

politics, also did not lower him or tend to lower him in the estimation of anyone present. Furthermore, the circumstances surrounding the publication of whatever I said were such that the Claimant was not likely to suffer any harm to his reputation.

X 24. None of the statements made by me to the Claimant were actuated by any malice towards him. In the past I have campaigned for his election as the Member of Parliament for Saint Andrew. I have given him financial contributions in his capacity as my Member of Parliament. I have spoken on many occasions on his political platforms and at his branch meetings. Indeed, I still have hanging on the wall in my study room at my home two plaques named the Peter Harding Awards which were presented to me by the Claimant in 1998 and in 1999 in recognition of my outstanding contribution to the BLP St. Andrew platform as guest speaker and in recognition of my outstanding contribution to the BLP St. Andrew platform respectively at awards ceremonies which he and the Party's St. Andrew branch held. I, as a constituent of Saint Andrew since 1994, voted for him to be elected as the Member of Parliament for that constituency. I also was elected, on the Claimant's initiative, as the National Council Representative for Saint Andrew in the year 1996-97. I recall an occasion when I canvassed together with the Claimant in Belleplaine.

25. I made the statements during the course of a closed door meeting among political equals at what I considered to be a meeting covered by "qualified privilege". The time-honoured tradition of the BLP is that statements made during the course of meetings of a political nature held at Party headquarters would not be the subject of defamation suits.

26. I admit that I told the Claimant, who was sitting directly opposite me, that he had no moral authority to accuse anyone of dishonourable conduct or to speak ill of Party Leaders. I told him that he was a big Queen's Counsel and, as the Party's then Chairman, had been involved in fraudulent conduct in relation to the Saint James North's nomination process by virtue of which I had been named and elected by the Party's branch to contest that seat on behalf of the Party. I did tell him, too, that he is not fit to be in Parliament based on that conduct.