

# Official Report

*PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2015) OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN*

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15<sup>TH</sup> Sitting

Friday, 28<sup>TH</sup> August, 2015

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*The Assembly convened at 2.34 p.m.*

*Prayers*

*[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]*

## **OATH OF A NEW MEMBER**

**Mr. Speaker:** On the 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2015, Members would recall that the Members of the Opposition took the Oath of Office in the National Assembly, with the exception of the Hon. Member, Mr. Adrian V. Anamayah, as he had asked to be excused.

Mr. Anamayah is before the Assembly today but, before he can take part in the proceedings of the Assembly, he must subscribe to the Oath.

The Oath of Office will now be administered to Mr. Anamayah by the Clerk of the National Assembly.

The Oath of Office was administered to and subscribed by the following Member:

Adrian V. Anamayah

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**

### **Inaccurate reporting of line item 6291 - National and Other Events – in the media**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, you would recall that, at the close of our last sitting, the Hon. Minister within the Ministry of Education brought to our attention that there was a report in an online news service, called the Citizens Report, in relation to matters pertaining to line item 6291 - National and Other Events. It was alleged that the Minister said that the sum of \$71 million was utilised in a particular way. The Minister within the Ministry of Education brought to the attention of the House that that was a false statement and denied having ever said so. Views were expressed on the other side of the House, which claimed that the news service represented truth.

I undertook to examine the records which came out of our discussions at the last sitting and to report to the Assembly today.

It was brought to my attention that one newspaper, the *Guyana Times*, of today carries a report in the same terms.

It was also brought to my attention that a Member of Parliament, in a particular newscast, repeated the very assertion that was in the online news service. It was unfortunate that a Member of Parliament did that, since I had already indicated that I would examine the records and would make the results of the examination available to Members of Parliament.

I have arranged for the recording to be heard in the Chamber immediately after I stop speaking so that Members can judge, for themselves, what transpired and see whether the grounds exist for the report either in the online news service, by the Member of Parliament or by the newspaper.

I ask the relevant officer of our Parliament Office to present the recording. Hon. Members, allow me one minute while it is being set and then we can listen to it.

*Audio recording was played.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I crave your indulgence for us to treat this matter, conclude it and continue with our order for today.

That appears to be the record of what transpired on this matter. Hon. Members, we must not treat this with levity. I am asking you to permit me to treat this matter. I think it was important enough, at the last sitting, to engender discussion across the room. As a result, I undertook and am seeking to discharge the obligation I undertook to this House. I assume that Hon. Members continue to see it as important, so please permit me.

I did say that it was wholly unfortunate that a Member of Parliament, who would have been in the room and would have known of my undertaking, repeated, on television, what was incorrectly stated in the news item. I think it is true to say that information moves along, here, at a very speedy rate. I would say, with respect to the online news service, the Citizens Report, that there is a duty, I believe, in the press, to inform the nation about everything, but I believe that there is an obligation, equally, to ensure that the information provided is accurate. It is the only way by which fairness can be maintained.

I am requesting the online service reporter to have that report corrected. As regards the newspaper, I will leave it to the editor to know what the correct thing to do is and I will observe that. The Hon. Member would know, also, what is consonant with truth, the record, the honour which we undertook here and the discharge of his obligations to the public at large. I will leave that Hon. Member to determine that.

I thank you.

### **Best wishes to newly admitted Member of Parliament**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, on behalf of the Assembly, I would like to extend to the newly admitted Member, the Member who has just taken the Oath of Office, the Hon. Adrian Anamayah, our best wishes for your service in the Assembly, and we wish you a very long service here.

*2.49 p.m.*

### **PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS**

The following Papers were laid:

1. The Excise Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2015 – No. 5 of 2015;

2. The Customs Duties (Amendment of First Schedule) Order 2015 – No. 10 of 2015; and
3. The Value-Added Tax (Amendment of Schedule 1) Order 2015 – No.12 of 2015.

