



In the circumstances, Hon. Member, I do not think it is necessary for me to go into a more detailed ruling. I have no hesitation in declining your request for the adjournment of the House.

[Interruption]

[Members of the Alliance For Change withdrew from the Chamber.]

Government Business - Motion

142nd Sitting dated January 25, 2011

BUDGET SPEECH 2011 – MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 2011

Preamble

The Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Ms. Manickchand, rose on a Point of Order for Mrs. Holder to retract a statement made that she considered inaccurate. The Speaker, however, decided that Ms. Manickchand's intervention was not a Point of Order.

Thereafter, Ms. Teixeira rose on a Point of Order stating that according to Standing order No. 41 (6) "No member shall impute improper motive to any Member of the Assembly..." The Speaker ruled that the Member, Mrs. Holder, did no such thing.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Holder said that she was prepared to make her study available, and the Speaker directed that she make the Report available to the Clerk of the National Assembly for all Members to have access.

Verbatim

Minister of Human Services and Social Security (Ms. Manickchand): On a Point of Order, Sir, I ordinarily do not interrupt a Member when he or she is speaking about my sector, but this is important. The Hon. Member, Mrs. Holder, just said that there are phantom pensioners receiving money. That leads to a very reasonable interpretation by any person listening that we are saying that we are paying money to people who do not exist...

Mrs. Holder: That is exactly what I am saying.



Ms. Manickchand: ... and except the Hon. Member has evidence of that, then I ask, kindly, Sir, that you order her to retract it.

Mr. Speaker: I am not sure that that is a Point of Order Member.

Mrs. Holder: I will retract nothing, Mr. Speaker. I am prepared to give the study to the Hon. Minister and to the Auditor General.

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Hon. Member tell us which study she is quoting from and tabling in this House? None of us heard what the name of the study is, who wrote it and when.

Mrs. Holder: This is a study done by me based on the questions that the Hon. Minister answered in this House; based on the Auditor General's report; and based on the census. I am prepared to let the Minister have it, or anyone who wants it. The logics are here; the facts are here; the data is here; where the data comes from is quoted. It is all legitimate. It is a simple matter of deduction; it is a simple matter of logics; it is a simple matter of mathematics. Anyone who can add, subtract and multiply will come to the obvious conclusion.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, there is nothing that I can see in the Standing Orders that would allow me to stop the Hon. Member.

Ms. Manickchand: Sir, I am not asking that you stop her. Even if I were not on strong grounds earlier, now that the Hon. Member has, pretty much, said she made this up herself, then I ask you Sir...

Mr. Speaker: The Member did not say that. Proceed Mrs. Holder.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker, according to Standing Order No. 41 (6), "No Member shall impute improper motive to any Member of the Assembly".

[Interruption]

Mr. Speaker: Members, please allow me to hear what is being said.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker, according to Standing Order No. 41 (6) "No member shall impute improper motive to any Member of the Assembly..."



Mr. Speaker: The Member has not imputed improper motive to any Member of the National Assembly.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to contradict you but the Member said that the moneys were diverted into other areas. These are imputations of improper behaviour.

Mr. Speaker: The objection that has been raised by the Hon. Member, Ms. Manickchand, is that the Hon. Member said that there are phantom pensioners receiving benefits. That does not impute improper motive to a Member.

Ms. Manickchand: Sir, I am presiding over that Ministry. If I am paying people who do not exist with the money of this country then that says I am not managing the State's money properly.

Mr. Speaker: I do not agree with your Point of Order. Proceed Mrs. Holder.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker, I have raised a different issue about what Mrs. Holder said. She said, "Millions of dollars were diverted and pulled out of the system." Those are my notes of what she said verbatim. Therefore, that is a different issue of imputation of improper motive.

Mr. Speaker: I rule that, that does not impute improper motive to any Member of the National Assembly. Proceed, please, Mrs. Holder.

Mrs. Holder: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I spent a great deal of time dealing with this matter. I had it checked with a number of economists locally and overseas. I sent copies of the answers to my questions to the Hon. Minister and her Ministry that compiled the data on which this study was based. I simply used the data contained in the 2002 population census and came to the mathematical conclusions that I came to. Everything that I said here can be checked, double checked and confirmed.

Minister of Finance (Dr. Singh): I must confess that I do not know which Standing Order covers the enquiry that I wish to make but, may I enquire, Sir, if I could, possibly, ask the Hon. Member a question about the study that she has made?

Mr. Speaker: I cannot allow you to ask a question.



Mrs. Holder: I repeat: the number of phantom pensioners has now increased to 17,640. The monthly haemorrhage from the fund, this is the pension fund, would, therefore, be over \$116 million or \$1.3 billion annually. This is evident of the high level of corruption under this Administration.

In closing, it is necessary to state that had the Auditor General, in his review of the Old Age Pension Programme, taken into consideration the census figures rather than solely rely on the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, this situation would have been properly investigated and old age pensioners would have received thousands of dollars more than they are now receiving.

I am prepared to make my study available and public whenever necessary.

[*Applause*]

Mr. Speaker: Far from being prepared to make your study available, I am directing that you make it available to the Clerk of the National Assembly for the benefit of Members. You quoted from a report and that report needs to be available.

145th Sitting dated January 28, 2011

BUDGET SPEECH 2011 – MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 2011

Preamble

Mr. Corbin requested the source Mr. Ramson was quoting from because it was in keeping with the rules of the House. Mr. Ramson said he will provide the source even though there is no such rule. The Speaker informed Mr. Ramson that there is such a rule.

Verbatim

Mr. Corbin: Cde. Speaker, on a Point of Order, I know the learned Attorney General, the Hon. Justice, is aware that if a Member asked for the source, and he is insisting that we follow rules, he should let us know the source of his quotation. He, himself, in his presentation, said the author that he is quoting from wrote several books. I would like to make a note of it. I am grateful if he can do so in accordance with the rules.