



Dr. Luncheon seeks to divert attention from the real issue by accusing me of being wrong to allow the motion - “fundamentally flawed” he called it. Whether my decision was right or wrong is not the issue. The real issue is the manner in which a decision of the Speaker can be challenged. This can only be done by motion for the purpose and not by a Member in debate as Dr. Singh tried to do and as I vainly warned against privately. This attempted disrespect for the rules of the House, however politely expressed, is egregiously offensive and wholly unacceptable. It attacks one of the very foundations of parliamentary democracy - the integrity of the Office of the Speaker which must be protected if parliamentary democracy is to survive. If every time the Government, the Opposition or a Member disagrees with a decision of the Speaker and is permitted to attack that decision in debate, the Office of the Speaker will be quickly undermined and the independence of the National Assembly placed in serious jeopardy.

Let me make it clear. I shall defend the integrity of the National Assembly whenever and by whomever it is challenged for as long as I am the Speaker.

Request for Leave to Move the Adjournment of the Assembly on Definite Matters of Urgent Public Importance

68th Sitting dated December 22, 2008

EXTENSIVE FLOODING CURRENTLY BEING EXPERIENCED ON THE COAST

Preamble

The Speaker referred to a written request which he had received from Mr. Robert Corbin, Leader of the Opposition, to move the adjournment of the Assembly for the purpose of discussing the floods on the coastal belt. The Speaker, being satisfied that the matter was definite, urgent and of public importance and could properly be raised on a motion for the adjournment of the Assembly, and with the leave of the Assembly, allowed the request.

The motion accordingly stood over in accordance with Standing Order No. 12 (3).

Verbatim

Mr. Robert H. O. Corbin: Mr. Speaker, I wrote you earlier today seeking leave under Standing Order No. 12, asking you to grant me leave to move a Motion that this National Assembly stands adjourned to discuss a matter of urgent public



importance, namely the extensive flooding currently being experienced on the coast. I am very pleased with your hint, Sir, that you might be kindly disposed to entertaining this Motion. If that is so, I would not try to elaborate on my request, but just read the letter I sent to you, if that is required.

The Speaker (Hari N. Ramkarran): No, I do not think that is required.

Mr. Corbin: To say that I think it is a matter of extreme importance, what I have heard so far has given me no hope to withdraw this Motion.

The Speaker: You can incorporate the letter in your presentation.

Mr. Corbin: Thank you.

The Speaker: Hon. Members, I have considered the claim by Hon. Member Mr. Robert Corbin and I am satisfied that the matter qualifies as one which may properly be raised on a Motion for the adjournment of the Assembly. However, a leave of the Assembly is required. I will also now seek such leave.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

The Motion will, therefore, in accordance with our Standing Orders, stand over for a short period.

Announcements by the Speaker

70th Sitting dated January 8, 2009

OBJECTION TO SECOND READING OF THE TRADE UNION RECOGNITION (AMENDMENT) BILL NO. 25/2008

Preamble

Hon. Robert Corbin objected to the Second Reading on a Point of Order, relying on Standing Order No. 54 (2) and other documents which speak to the duration between First and Second