*[Minister of Finance]*

## **STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS, INCLUDING POLICY STATEMENTS**

### **Devastation created by tropical storm Erika on the Dominican Republic**

**First Vice-President and Prime Minister [Mr. Nagamootoo]:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to make a very short statement as regards tropical storm Erika which has created havoc on the island of Dominica, a Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Member State. I wish to say that the Government and people of Guyana are today in solidarity with the people of Dominica and that we avail ourselves, as a Government and a people, to render whatever assistance we could to the Government and people of Dominica at this time of distress.

We were made to understand, Your Honour, that as many as 20 persons might have died, a number of bridges and roads have been washed away and as much as 12 inches of rain had fallen on the island. We can only understand that in the context of having experienced two recent episodes of flash floods and the devastation that that caused to the lives of many people.

Mr. Speaker, we reiterate our solidarity with the people of Dominica at this time of distress.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Prime Minister for his statement.

**Mr. Rohee:** Mr. Speaker, the People’s Progressive Party (PPP), as a continuation of the matter raised by the Hon. Prime Minister, issued a statement on the matter and I would like, for the record, to read this statement, with your permission, Sir, which has two paragraphs.

**Mr. Speaker:** This is a continuation of the matter that the Prime Minister raised. Please proceed.

**Mr. Rohee:** The statement states:

“The People’s Progressive Party expresses its solidarity with the Government and people of the Commonwealth of Dominica in this time of great devastation brought about by tropical storm Erika. Our deepest condolences to the families and relatives of those who have lost their lives. The party takes note of the increased frequency and intensity of

natural disasters that wreak havoc on Caribbean countries which are already classified as some of the most vulnerable to climate change.

Tropical storm Erika is a stark reminder that the international community must unite and take urgent and meaningful action on climate change. The need to provide urgent and direct assistance to affected countries such as Dominica is also underscored.”

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Hon. Member for his statement.

**MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND MOVED BY A MINISTER**

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 54**

“BE IT RESOLVED:

That Standing Order No. 54 be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed at its Sitting on Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2015, with the second reading and the remaining stages of the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2015 – Bill No. 8 of 2015.” [*The First Vice-President and Prime Minister*]

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** I wish to move that Standing Order No. 54 be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed, at its sitting today, Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2015, with the second reading and remaining stages of the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2015, Bill No. 8 of 2015.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Standing Order suspended.*

**PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**GOVERNMENT’S BUSINESS**

**BILLS – SECOND READING**

**INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 2015 – BILL NO.8/2015**

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Income Tax Act.” [*The Minister of Finance*]

**Minister of Finance [Mr. Jordan]:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to move that the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2015, Bill No. 8 of 2015, published on the 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2015, be now read a second time.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very simple Bill, perhaps one of the simplest that will be brought to this House. The Bill seeks to reinstate a benefit that was previously enjoyed but was inadvertently taken away with the movement from a progressive system of taxation to the present regressive, flat tax system. In fact, this benefit was taken away in 1991 and I think it is a tribute to this regime that, 24 years afterwards, we could see the errors of our ways, somewhat, and reinstate it.

This benefit is indeed enjoyed throughout the Caribbean, at least in many of the jurisdictions that I have researched. Not only is this contribution critical to employees during their working and non-working life, but it is also an important source of savings and financing for the Government. This measure continues our quest to provide a good life for all Guyanese by giving back to them and putting more money in their pockets, so to speak.

We have heard, in our recent debates, of the salary and pension increases to be paid shortly, the removal of Value Added Tax (VAT) from various poor people’s items and so forth; so, this is in the armoury of pro-poor measures that we have put together. How will this measure actually work? Well, let us assume that someone is earning \$60,000 at the moment. He or she would be given a free pay of \$50,000 per month and that leaves a chargeable income of \$10,000. He or she would be asked to pay 30% of that \$10,000, which is \$3,000 in income tax, and he or she would also be asked to pay \$3,360 per month in National Insurance Scheme (NIS) contributions. In essence, his or her take home pay would be \$53,640.

