

Sitting of Friday 17 June 2022
Announcement – Matter of Privilege

Honourable Members,

I have an announcement to make.

I wish to inform the House that Dr the Hon. Marie Christiane Dorine Chukowry, Parliamentary Private Secretary, has, in writing, today, given notice of her wish to raise a privilege complaint arising out of an article which appeared in the newspaper daily l'express of today, under the caption "*ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE - Kalpana Koonjoo-Shah et la photo polémique*".

In the said article, the Honourable Anquetil is reported to have said the following, I quote –

“On se souvient de la fois où des jurons avaient été proférés. Il n’y a pas eu de tests pour retracer la voix. Il y a aussi eu l’épisode de lalang-gate, où il n’y a pas eu de sanction. Mais dans mon cas, l’enquête a été faite très vite. Voilà ce qu’est le temple de la démocratie……»

The Hon. Member is of the view that the content of the said article may amount to a contempt of the Assembly under section 6(1)(s) of the National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act for uttering and publishing a statement reflecting on the conduct and character of the Speaker, and containing accusation of partiality in the discharge of his duty as Speaker.

The matter has been referred to me by Mr Speaker. Hon. Members, I have perused the said article against the provision of section 6(1) (s) of the National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act, which reads as follows –

“6. Contempt of the Assembly

- (1) Subject to subsection (2), each of the following acts, matters and things constitutes the offence of contempt of the Assembly’

Subsection (s) reads as follows –

‘uttering or publishing any statement reflecting on the conduct or character of, or containing or amounting to an accusation of partiality in the discharge of his duty by the Speaker, Deputy Speaker or Chairperson of any committee.’

Hon. Members, I take the view that the content of the said article may amount to a statement reflecting on the conduct and character of or containing or amounting to an accusation of partiality in the discharge of his duty by the Speaker.

I consider that an offence may have been committed under the aforesaid section of the law.

Dr the Hon. Chukowry moved the following motion –

“Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the light of your Ruling, I move that the matter, whereby an article which appeared in the newspaper daily l’express of today, under the caption “*ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE - Kalpana Koonjoo-Shah et la photo polémique*”, be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for appropriate action pursuant to Standing Order 74(4) of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly.”

The Hon. Diolle seconded.

The Deputy Speaker put the following question -

“The Question is that the matter, whereby an article which appeared in the newspaper daily l’express of today, under the caption “*ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE - Kalpana Koonjoo-Shah et la photo polémique*”, be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for appropriate action pursuant to Standing Order 74(4) of the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly. Those in favour say AYE. Those against say No. The AYES have it.”