



and many other things. That is a separate issue. The importance and indeed urgency of the matter is one aspect.

There is another aspect as to whether it falls under the rules of the House, under the specific Standing Order, to have a debate to interrupt the business of the House on a matter of urgent public importance. A debate in the House is not the only urgent way in which a matter of this nature can be treated, so while I do not deny the urgency of the matter, the question for me is whether it falls within the rules of the House to be debated under our specific Standing Order. In my view, it does not fall under that rule and, as I indicated to you, I cannot allow the business of the House to be interrupted to have this debate. I, once again, stress and I need to stress, I am not saying that it is not an urgent matter; I am saying that it does not fall within our rules. There are two other methods in which the matter can be debated: by a three-day notice and by a full Motion which would take about twelve days notice. I would urge that for any Member who wishes to have this matter brought before the House that one of those methods be considered.

Thank you.

Motion disallowed.

95th Sitting dated July 30, 2009

MOTION TO INVITE INTERPOL TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ASSASSINATION OF RONALD WADDLE, THE INVOLVEMENT OF GUYANA GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL IN THE MURDER OF OVER TWO HUNDRED GUYANESE YOUTHS AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE GUYANA GOVERNMENT IN FACILITATING THE DRUG TRADE

Preamble

A request by Mr. Robert Corbin, Leader of the Opposition, to move the adjournment of the Assembly on a definite matter of urgent public importance, to wit, the explosive sworn testimony, given on Tuesday, July 28, 2009 and Wednesday, July 29, 2009, in a New York Court by Selwyn Vaughn, a witness under protection of the US Government, was disallowed by the Speaker. Mr. Corbin continued arguing but the Speaker held his position which caused the



Leader of the Opposition to overturn the law books and the Members from the PNC/R-1G and GAP/ROAR to withdraw from the Chamber.

Verbatim

The Speaker (Hari N. Ramkarran): Yes, Mr. Corbin.

Mr. Robert H. O. Corbin: Mr. Speaker, this is indeed a sad and shameful day for Guyana.

The Speaker: Mr. Corbin, please do not make a speech.

Mr. Corbin: Mr. Speaker, I had cause to write you earlier today under Standing Order 12, seeking your leave to move the adjournment of the National Assembly at today's Sitting to discuss an urgent matter of public importance, to wit, the explosive sworn testimony given on Tuesday, 28th July, 2009 and Wednesday, July 29, 2009, in a New York Court by Selwyn Vaughn, a witness under protection of the US Government, which provides essential information about the assassination of prominent journalist and activist Mr. Ronald Waddell, the murder of 200 Guyanese by a Phantom Squad...*[Interruption]*

The Speaker: Mr. Corbin, I am not going to entertain a speech. I have ruled in the past that this occasion, a request for leave, can be used to make a brief statement of the request and the basis of it. I just want to read you, once again - these things have been gone over about a dozen times at least in this House - Kashyap, Page 807, *Parliamentary Procedure in India*. I quote:

“When asking for leave of the House, a Member has to confine himself to a mere statement to that effect. He cannot make a speech at that stage.”

In the House of Commons, a Member making an application, check Erskine May, is allowed three minutes.

Mr. Corbin: Sir, I am not making a speech. I am just stating what is the basis of the Standing Order, as stated in the very first paragraph, so that Members must be alerted to what the subject matter of the adjournment is all about, and that is what I was pointing out - what the subject matter is that I believe is urgent and of public importance. And I was saying that that subject matter has to do with this sworn



testimony given before a US court two days ago, which provides essential information about the assassination of prominent journalist and activist Ronald Waddell, the murder of 200 Guyanese youths by a Phantom Squad headed by Roger Khan, and the complicity of the Guyana Government and named officials, including the incumbent Minister of Health and the President of Guyana.

I consider this matter urgent, Mr Speaker, since it appears that the Government, as was evident in the manner of handling the Gajraj affair, seems bent on maintaining that precedent, with respect to the alleged involvement. In determining this matter, Your Honour, you may wish to consider that while this matter has been in the public domain for several years, it is the first time that sworn evidence is available from a witness who is still alive to offer that evidence in a court of law, albeit in the USA.