When this Bill is passed and the measure goes into effect, that same person who is earning \$60,000 will have a free pay of \$50,000 and that leaves \$10,000. Also, the \$3,360 that he or she would have paid in NIS contribution for the month will also be deducted from the \$10,000, which will leave a chargeable income of \$6,640 and 30% of that is \$1,992, giving that person a

take home pay of \$54, 648. This means that that person will have a savings or extra money in his or her pocket every month of \$1,008 or \$12,096 per year that he or she would be taking home.

This measure takes place immediately, that is Year of Assessment 2016, which means Year of Income 2015. The Commissioner will do the necessary calculations and determine how much you would have saved up to the end of August, and he will shortly issue guidelines as to how to treat with the issue of giving you back the moneys that you have paid up to August. He will issue also guidelines to make the appropriate adjustments from September onwards so that you start enjoying your benefits, which I know will come in handy for the Christmas season, especially, and, at least, also for when school reopens. Even though you are not getting it immediately, at least by the end of September or October, you would get your benefit.

We are also dealing with a very important mobiliser of savings in this country – the National Insurance Scheme contribution - and I think it would be remiss of me if I do not use this opportunity to point to a few things of the NIS which have occurred in the recent past. When we make our contributions to NIS, we expect that, in our times of difficulties, times of old age and so forth, the NIS would be there for us. It is incumbent upon the NIS to be prudent in its investment of our resources that we are contributing so faithfully every month over our working life.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that all of us were hurt at the reckless investment by NIS in the Colonial Life Insurance Company (CLICO), resulting in the impairment of over \$5.6 billion of NIS' money. Between the period 2009 to now, NIS has lost \$1.8 billion. As if this were not criminal enough, NIS again made another rather suspect investment in the Berbice Bridge Company Inc., nearly \$1 billion on which it is still to collect income. Essentially, NIS is now in the unfortunate position where it is eating into its capital to make even the minimal benefits that are made available to its contributors, but this cannot continue forever.

If you are going to eat into your capital, the base is going to be less and the income that you can earn on that capital is going to be less. Therefore, we will have to move swiftly to look at NIS again, look at the actuarial report that is there - and which has only been very minimally implemented - and come up with a strategy. It is not going to be easy but it will be a fresh approach.

*3.04 p.m.*

That approach includes entrenching in NIS, whether through its laws or some other mechanism, to ensure that never again should NIS be asked to do anything as reckless as it has done over the last five years. This is not a partisan matter. On both sides of this House, we have made contributions. And, on both sides of this House, we expect that those contributions will work for us in our working life - if something happens to us in sickness or so on - and in our after working life, when we do need it (in our older age, golden years, so to speak). We do not want the scenario where we expect to have our benefits only to find out when we get there those benefits are not there for us.

This is the scenario now. NIS is constrained from giving better benefits because it continues to lose on this impaired investment. I believe, in some respect, at the end of the day, the Consolidated Fund may be asked to make good on this loss because, in my earlier times, I knew NIS to be a member of the Co-operative Financial Administration Act (COFA) and I knew part of the Act suggested that, for institutions under there, the Consolidated Fund had to make good on their losses. So, I think it will be a real struggle to replace over \$5 billion.

I know efforts have been made to amortise this debt, little by little, but even those efforts seem to be falling short. NIS was given a building in Camp Street, which is occupied by the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA). I think it is being given \$5 million a month rent, which is \$60 million per year. But, now, the building is found to be structurally - I do not want to use the word unsafe because it may frighten people - let us say, not in keeping with the activity for which the people are in there. I do not want to use structurally unsound. And this has been exacerbated, recently, with the little earth tremor that we had. So, it is not a pretty sight when it rains, even a little bit, to see umbrellas being opened in GRA to people in the building, to people sheltering from rain.

Documents are there that are being destroyed as a result of the building being flooded after even a little rain. And, so, we have to move immediately to see how we can improve the safety of the workers while they are there and, as a medium-term measure, look at prospects of removing the GRA from there until that building can be made structurally and otherwise safe for human habitation.



