

Official Report

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2012) OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

5TH Sitting

Wednesday, 21ST March, 2012

Assembly convened at 2.13 p.m.

PRAYERS

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS

REPRESENTATION ON SECTORAL COMMITTEES

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 86(1) makes provision for the appointment of the four (4) Sectoral Committees pursuant to Article 119B of the Constitution as soon as may be after the beginning of each National Assembly;

AND WHEREAS Standing Order No. 86(2) provides that each Sectoral Committee shall consist of seven (7) members, four (4) representing the Government and three (3) the Opposition, respectively;

AND WHEREAS in this 10th Parliament, the Opposition is in the majority and the Government the minority,

AND WHEREAS Standing Order No. 86(2) does not represent the new majority reality in this 10th Parliament;

“BE IT RESOLVED:

That Standing Order No. 86(2) be amended to read that representation on the Sectoral Committees should be calculated in accordance with the seat allocation to the Political Parties in Parliament; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the four (4) Sectoral Committees not be constituted until and unless representation thereto is calculated in accordance with the seat allocation to the Political Parties in the 10th Parliament.” [*Mr. Harmon*]

COMPOSITION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 85(1) makes provision for the appointment of a Parliamentary Management Committee as soon as may be after the beginning of each National Assembly;

AND WHEREAS Standing Order No. 85(2) provides that the Parliamentary Management Committee shall comprise ten (10) members, five (5) representing the Government and five (5) representing the Opposition to be nominated by the Committee of Selection, with the Speaker as the Chair, and if the latter is not a member of the Committee, he or she shall not have an original or casting vote;

AND WHEREAS the provision of the said Standing Order No. 85(2) could lead to gridlock and impasse in the work of the Parliamentary Management Committee,

“BE IT RESOLVED:

That Standing Order No. 85(2) be amended to provide that the composition of the Parliamentary Management Committee shall be nine (9) members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That representation on the nine (9) member Parliamentary Management Committee shall be determined in accordance with the seat allocation to the Political Parties in the Assembly.” [Dr. Roopnarine]

THE RIGHT TO VOTE IN PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

WHEREAS Standing Orders Nos. 80(5), 88(2) and 93(2) provide that unless otherwise provided for in the Standing Orders any member of the Assembly, whether elected or non-elected, shall be eligible for membership of any Standing Committee, Select Committee and Special Select Committee, respectively, and shall have the right to vote therein,

“BE IT RESOLVED:

That Standing Orders Nos. 80(5), 88(2) and 93(2) be amended to read that only an elected member of the Assembly shall have the right to vote in any Standing Committee, Select Committee and Special Select Committee.” [Mr. B. Williams]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we have before us today a number of motions, but as it has become customary, it would appear, just before calling for us to assemble, I received a letter from the Hon. Prime Minister which purports to be a challenge to the debating of these motions this afternoon. I would ask that the Hon. Prime Minister presents his Point of Order.

Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs [Mr. Hinds]: I would like to draw our attention to Standing Order 111 which deals with the amendment of Standing Orders and, in particular, the first part of that, among other things, states:

“Unless the Speaker shall otherwise direct, not less than twelve days’ notice of a motion to amend the Standing Orders shall be given, and the notice shall be accompanied by a draft of the proposed amendments.”

The Government would like to submit that, in the case of this and the two other motions to follow, which all call for amendments for Standing Orders, there were no proposed amendments accompanying the motions, and also we would like to submit that on a number of previous instances, including one, Mr. Speaker, that you had initiated, there was the satisfaction of Standing Order 111 with the submission of the proposed amendment. We, therefore, submit that,

unfortunately, the requirements of Standing Order 111 have not been met and we do not think that these motions are as of hearing now, properly, before this House.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you Hon. Prime Minister. May I invite, technically it should be, the mover of the motion to respond, or if he wishes to have anyone do so on his behalf, and I will take any submission from the Alliance For Change if it feels the desire to do so, and then I would like to consider.

