



The Speaker: I appreciate what you are saying. Unfortunately, I do not agree. I have a feeling that I did not quite follow, perhaps like you did, in the greatest of details that I should have, what the President said. I know the broad outlines. I do not know whether the President was advised, but it would be difficult, from my perspective, and you are a lawyer of some distinction, Mr. Corbin, for the President to - and you have many Members here; Mrs. Backer is a specialist on torture too! [*Laughter*]

Let us not personalize it. The Government might be well inclined to listen to its legal advisers in relation to establishing an inquiry involving a specific incident when that incident is before the court. So I will have to leave it there, but that is an issue that may well engage the attention of ... [*Interruption*] I cannot agree with you, Mr. Corbin. I am sorry.

Announcements by the Speaker

117th Sitting dated February 24, 2010

ALLEGATION BY MR. KHEMRAJ RAMJATTAN OF HANSARD RECORD TAMPERING

Preamble

Mr. Ramjattan laid allegations in a letter to Kaieteur News that the Hansard was tampered with to change the words of Hon. Irfaan Ali from "We have spent it already." to "We are ready." The Speaker requested the audio to be played in the National Assembly and the audio confirmed the words spoken by Hon. Irfaan Ali to be "We are ready." and not "We have spent it already."

Verbatim

Mr. Speaker (Hari N. Ramkarran): Hon. Members, there was a report on page 2 of today's Kaieteur News under the heading "Parliamentary records tampered with – Ramjattan." The report says as follow:

“Alliance For Change (AFC) Chairman Khemraj Ramjattan is charging that the Parliamentary Hansard has been tampered with. Ramjattan was referring to the session which relates to the controversial \$4 billion allocation which was allotted to the Housing Ministry...”



It is usually a practice that when the Speaker is on the floor, the Assembly remains absolutely silent. I would appreciate if that convention can be maintained.

“Ramjattan said that the answer which was given by Minister of Housing and Water Irfaan Ali to a question asked by Alliance For Change Co-Vice Chairperson Sheila Holder during the January 11 sitting of the House, was not accurate. Ramjattan was at the time referring to Financial Paper # 6 which was tabled in the House earlier this year and involved billions of dollars which Ramjattan is charging was not spent for the housing sector, according to the laws of Guyana. According to Ramjattan, he was reliably informed that the Hansard - which is the verbatim record of the National Assembly - has been tampered with, and he has therefore requested that the Speaker of the House launch an investigation into the alleged tampering. *“What I feared will happen with the Hansard when it was not forthcoming in the usual seven to 10 days has actually happened now that it has taken some 40 days for compilation,”* Ramjattan said.

He added that it was queried in the House from the Housing Minister whether the money was already spent and he answered in the negative, but the expenditure for 2010 clearly states that the money has already been spent and as such, the Housing Minister was in breach of the laws of Guyana. Ramjattan recently told this newspaper that what is now recorded in the Hansard and attributed to the Housing Minister is *“we are ready.”* This he stressed should have read, *“We have spent it already.”*

Ramjattan told this newspaper that he intended to use the Hansard of the National Assembly to file accurate statements against the duo with the Director of Public Prosecutions.”

The gravity of these charges, I am sure, is not lost in you. The Hon. Member, Khemraj Ramjattan, reported his suspicion to me on Monday, February 22, 2010 – last Monday - whereupon on the evening of the same day, as soon as I got the opportunity, I requested the Clerk to investigate, as you are aware, yesterday was a public holiday. I would have expected that the Hon. Member would have awaited the results of the investigation before making a public allegation.



I now confirm that I have listened to the audio recording and it confirms the Hansard Record of Mr. Irfaan Ali's statement "we are ready", with exemplary clarity. I now ask for a tape recording of the portion of the debate to be played, please.

[Audio played for the benefit of all Members of Parliament.]

I have requested the Clerk to ensure that Hon. Member Khemraj Ramjattan receives a copy of the audio recording and I look forward for appropriate comments in this Assembly, tomorrow, after the Hon. Member would have had an opportunity to study the tape.

I will ask the Clerk to forward the written transcript of the Hansard, the audio transcript of the tape and a copy of this announcement to the *Kaieteur News*. I expect that the *Kaieteur News* will make an appropriate statement on the matter.

I wish to add, finally, that the staff of the Parliament Office who have shown dedication, commitment and integrity to this Parliament, not to this side of the Parliament or to that side of the Parliament, but to this Parliament, far beyond the call of duty since I have served as your Speaker from 1991, are deeply pained at the Hon. Member's allegation. I look forward that anything he or the *Kaieteur News* might wish to say would go some way in alleviating that distress.

Thank you.

Private Members' Business – Motions

130th Sitting dated August 9, 2010

MOTION OF PRIVILEGE AGAINST HON. DR. ASHNI SINGH, M.P., MINISTER OF FINANCE

Preamble

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P., moved a motion of privilege with respect to a misleading statement made by Hon. Dr. Ashni Singh, M.P., Minister of Finance, during the consideration of Financial Paper No. 6/2009 on the 11th January, 2010.

The Speaker informed the Assembly that a prima facie case was not made out against Hon. Dr. Ashni Singh, M.P., Minister of Finance. Thereafter, the matter was disallowed by the Speaker.