Mr. Speaker, I do not want to prolong. It is Friday afternoon and we know what Friday afternoon is in Guyana. I will just say, as I said, the Bill is a very simple measure, a measure to put money in people's pockets and I will hope that both sides of this House can unanimously pass this Bill so that it can be assented and then the people can start enjoying their benefits.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker. [*Applause*]

**Leader of the Opposition [Mr. Jagdeo]:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few days ago, we indicated to Members of the Government that we would be inclined to support early passage of all the supporting legislation to give effect to the Budget measures. And, we are here, today, to do that. We thought when we had that discussion, that the politics surrounding the debates had ended and that we would not use the debate or the presentation of the Bills to give effect to the Budget measures to score political points once again. Therefore, we had not intended to speak on the matter, but I feel an obligation to do so, given what we have just heard from the Minister of Finance.

We have seen the calculations done by the Hon. Minister of Finance in the Budget and his statements to the effect that Guyanese will be benefiting from the Budget through greater disposable income. But, the calculations have been very convenient. Tomorrow, when the people of this country wake up and they look at their pay cheques and their benefits, then they are going to realise how misleading many of the calculations made by the Hon. Minister of Finance have been.

The interest subsidy on NIS contribution has been removed. The Hon. Minister of Finance did not tell us the figure for that: how much the Treasury will benefit and how much disposable income would be withdrawn from people based on the removal of the interest subsidy. But, he told us that removing the interest from NIS contributions would contribute \$1.3 billion to people's disposable income. Similarly, we did not get from him a net calculation of the withdrawal of disposable income from every family in this country that has children going to school.

We heard about the \$500 increase in the uniform allowances, but we did not hear about the cost of the removal of the \$10,000 grant from school children. Our calculation is that this is close to \$1.7 billion.

We have heard about, by extension, benefits for rice farmers. The country was so happy to hear that this Government is now putting in the Budget an incremental sum, in its view, of \$23 billion to help rice farmers. However, in the Budget debate, we saw the Hon. Minister of Finance, using technicalities in order to dodge the question of where the money is budgeted.

We have heard about money given to the rice industry - \$3.8 billion - in the last three months. But the Hon. Minister of Finance is dodging the question whether this money came from the Consolidated Fund, and, if it came from the Consolidated Fund in the absence of the Budget, he would have committed an illegal act. So, if it did not come from the Consolidated Fund, where did it come from? And, if we cannot be told where it came from, did the Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) actually receive the money? It is a black hole!

We heard from the Hon. Minister of Finance, adding disposable income again to people, that \$5 billion was given to the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB) for support to the rice industry and he, again, had refused, in the Budget debates, to say whether the money came from the Consolidated Fund or not. Until today, this nation does not know if the GRDB actually collected that money. Did it again go into a black hole?

We have heard the calculations about how pensioners will benefit from over \$3,000 increase, but we are yet to hear about the cost of the removal of the subsidies for water and electricity for pensioners. When we do calculations, we have to say to the people, in a net sense, if they are better off. My view is that they are not!

We had intended not to politicise the debate. We, on this side, would welcome a debate on CLICO and the failure of CLICO. And, when that debate takes place, you will see the difference in approach between how the former Government of Guyana tackled this issue and how the Caribbean tackled it.

We can look at even the world. In 2008, when the world moved into a financial crisis because of subprime mortgages, and, institutions across the world were collapsing - 90 odd banks in the United States of America, the stock exchange practically collapsed, trillions of dollars wiped out - the United States Government had to prop up financial institutions by putting budgetary resources through what they called the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) into these institutions. The Central Bank had to expand its balance sheet by buying corporate bonds from

many of the institutions, the real sector institutions, because there was a credit crunch in the United States of America. And, the Central Bank – through what is known as “quantitative easing” - expanded its balance sheet to increase money supply. The world was in crisis. Institutions were toppling everywhere.

CLICO collapsed in the Bahamas. Across the Caribbean, many institutions collapsed. In the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries, until today, close to US\$2 billion of their resources are exposed. So, when CLICO, which was heavily exposed in the Bahamas, collapsed, we, in Guyana, moved swiftly to address the situation. We ensured, first of all, that we took legal action in the Bahamas.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, it is a generous interpretation of merits at this time. You are going to be finished shortly. Is that correct? Please proceed.