Mr. B. Williams: If it pleases you, Mr. Speaker. With reference to Standing Order 111, as contended by the Hon. Prime Minister, the Hon. Prime Minister omitted these words: “Unless the Speaker shall otherwise direct...” Those words convey that the Speaker has a discretion in this matter. [Mr. Neendkumar: Why do you get the judge to order... *inaudible?*] My learned friend means to disturb us. It is “not learned”. My friend intends to disturb us because he feels I am in the position of Sachin Tendulkar, only one more to go; only one more for the honourable Sir Lionel Luckhoo. Now the discretion that you have, Mr. Speaker, is important because these rules are meant not to hinder our internal business, but mainly to facilitate it. What is the most important aspect of Standing Order 111? It is the proposal to amend the Standing Order. That is what is important - that the motion has to come properly before you.

The fact of the attachment that there should be a draft could be so fundamental that if the draft is not here, and now, that it should vitiate the motions which are before this House. But it follows: If the draft attachments were so fundamental then... The Clerk of the National Assembly, who all these motions have to pass through, has sent me, and some other Members who have proposed motions, notice that he has accepted the motions and that they will be placed on the Notice Paper and the Order Paper. [Mr. Neendkumar: The Clerk is not the Speaker. It is the Speaker who makes the decision.] It happens when the blows are too much. I consider the Clerk of the National Assembly, with all due respect, to be an expert on parliamentary procedures in this honourable House, and it is clear that he does not see that it is as of a much, or moving, significance to hinder the passage of the motion through the House, because this is mainly to go to the Standing Orders Committee.

It is clear that, since it is procedural, you, Mr. Speaker, have this discretion to so say, “okay, it goes to the Standing Orders Committee”, but you will lay over the drafts before the first meeting

of the Committee. How could that, Mr. Speaker, be so harmful to the proceedings in this House? The motions are the important things. They have passed the scrutiny of time that they are laid over for more than twelve days. They have been in the system and checked by the Clerk of the National Assembly. The Clerk of the National Assembly found no fault with those motions. So I am respectfully submitting that it is a storm in the tea cup, to borrow a phrase that we do not see forthcoming in this Tenth Parliament. So Mr. Speaker, my respectful submission is that you possess the power not to hinder the business of the National Assembly and that you could allow the passage in the normal manner, and you could also order that the draft of the various proposals to amend the Standing Orders be laid over before the first meeting of the Standing Orders Committee which will besiege of it.

To reinforce my contention, may I respectfully refer you, Mr. Speaker, to Standing Order 112 which deals with the “Suspension of Standing Orders.”

“Any one or more of these Standing Orders may, after notice, or with the leave of the Speaker...”

Again, your discretion is given.

“...be suspended...”

[**Ms. Teixeira:** It is “after notice.”] Why do you not listen and learn?

“...on a motion made by a Member at any Sitting.”

So, Mr. Speaker, you do not have to have a notice. A notice is one but you could do it now - *ex improviso*. It could arise now and we could do it now, and any Standing Order could be suspended. Therefore it means that you, Mr. Speaker, could suspend the requirement that the draft ought to be accompanying the motion before it goes to the Standing Orders Committee. It is needed here or there. So Mr. Speaker, that is why you have discretion in terms of these rules to enable the business of the National Assembly to proceed smoothly, more especially, the internal business of the National Assembly.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any other Member who wishes to speak to this? Hon. Prime Minister, would you...?

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Speaker, I wish just to make...

Mr. Speaker: Just one minute, Mr. Ramjattan. Mr. Prime Minister, would you wish to defer to speak last?

Mr. Hinds: Yes.

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Speaker, I just wish to make the point that these rules which we have before us must not be our masters. They must serve us to get the business of this National Assembly moving forward. Inherent in the motion... By the way, there is a huge quantification about procedures and rules, only recently in the High Court, before the Chief Justice, as to why they must not applied, because if we want the necessary justice of the case to be heard we cannot muddy the streams with procedural tabulation, and all of that. Why should we, in view of hearing of all of that there, not apply it here, simply because we need not to proceed with an amendment to our Standing Orders which, by the way, is stated in the motion? What is it we want to amend the Standing Orders to? It is clear as day light, and so if there has been an overlooking by the mover of the motion and the seconder of the motion, and, to a certain extent, the Clerk of the National Assembly, not realising probably there was this requirement, we are not going to, in any way, try to self flagellate, at this point, to the extent that we are going to waste the time of the the National Assembly, all the cost involved here, in a Private Members' Business day, Wednesday, for the purposes of now delaying it so that we can come back another day just to get the notice there. **[An Hon. Member: Rules.]** No. Rules are there, as I have indicated, for purposes of knowing the case that is before us, and we must not blow hot and cold on this.

