late, opposition MPs have tabled motions proposing a deduction in the salary of several ministers, but all in vain.

- Bernama