[*Applause*]

In such circumstances, this is the first Sitting of the National Assembly since this new development, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that the above circumstances justify this matter as being of public importance, and require that the National Assembly deal with this matter accordingly. In my letter to you, which I hope will be placed in the record, I have outlined a series of circumstances dating from 2002, with specifics, which shows the ... [*Interruption*]...

The Speaker: Hon. Members, I do not wish to have a repeat in this House of what went on a little while ago. Please!

Mr. Corbin: I have detailed in my letter, Sir, specific circumstances, chronologically since 2002, which make it incumbent on the Government, incumbent upon us, to call upon Interpol to conduct an investigation on this Government, as we have absolutely no confidence in any investigation that this Government will do on this matter, and I hope that this matter, Sir, will come up for urgent consideration today.

Thank you.

[*Applause*]

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Corbin. I am grateful that the letter was sent early enough to give me an opportunity to have a look at the matter, and to read your very long letter.



Hon. Members, we have had applications by way of Motions to adjourn the Business of the National Assembly under this Standing Order, on many occasions in the past, and I have gone to the trouble of giving written opinions on these matters so that they will form a record; I am not saying they are right, but they will form a record. While they are not right, the House is bound by them until another Speaker changes that position; Hon. Members will have an opportunity of having a view of what the rules provide.

I have also said before that the rules relating to adjournment Motions have long been felt to be very harsh, and many Legislatures and Parliaments have adopted modified rules in order to deal with these types of matters, and that thinking went into the adoption of a modified rule for our own National Assembly. I do not remember the Standing Order offhand, but it allows for a debate on an urgent matter after only three days' notice, with certain other rules attached to it.

Now, the first thing that strikes is that this matter relates to incidents in Guyana, and accusations. These consist of newspaper reports of evidence which took place in a court of law in the United States in a pending matter. That is a...that is what we are dealing with here - newspaper reports in Guyana of evidence given in a matter which is pending in a court in the United States of America.

The first thing that attracted my attention, which is on record in this House - *Grounds for disallowance of adjournment Motions...* The matter sought to be raised is mostly based on press reports without being substantiated. That is the Indian Parliament. Erskine Mays: *the matter raised by the Motion must not offer when facts are in dispute or before they are available.* I took the trouble in the last Parliament to print out this handout and circulate it to all Members of Parliament, so there cannot be any excuse that these provisions are not known. On those grounds, I do not need to go further. On those grounds, I am afraid that I am unable to entertain the Motion, and I wish to add, all official documents to me form part of the record of this House.

Mr. Corbin: Mr. Speaker, as always, I have been guided by your ruling, but I trust that, as in a court of law, I would be permitted to give an opinion which you may...grounds on which you make reports are based on newspaper reports. These reports are not based only on newspaper reports, Sir, but they are available - sworn affidavits, court documents, and testimony that have been made available to the world at large. And it is for this reason, Sir, that I attempted to detail in my letter specific circumstances on which there are incontrovertible evidence, not newspaper reports, Sir.



This issue of the Good Hope trio is not incontrovertible. It is a fact. It went to court and nothing happened about it, Sir. I mentioned that the killing of Yohance Douglas...and what happened to the two people who were accused. Those are facts, Sir; those are not newspaper reports. I have mentioned instances where there had been drug lords functioning under the cover of the Administration. These are not wild reports, Sir.

The Speaker: I understand.

Mr. Corbin: But I want to make clear, Sir, that I do not want it to be interpreted that I have come here with some flimsy allegations, Sir. That is why I took the liberty - you said it was long - and I did not bore the Parliament with the details, but I took the time of giving dates, times and even names, in some circumstances, of instances which establish that these are not hearsay stories, Sir..

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr Corbin.