We have indicated clearly, through this notice, what we are seeking. It is not as if you have been taken by surprise, and the rules are there as what is called directory. These are not mandatory to the extent that every ounce of words and the spirit thereof...It is largely that which we are going to use to get the business of the National Assembly moving forward. If we are going to make this thing mandatory here, now, it means that we all have to come out, go back to our various Regions, simply to bring a notice back with a draft that has what the amendments will be.

[Ms. Manickchand: They should have done that first.] Yes. I am saying so, but what do we

do in the context of things here? [Ms. Manickchand: What is the source of this thing?]

The source of it is that we... [Ms. Shadick: Let the Speaker exercise his discretion.]

Alright, let the Speaker exercise his discretion.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say Sir, that you have the discretion and I concur with my learned friend...

Mr. Hinds: Mr. Speaker, ...

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, I believe that your colleague, Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira wishes to speak.

Ms. Teixeira: We have to be very careful in this House about not falling prey to capriciousness. The rules of the House have been developed over the time and, as of July last year, we went through another revision at the Parliamentary Select Committee, made up of all Members of all political parties. The point here, whether it is oversight or not, is that the reason why a draft amendment is included in Standing Order 111, sub paragraph (1), is to allow the House to know what are the exact wording of the amendment which has been brought to the Standing Orders. It is an important inclusion in that Standing Order and, as you may know, we may decide that all of this does not matter and at every sitting we will throw away the book and create a new book, create a new thing. That is, it is anarchy and there are reasons why the National Assembly worked with certain rules and discipline. Standing Order Committee Report of 2007 dealt with the two amendments brought to this House by the Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Rohee, on the days between the first and second readings of the Bill and, Mr. Trotman, you, yourself, as a Member of the AFC, on Standing Order 54, to do with the times and hours of sitting. Both motions, in 2007, were tabled; both had draft amendments; both came to this House and went directly to the Standing Orders Committee. I do not know what has changed in terms of some compliance and respect for what this House stands for.

Mr. Williams talked about the suspension of the Standing Orders but this Standing Order 111 deals with amendments to Standing Orders. It is a very specific section of the rules and therefore he talked about suspension Standing Order 111 (2), but it is about amendments to the Standing Order 111. Therefore if the Member wants to move the suspension of a Standing Order he has a

right to, it can be done, but it must be done after notice is given - notice, meaning a written notice - within the required time.

Mr. Speaker, I am appealing to you that this level of capriciousness is a dangerous road this Parliament is going down. We regret that the Members on the other side did not study the Standing Orders. The twelve-day notice, Mr. Speaker, appears to be in reference to the first part of the clause - the way it is written in English - but you, yourself, could decide that you want to waive that, but I believe that all of us in this House cannot, at every sitting, be wishing away and throwing away bits of the Standing Orders as it suits us and when it suits us. I am again repeating, it is a dangerous path this House is on.

The Standing Orders Committee, when referred matters from this House, can review any Standing Order, and it will come back to this House and be voted on, but we cannot run roughshod with these issues. We have a right on this side of the House, so do all the Members on the other side of this House have a right, to see that in the crafting of the three motions one has no idea of what the exact wording of each amendment will be. So Mr. Speaker, we defer to you, as you are the sole judge, but we appeal to you to uphold the Standing Orders, as written at this stage. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: I recognise Mrs. Backer. I see Dr. Roopnarine, but I would like to take some time to consider this. So it will be Mrs. Backer, then Dr. Roopnarine and then the Prime Minister will be the last person I will entertain.

Deputy Speaker [Mrs. Backer]: The two speakers on the Government side seemed to have conveniently pushed off of the Standing Order "...unless the Speaker shall otherwise direct..." That gives the Speaker a discretion, but we were hearing innuendoes - Mr. Speaker, said the last speaker, "We appeal to you to observe and uphold the Standing Orders." That, Mr. Speaker, is an affront to the office of the Speaker because the person who spoke just before me was saying to you "Sir, please uphold and do not allow it." Implied in that is if you do not cast it aside you have not upheld the Standing Orders. That is what has been suggested. You, Sir, have a discretion and in exercising your discretion I just would want you to say three or four things.

