



The Speaker: Hon. Members, eighteen Members voted for the Motion and twenty-nine against. It, therefore, complies with the Standing Order and we will hold over this Motion in accordance with the Standing Order. It will stand over until after 17:00 hrs.

Hon. Corbin: We have to stand in our places.

[Members who voted for the Motion stood in their places to be counted.]

Mr. Winston S. Murray: No, no, no.

The Speaker: Yes, we have eighteen votes from this side and it is carried.

Mr. Murray: But we are required to stand in our place. I just want to ensure that you are technically correct.

The Speaker: Okay, in compliance...

Mr. Murray: We stand to support the Motion.

The Speaker: I see.

Hon. Corbin: Mr. Clerk, you have to count. We do not want any technicalities.

The Speaker: I think the count takes the place of that, but we will hold over until 17:00 hrs.

Oral Questions without Notice

ORAL QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE - Urgent

23rd Sitting dated May 10, 2007

Preamble

A request by Mr. Robert Corbin, M.P., in accordance with Standing Order No. 18, to ask an oral question without notice was ruled out of order by the Speaker.



Verbatim

Mr. Robert H. O. Corbin: Mr. Speaker, I have received a message from the Clerk of the National Assembly, just before leaving office, indicating that the request I had made for an oral question, the Hon Minister of Finance would somehow not be allowed. I was not sure because it was related to my Secretary and I thought that you would be in a position to give some guidance if indeed that is, in fact, your ruling.

But I indicated before the commencement of the Session that I had hoped to make use of Standing Order No. 18, which is the new provision in the Standing Orders, permitting a twenty-minute period for oral questions and, according to this Standing Order, provides certain guidelines, which I do believe the issue at hand satisfies, as it relates to an urgent matter of public importance and one which is somehow related.

I was hoping that the Minister of Finance, to whom I had sent a copy of my letter to you indicating that I had proposed to move it, would be alerted in advance that we needed some information on what was happening in the Guyana Revenue Authority on these appointments, and that he would be able to enlighten us quickly in this Parliament under the Standing Order which has been provided for this purpose. So, I would be glad to get some guidance because, as I had said, it is an oral message; I would really like to get some guidance.

The Speaker (Hari N. Ramkarran): Thank you, Mr. Corbin. I have ruled... I have seen the question; I have studied it and I have studied the Standing Order No. 18 and under Standing Order No. 18 (b) questions are allowed that are urgent and important or relate to the business of the day.

My view is that the issue raised by your question is not urgent and important. If you wish, you can convert the question as Questions with Notice, and it would be answered in due course.

Hon. Corbin: Mr. Speaker, hopefully I can get from you some guidelines as to future use of this Section because I have always abided by your ruling, which is my duty. But, it would help Members of the Parliament to determine what is considered urgent and by whom. This is a public issue of the supersession in a very important agency, by the public Board, under which the Minister of Finance, according to the Guyana Revenue Authority Act, must approve before these appointments are made.



So the Act itself gives the Minister the authority and the power to approve. I think that it is reasonable to assume that if this matter is attracting such urgent public attention and criticism, that it is considered urgent enough for us to get a feedback from the Minister of Finance, who has ultimate responsibility for approving such appointments, whether indeed he exercised his judgment in accordance with the rules of fair play and justice.

If you say it is not urgent, I would have to accept that, but what criteria are not important? What criteria do we use for determining whether a matter is urgent in the context of Guyana?

The Speaker: I do not wish to give a detailed ruling on what is urgent at this time, but I have issued several extensive rulings in relation to adjournment Motions and they are available; Members were circulated with copies. Members were also circulated, some time ago, with copies of an extract from Erskine May's - a very old Edition - which relates to our Standing Orders as to what is urgent.

I would refer Members to those rulings which I made and to the material which had been circulated for my understanding on what is urgent. If it is necessary, at the appropriate time, I would make further comment on what I believe urgent means.

Thank You.

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

23rd Sitting dated May 10, 2007

TAKE-OVER OF THE BAUXITE OPERATIONS AT LINDEN BY THE CHINESE COMPANY BOSAI MINERAL GROUP COMPANY LIMITED – Standing Orders 11 (1) and 11 (4)

Preamble

A request by Mr. Robert Corbin to move the adjournment of the Assembly for the purpose of discussing the takeover of the Bauxite operations at Linden by the Chinese Company, BOSAI Mineral Group Company Limited, with the consent of the Speaker, was converted to an Adjournment motion under Standing Order No. 11 (4).