Mr. Corbin: ...and what, lately, I have been speaking about. The only difference, Sir, I am saying that it is urgent is because it is the first time, and that is why it is coming to the Parliament. If I wait until next week, it might be ruled that I did not come to the Parliament at the first available opportunity. So, this is evidence which was only revealed in the court yesterday and the day before, so it is fresh evidence which, as I said, is incontrovertible. The Motion really seeks to say that with all that has been happening in Guyana, which is incontrovertible, there is no proper investigation; that this is an opportunity for the people of Guyana to request an Interpol, an international organisation to get this evidence so that we can have an investigation. I do not see what is wrong with that.

[Applause]

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Corbin. You can circulate your paper to the press. I am sure they will be very anxious to read about your recommendations, about Interpol and otherwise. But look, the only matter that is urgent are the facts and circumstances stated by a witness in a court in the United States of America, in a pending trial, the issues of which are reported in the newspapers here; that is the only thing that is urgent - the evidence of a witness in a trial. The other circumstances cannot be urgent; I am not saying they are not important; I am not saying they are



not distressing; I am not saying they are not serious. We are dealing here with urgency. The other things that are mentioned in your letter, Mr. Corbin, are not urgent.

Let me read, in this same document, what they say about urgency. The fact that a grievance is continuing is not sufficient if it is not of recent occurrence. The fact that new information has been received regarding a matter that has been continuing for some time does not, itself, make that matter... of the facts have only been recently revealed, that does not make the occurrence urgent. That does not make the occurrence recent.

So having regard to all of these statements, for which authority is cited, I appreciate what you are saying, but, regrettably, I do not agree with it.

Mr. Corbin: But you recall, Sir, that this is the highest forum of the land. This is the highest court of the land, and you, Sir, have the golden opportunity of creating precedent for this Parliament on a matter of this great nature, Sir. [*Applause*] You can down in history, Sir, as having created history, set new guidelines, not Erskine May, not the court of India, but the court of Guyana - The Parliament of Guyana.

[*Applause*]

The Speaker: Thank You.

Mr. Corbin: But this matter, Sir, which every decent Guyanese is concerned about, about what has been happening in this country for five years, if this Parliament, Sir, cannot address this matter with some urgency, a matter that goes to the core of the Constitution, where can it be aired, Sir? This is the point. This is the highest court, Sir.

The Speaker: It can be aired right here, Mr. Corbin.

Mr. Corbin: When, next year, Sir?

The Speaker: On another type of Motion.

Mr. Corbin: When, next year?

The Speaker: It can be aired right here on a normal Motion with notice; it can be aired right here if leave of the Assembly is given, and you do not need the leave of



the Assembly. In this case, you do not need a majority of the House. Once the Speaker gives leave, you do not need a majority of the House. The Speaker puts it, and it can be voted down by the majority, but if eighteen Members agree, then the Motion can be heard. So that is the rule.

Thank you very much, Hon. Members. Mr. Clerk.

Mr. Corbin: If a matter of this gravity is not urgent to this country, these laws of Guyana mean absolutely nothing in this country. Nothing! All of them! All of them! All of them! [*Uproar*]

[*All the law books were overturned by Mr. Corbin.*]

[*At this stage, all the Members of the PNC/R-1G and GAP/ROAR walked out of the Chamber.*]

The Speaker: Mr. Clerk, could you proceed, please?

I do recall, before you leave, many years ago, at a meeting in this National Assembly, and I do believe Mr. Corbin was present, when the books were similarly overturned by Dr Jagan, who was then the Leader of the Opposition. That was some time in the 1970s.

98th Sitting dated October 15, 2009

THE PRESENT UNTENABLE AND DEPLORABLE SITUATION IN THE SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY BY GPL TO CONSUMERS

Preamble

A request by Mr. Robert Corbin, Leader of the Opposition, to move the adjournment of the Assembly to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, to wit, the present untenable and deplorable situation in the supply of electricity by GPL to consumers, was allowed by the Speaker. The motion accordingly stood over to 5.00 p.m.

Verbatim

The Speaker (Hari N. Ramkarran): Mr. Corbin, I am in receipt of your letter, and the only part of the letter that is relevant is the first paragraph. So, I am not going to give you permission to read this letter or to make a speech on it. I will