One, it is no harm. In exercising ones discretion, at whatever level - whether it is in the home, whether it is on the street or whether it is in Parliament - these are the things which have to be

taken into consideration: Will any harm be done to anyone? The answer must be “no” because the motion is not being debated now. If the motion was being debated now obviously the People’s Progressive Party (PPP) would be on very solid ground but it is not; it is on a slippery slope and it has shoes that have no traction. No one will be taken by surprise because, Sir, you in your wisdom and judgement can say: “I am directing that the draft be submitted to the National Assembly and circulated to Members within forty-eight hours of the end of the sitting”, or three days, or five days. In other words, the point that I am making, the Members do not have to see it at the first time when it goes to the Standing Orders Committee, is that you can say, in fairness to everyone, “Mover of the motion submit your draft within forty-eight days” so that... [Mr. Neendkumar: It is not forty-eight days.] It is forty-eight hours, sorry, and that - no Standing Order Committee meeting - the Committee shall not meet unless people have five full days to look at it, and to debate it, and to decide and discuss it among their parties so that there could be no taken by surprise. Sir, this is not a storm in a tea cup. This is something even smaller than this. [Mr. Ramjattan: It is trivial.] It is trivial. Thank you very much.

So, Sir, you have the discretion; no harm will be done. You have the power and the authority, and I think it would only be fair to the PPP to indicate that it to be laid over within a certain time which will give it and the Alliance For Change (AFC), and everyone here, a chance to see it days before it is discussed at the Standing Orders Committee. That is all I would want to say.

Dr. Roopnarine: It is really very disappointed to hear the Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira raised the spectre of anarchy and capriciousness and I want to assure the Hon. Member, and the Members on the other side, that we, on this side of the House, have absolutely no interest in either capriciousness or anarchy.

When this particular Standing Order, Standing Order 111, was drafted I do believe that the people who drafted it were sensible and intelligent people and I think what they must have had in mind is that more amendments should be brought that, in fact, is so substantial that it requires a draft. I agree with the Hon. Member Mr. Ramjattan that the draft that is being sought is, in actual fact, inherent in the motion itself: That if you were to read the motion, you can be in no doubt, whatsoever, what the actual draft would be. I also accept that it was an error of omission that the draft ought to have been submitted. My feeling is that one of the reasons it was easy to omit the draft is that, in effect, all that the draft would have done was to substitute one number for another

number. It is not a draft with so much substance that it requires elaborate notice and elaborate consideration.

The Hon. Member Mrs. Backer has recommended, Mr. Speaker, that using your discretion, under Standing Order 111, you can simply ask that the draft be produced within a given period of time. I, myself, do not believe that two days are required. I believe that were you to suspend this sitting for one hour we can have the draft in the presence of the Members, and if it is really enough an elaborate draft, I am sure that it will satisfy the requirements of Standing Order 111.

So I am urging that we move on with the business of the National Assembly. It is unfortunate, I think, that we come here on the first Private Members' Business day of this Tenth Parliament to find that, in effect, an objection, the nature in which it seems to me is not terribly serious, is being used to frustrate the work of the sitting. That I think is regrettable and I am urging, Mr. Speaker, that you use your discretion, under Standing Order 111, to suggest that we stand adjourn for an hour, maybe, and we can have the draft ready for circulation. I am sure that the draft will not cause any alarm among Members of the other side and we will satisfy the spirit and meaning of Standing Order 111.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hinds: I would like us to refer back to part one there, that a number of Speakers have directed our attention to, and I would like to submit that, in an ordinary reading of this part one, that the discretion applies to the twelve days' notice. I would like to recall the words just used by the Hon. Member and my friend across the way, Dr. Rupert Roopnarine, and I think in the way he expressed it just now, he made it clear, that there are two parts of this Standing Order: the twelve days' notice which could be varied but, whatever is the case, it should be accompanied with a draft of the proposed amendments.