**Mr. Jagdeo:** The Hon. Minister of Finance opened the door by mentioning CLICO and I believe that I have a duty to speak about our response to CLICO.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, I do not want to tell you that you have two minutes more or three minutes more, but I must insist that we end quickly.

**Mr. Jagdeo:** I will submit to your ruling whether I have two or three minutes more, but I still need to speak on the CLICO matter and NIS’ contributions to CLICO.

**Mr. Speaker:** You have three minutes, sir.

*3.19 p.m.*

**Mr. Jagdeo:** We got \$15 million of grant from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. We moved also to escrow the funds that BOSAI had owed to an institution related to the Colonial Life Insurance Company (CLICO). That money is still under the jurisdiction of the court. We sold the assets of CLICO. One was recently sold – the land on the East Bank – and raised US\$20 million. [An Hon. Member: Who buy them? You?] It was publicly advertised. I cannot deal with ignorance, Mr. Speaker. We believe that we are the only country in the region which pledged that we will redeem face value.

Mr. Speaker, it is one minute to wrap up.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, you will be happy to know that you have quite a lot of time which has left.

**Mr. Jagdeo:** We are the only country to do this. We are the only country in the region to redeem at face value the deposits of all the contributors to CLICO. Even Trinidad and Tobago is redeeming those pledges at a discount. It was because of sound financial management that we dealt with it.

Mr. Speaker, my time is up but we welcome a debate on this. This is the Government that is now truncating the revenue stream of the Berbice River Bridge. It said it was a milking cow for friends and family of the People's Progressive Party (PPP), but now we are hearing dividends have not been paid to investors. It has to be consistent. I thought today the politics had ended, and we were working together to pass this Bill, but the Hon. Minister of had to scores cheap political points.

Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member, you have more time. It was just brought to my attention that you could just speak forever.

**Mr. Jagdeo:** Really?

**Mr. Speaker:** It is until half of an hour is finished.

**Mr. Jagdeo:** Maybe, I should not continue any more since I made the point already that we were here in a different mode today. The Members have pushed us back into this.

Thank you Mr. Speaker. I have finished my speech.

We would welcome a debate on CLICO, the Berbice River Bridge and on the National Insurance Scheme (NIS). I will be able to tell you, Mr. Speaker, of the early days when the Hon. Minister of Finance was in the Office of the Budget and the Vice President was Minister of Finance and how the NIS's money used to be given to the city council at zero-rated bonds. I will not...

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the Hon. Attorney General wish to speak? You have the floor, Sir. You are rising on...?

**Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs [Mr. Williams]:** Standing Order 40(a), Mr. Speaker...

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Attorney General, this is the second reading of the Bill. One can speak as much as 30 minutes.

**Mr. Williams:** I am guided, Sir.

**Mr. Jagdeo:** Mr. Speaker, I thank you. Once again, we welcome a debate on all those issues in this House.

Thank you very much Mr. Speaker. [*Applause*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the question is that the Bill be now read a second time. Minister of Finance, do you wish to speak? I do not want to curtail the debate, so please stand and speak.

**Mr. Jordan:** No Mr. Speaker. I think I had to say what I had to say. I leave it. I must say that I did enjoy the Hon. Leader of the Opposition debate.

*Question put and carried.*

*Bill read a second time.*

*Assembly in Committee*

*Bill considered and approved.*

*Assembly resumed.*

*Bill reported without amendments, read the third time and passed.*

## **MOTIONS**

### **CONFIRMATION OF THE CUSTOMS DUTIES (AMENDMENT OF FIRST SCHEDULE) ORDER 2015 – No. 10 of 2015**

“BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly, in accordance with Section 9 of the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01, confirm the Customs Duties (Amendment of First Schedule) Order 2015 (No. 10 of 2015), which was made on 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2015, under Section 8 of the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01 and published in the Official Gazette dated 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2015.”