Whilst much has been made that this Government is difficult, this is a little issue, and so on, I think that we should take in the context of what is happening. As you know, Mr. Speaker, that we feel very strongly that the action taken by the Members on the other side in changing and varying in a certain way, the make-up of the various Committees, does harm to certain provisions of the Constitution and may be even our existing Standing Orders. We did what is expected to be done in a democratic country, such as ours, but we went to the court to get an

interpretation and opinion on our motion. Sir, as you know, we have been pleading that the consideration of motion, such as these, should await the ruling of the court. So we have taken this position, may be not capriciously, may be not with any bad mind, to further our case that the consideration of these motions should await the ruling of the court and so I submit Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, with your leave, I would like to ask that we take a ten-minute suspension. I will confer with the Clerk of the National Assembly and I may, again with your leave, ask for some of you to attend in the Chamber so that we could come to a decision. In ten minutes I will be back.

Sitting suspended at 2.43 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 2.53 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have taken some time to consider the point of order taken by the Hon. Prime Minister and the responses of the Hon Members, Mr. B. Williams, Mr. Ramjattan, Mrs. Backer and Ms. Teixeira, and I have come to a decision which I will put into writing, but for now I will give it orally. Before I do so, let me just say that I am somewhat disappointed that our business has been reduced to “squabbling” – if I can use that word – over every minute detail, but I suppose this will characterise the Tenth Parliament. Hopefully, we will settle down and get beyond this.

I am troubled by the fact that the matter which was brought to my attention just, literally, minutes before I came to sit, could have been brought to my attention before and does lend to the impression that it was brought at this time to frustrate the business. Be that as it may, I am aware that I am the Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee and that whatever happens I will be hearing and chairing these proceedings, in a sense. I recall, as the Hon. Prime Minister has well pointed out that in the past I have sought to move amendments to the Standing Orders and that I was required to place, alongside the motion, a draft of the amendment that I propose to introduce.

I have conferred with the Clerk and he has advised me that there must be a copy of the proposed amendment(s) accompanying the motion, and that he has erred whether by oversight or inadvertence, being busy or otherwise. He said that it was his error that he allowed the motions

to come onto the Order Paper without the requisite amendments being attached. In view of that fact, I do find that my discretion, which I do believe I have, extends only to the period of notice of 12 days and does not extend to the aspect of the attachment of the proposed amendments. So if at all I exercise my discretion, it is only to the time. I can abridge the time that the notice can be given, but once that is given there must be an amendment attached. This is the advice of the Clerk and I, also, take into account my own dealings as a Member of this House when I approached the House on a similar motion.

I rule that the motions, as they are, are not out of order, but the notices issued by the Parliament Office which went out without the requisite amendments are out of order. So the motions in and of themselves are not in error and so I would say that this afternoon we are unable to proceed to entertain them. The notices were not accompanied by the amendments and the Parliament Office will have to take some responsibility for that and the Clerk has said that he did err. However, I will exercise my discretion by abridging the time and I will not revert to the 12 days. The time for the notices to go out with amendments will be 48 hours and that the matters be placed on the Order Paper for the next Sitting of Parliament, whenever that is, whenever the Government side decides, but it should be within 48 hours and not 12 days because the motions themselves still are valid. The notices by the Parliament Office were flawed in the sense that they did not contain the needed and requisite proposed amendments. As I said, I must take into account the fact that in the past when I approached this House to move amendments, I did have to supply the amendments. So to that extent I rule, and I will put it into writing that the motions will not go forward today, but they will not be struck out. The Parliament Office will issue new notices and the time will be abridged to 48 hours.

I wish to add as well that, in this Tenth Parliament, to the best of my ability, I will have a very strict and literal interpretation of the rules and I will not give myself too much liberty in terms of interpretations. I know that a liberal view is being encouraged but this is the season of the High Court, constitutional motions, motions and amendments to motions. So I will try to abide by the Standing Orders and my own past practices when I was a Member. That is my ruling.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Ally: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I wish to indicate that we, on this side of the House, will abide by your ruling. But I would like to ask if this matter can be expedited, as you said – 48 hours. And I hope that with the concurrence of the Government that we indeed can have it. We can be prepared for the next hour but since you rule within 48 hours, I trust that we can come back within 48 hours and have this matter settled.

Mr. Speaker: As I indicated, the motions themselves were not in error but when the notices were issued by the Office, they should have contained the amendments and the Parliament Office should have picked that up. We all are prone to err. The Office is, I can tell you, under tremendous stress, given the new configuration, given the excitement within the Chamber, the High Court and elsewhere, given the numerous letters we receive on a daily basis. Hon. Prime Minister I know that you are representing your party's interest. I respect that. As I said, I had hoped that we would have received it earlier, but we are lawyers. I see the Hon. Member, Ms. Manickchand is smiling. We lawyers know certain things.

I regret that Members have had to come from out of town but, in any event, today's Sitting, even if the motions had gone forward, would have been somewhat perfunctory. We would not have had long debates. So I rule that the motions remain valid but the notice would be out of order.

Thank you very much.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hinds: Mr. Speaker, it seems that the business for today has come to an end. I would like to move the motion for the adjournment of the House to next Friday, 30th March, 2012, when the Budget shall be read.

Ms. Ally: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I wish to propose an amendment to the Hon. Prime Minister's motion so that we would meet on the 28th March, 2012, in order to conclude discussions on these motions.

Mr. Speaker: Could I be heard before I hear anything else? I have not put the question as yet so I would like to say that I have spoken to the Clerk about the issue of the adjournments. I can tell you that even the Clerk has said that we are entering into sections of the Standing Orders that we never had to before. It would appear to me that if it is that we have an adjournment to next

Friday, bearing in mind, Hon. Member, Ms. Ally, that Members have to travel from very far, is it possible, and given the nature of this matter being, as I said, not a matter for debate and discussion, and with the concurrence of the Clerk of the Assembly, who has the overriding authority in terms of the setting of the Order Paper, that we can actually put these motions forward. I know that normally there is a suspension of the Standing Orders for the reading of the Budget, but I do not believe that we would be so out of order to have a few minutes to take care of this matter rather than to have Members come on Wednesday and have to stay on until Friday. While we address issues of the adjournment – I see Ms. Teixeira being quite anxious – I believe that we should try to be cognizant of the fact that quite apart from Members travelling from hundreds of miles away, police officers have to be mobilised for ten minutes, the catering staff, the Office, Ministers and Members. I am asking that we try to bundle things together and in ten minutes time we would get through this and the Hon. Minister of Finance would be able to proceed, and we would save taxpayers' money which is something that we need to do. I am asking you to consider that. I am looking at Standing Order No. 11 (3) which speaks about adjournment. That is the proposal that I put. I may not have the authority to put it, but I am asking us to consider those who are coming from afar, those who have things to do and the police officers on the road – just for ten minutes and come back again on Friday. That is my proposal for you to consider Hon. Members.

Ms. Ally: Mr. Speaker, if the Government side is agreeable that we will have those motions before the reading of the Budget on Friday, we will agree certainly. If not, we stand for Wednesday.

Mr. Speaker: For the benefit of Members, whilst the Hon. Prime Minister is going through his Standing Orders, Standing Order No. 11 (3) says:

“Upon the conclusion of all business so exempted, the Speaker shall call upon a Minister to move “That this Assembly do now adjourn”, and, if it is then after 10.00 p.m., the Speaker shall adjourn the Assembly without question put.”

Those are very profound words. The question is not put but there is nothing stopping another Member from moving a motion to that question but without it being put to a vote. But what this

requires is some degree of cooperation between the two sides, obviously. Hon. Prime Minister please proceed.

Mr. Hinds: Yes. Mr. Speaker and Hon. Members, the Government side appreciates the proposal that you have put. And whilst we have been thinking of some of the Standing Orders that deal with the laying of the Budget and some of the issues about the Budget, I think that we are prepared to accept the proposal that you have put that we deal with the motions, as the proposal from the Hon. Member, Amna Ally. The Government side is willing to accept your proposal.

Mr. Speaker: I am most grateful for that and I congratulate all Members for agreeing with my proposal. Hopefully, by next Friday, we will have a ruling from the High Court in any event. So thank you. The Assembly now stands adjourned.

Adjourned accordingly at 3.07 p.m.