*[First Vice President and Prime Minister]*

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Motion carried.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have given consent in accordance with Standing Order 28(2) for the following motion to be proceeded with at this sitting. The First Vice President and Prime Minister will move the motion.

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** I like to move the motion in my name.

“That this National Assembly, in accordance with Section 9 of the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01, confirm the Customs Duties (Amendment of First Schedule) Order 2015 (No. 10 of 2015), which was made on 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2015, under Section 8 of the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01 and published in the Official Gazette dated 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2015.”

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Motion carried.*

## **RECESS FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

WHEREAS Standing Order 9 provides that “unless there are special reasons for so doing, no Sitting of the National Assembly shall be held between the 10<sup>th</sup> August and 10<sup>th</sup> October in any year”;

AND WHEREAS Standing Order 112 provides that any one or more of the Standing Orders may be suspended, after notice, or with the leave of the Speaker, on a motion by a member at any Sitting;

AND WHEREAS, by way of Resolution No. 4 of 2015, the Government of Guyana suspended Standing Order No. 9 to allow the 2015 Estimates of Expenditure to be presented and passed by the National Assembly on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2015;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Guyana, notwithstanding the suspension of Standing Order No. 9 to allow for the passing of the 2015 Estimates of Expenditure, would like the National Assembly to go in recess during this year (2015),

“BE IT RESOLVED:

That, unless there are special reasons for so doing, the National Assembly agrees that there would be no Sitting of the National Assembly or Meeting of Parliamentary Committee or Sub-Committee from 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 to 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.”

*[First Vice President and Prime Minister]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have given consent in accordance with Standing Order 28(2) for the following motion to be proceeded with at this sitting. The First Vice President and Prime Minister will move the motion.

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** Mr. Speaker, if you would permit me, before I move the motion in my name, to thank you most profusely, if I may say, for your calm and equanimity in these last days of our sittings, particularly the sittings that had to do with the consideration of the Estimates for 2015. I know at times we seemed to have been competing with the tropical storm Erica, and the sessions had been very stormy. I recall, going back to my high school days, a quote from Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* - you sat “like a monument of patience smiling almost at grief”. Sir, you battled through and saw us through successfully. I wish, again, on behalf of this side of the House, to thank you for steering us through those difficult moments of time.

I also wish to express the gratitude of the Government, and all my colleagues, for the work of the Clerk of the National Assembly and the staff of Parliament Office. We are cognizant that at times we do pull them through very arduous periods of work. We have gone through those sessions which went into the wee hours of the morning. I wish also to express our gratitude for their working beyond the call of duty which was also the case of other workers in this building, including members of the lounge and other supporting ancillary staff. In particular, I also wish to

express gratitude to members of the media who sat through these sessions to take the news to the people of Guyana. It has also been for them a difficult time of having to work throughout the sittings into the early hours of the morning.

At this point I wish to welcome the new Member of Parliament Mr. Adrian Anamayah. I am confident his taking the oath here will add to the calibre of Members of Parliament who would take their duty and representation seriously.

*3.34 p.m.*

In particular, as a *Berbician*, I welcome the new Member to this august Assembly and to this House. Also Sir, I wish to say that the return of the Opposition to these seats has been a welcomed development.

In saying that, Sir, I now wish to propose this motion of recess for the National Assembly and I am not sure that if this is moment that Your Honour had wanted me to move this motion and for which leave has been granted.

Sir, I would like to read into record that our Parliament, the National Assembly, had not met since August of last year when we went into recess on the 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2014 and then we went through a period of prorogation which denied us sittings for nine continuous months before we had met. I want to explain that we have not, on this occasion, Sir, although we may feel richly deserving of it, had our two months recess. We are now proceeding on a curtailed period.

“WHEREAS Standing Order 9 provides that “unless there are special reasons for so doing, no Sitting of the National Assembly shall be held between the 10<sup>th</sup> August and 10<sup>th</sup> October in any year”;

AND WHEREAS Standing Order 112 provides that any one or more of the Standing Orders may be suspended, after notice, or with the leave of the Speaker, on a motion by a member at any Sitting;

AND WHEREAS, by way of Resolution No. 4 of 2015, the Government of Guyana suspended Standing Order No. 9 to allow the 2015 Estimates of Expenditure to be presented and passed by the National Assembly on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2015;



AND WHEREAS the Government of Guyana, notwithstanding the suspension of Standing Order No. 9 to allow for the passing of the 2015 Estimates of Expenditure, would like the National Assembly to go in recess during this year (2015),

BE IT RESOLVED:

That, unless there are special reasons for so doing, the National Assembly agrees that there would be no Sitting of the National Assembly or Meeting of Parliamentary Committee or Sub-Committee from 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 to 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.”

*Motion proposed.*

**Ms. Teixeira:** Unlike my colleague across floor, I will not make this a political statement, but this is a simple motion to do with recess. A simple motion stating that we are going into recess, having extended the time. I, first of all, want to say that the House has an enormous amount of work to do. This is the people’s House and the people’s business that we are addressing. Whilst we think that we deserve a rest - I am sure that all politicians deserve a rest at some point - nevertheless, we have a lot of work to come back and do here. We are not opposing the motion for recess, but we believe that we must hasten back and start a lot of work that has to be dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to thank you, the Clerk, the staff of the National Assembly and all the many staff members, who came to this House during the debate, and all the public servants and employees who were here and worked. This is probably the most gruelling exercise we have had. We wish to thank you very much and we ask that the thanks and appreciation be conveyed to all the staff of the Parliament Office.

Last, of course, I did forget the media, which also stayed here with us through out. Thank you very much.

*Question put, and agreed to,*

*Motion carried.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, this concludes our business for today. Before we leave, I crave your indulgence to allow me to express my thanks for your assistance and cooperation during the period that I had the honour to serve in this Assembly.

Some Hon. Members, mindful of my welfare, did say to me that it would be a baptism of fire. It was a baptism, but not one of fire. I have not found any wounds yet but perhaps after we have gone into recess and I give myself a chance to think of what has been visited upon me, forgive the expression, by Hon Members, I might find that I do have wounds.

I think we all deserve an opportunity to step back and be fresh and I am happy that one month - I think it is inadequate - would allow us a time to return fully energised.

I know that, somewhere in this building, we are looking at the Standing Orders and though the Assembly will not meet, the hundred-odd members, or most of them, of the Parliament Office will ensure that things move along so that when we return to the Assembly we will be ready to move. Their privilege or enjoyment of a recess will not be like ours but much more restricted.

I have learnt many things here, now. Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira told me that I am a new kid on the block and as a new kid on the block I will indulge for a moment. I have learnt that, at least the practice in this House, when a Member says "I am not making a political statement" what the Member means is "I am now starting to make a political statement." It is also the case in which sometimes I had to examine a statement which a Hon. Member would have said to me. I am not comfortable with that but if that is what is required then I would have to do it. I am more comfortable with taking that Hon. Member word as one of reliance.

I did have the cause to say to a certain Hon. Member here, and I did not mean any disrespect, that I guess politicians think differently. I would like to maintain faith in my approach, that is, when someone tells me something I should rely on it, so you would indulge me on that. The times when I am wrong, well so be it. I would like to believe that we are all capable of that, of giving our word and keeping it, and I hope that will be possible. When you step away from here for one month that you would say there is something in that.

They are many other things I could say. Members have been very welcoming and very kind in my interaction with them. I do appreciate that greatly. I am confident that it will continue.

I want to say thank you very much and please enjoy the break you would have.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Speaker:** Prime Minister, you would move the adjournment.

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to move the adjournment of this House until the 10<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2015.

**Mr. Speaker:** The House stands adjourned to the 10<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2015. I did say that the House stands adjourn to the 10<sup>th</sup> day of October, which will mean that we will all gather here, God willing, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October. I hope that is the understanding that we have.

*Sitting adjourned accordingly at 3.45 p.m.*