

NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS

DAILY HANSARD

FIRST MEETING – EIGHTH SESSION

MONDAY 24 APRIL 2006

The Speaker, Sir Peter Kenilorea took the Chair at 10.10 a.m.

Prayers.

ATTENDANCE

At prayers all were present with the exception of the Member for Central Honiara.

Hon OTI: Point of Order. In terms of Standing Order 80 - the presence of people who are not suppose to be at this meeting who are in the Chamber, what is the ruling on this, Mr Speaker?

Mr Speaker: As far as the presence of the media is concern, the Speaker has given permission for that, except that they are not allowed on the floor of Parliament. The media has been given permission to be in the public gallery but not on the floor of Parliament.

Hon Oti: Mr Speaker, I make reference to a number of Permanent Secretaries who are sitting here in the Chamber.

Mr Speaker: The proceedings of Parliament are public proceedings and therefore open to the public. If the honorable Member is referring to certain officers, there is no way we can get them out as this is a public meeting.

Hon Oti: Mr Speaker, respecting your ruling - are only some people allowed to be in the meeting and others barred from coming to the meeting?

I make reference to the statement by the Commissioner of Police last night that the meeting today is not open to the public, so where do those who are with us now fit into that equation?

Mr KEMAKEZA: Point of Order. Mr Speaker, the statement by the Commissioner of Police is very clear and your ruling is in line to what the Commissioner of Police has said. This is in relation to officials present at this meeting and your ruling is in line to that.

Mr Speaker: Honorable Members, we need to proceed with the business of Parliament so that you can participate. At the moment you are not permitted as yet to participate in the proceedings of Parliament because you need to take your oaths first. We are now getting into Parliament business and you are yet to take your oaths. I have made my ruling that you need to take your oaths so that you are free to participate.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS

(49 Members of Parliament taking their oaths)

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

Declaration of the Election of Speaker

The Clerk: Mr Speaker, Honourable Prime Minister and Honourable Members of Parliament, on the closure of nominations for the Office of Speaker at 4.00 pm on Sunday 23 April 2006, I wish to announce that I am satisfied that the nominations received by my office have met the requirement of Parliamentary Standing

Orders 5(2) and 5(3) and are valid, and that all these nominations are in respect of Rt Honourable Sir Peter Kenilorea who is the unopposed candidature for the post of Speaker of National Parliament.

(applause)

Rt Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea declared unopposed as Speaker of National Parliament

ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

Mr Speaker: A point of privilege was notified by the Honourable Member for Temotu Nende.

Mr OTI: Mr Speaker, thank you. Before I raise my rights under Standing Order 25, I would like to make reference once again to my rights under Standing Order 80 and that is the election of the Speaker. Fortunately for our purposes, your election today did not require us going through the processes and requirements as required under Standing Order 5. But my understanding also is that the election of the Speaker and (I stand to be corrected) therefore and also the election of Deputy Speaker the procedures and processes normally followed are those under Schedule 3 of the Constitution with regards to the election of the Prime Minister.

Section 6(3) of the Second Schedule to the Constitution says “No person other than the Governor General, a member or a public officer whose assistance is enlisted under the proceedings of the subparagraph maybe present at election meetings”. That was why I raised earlier on in the Chamber the presence in the Chamber of elements prohibited by rules of procedure under Standing Order 80 that I have raised the question of the presence of individuals in the election of the Speaker and also the election of the Deputy Speaker.

I would like to have that clarified before I raise the matter of privilege under Standing Order 25. Thank you Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: Thank you honourable Member. The procedure for election of the Speaker is under section 64 of the Constitution, which is a business of Parliament. As honorable Members would realize all businesses and proceedings of Parliament are public businesses.

The schedule to the Constitution does not apply to the election of the Speaker, whereas Standing Order 5 does apply to the Speaker. Whilst there are certain similarities in terms of the procedure for election of the speaker, the provision for the election of the Speaker is found under Standing Order 5. And as honourable Members are aware the election of the Speaker is presided by the Speaker, and therefore it is a Parliament business, and Parliament businesses as I have said earlier is a public business and is open to the public.

In terms of security arrangements outside, the Speaker is not responsible for that, but one would have assumed that if they come through the security provision outside of Parliament into Parliament they would have been cleared for purposes of the security arrangement outside, and therefore the Speaker has no objection for such people to be in Parliament because parliament proceedings are public proceedings. Thank you.

Mr Oti: Mr Speaker, with your indulgence allow me now to raise a matter of privilege under Standing Order 25, and thank you for dispensing with the requirements of notice one day prior of my intention to raise a matter of privilege.

Mr Speaker, I would like to raise this particular matter because it affects the privilege of Parliament to proceed normally with its business. As you have highlighted, on the one hand unless required under section 70 of the Constitution, all meetings of Parliaments are public meetings and the statement by the Commissioner of Police last night may not have explicitly barred any particular persons from the public or all public to participate or to come and attend the meeting of Parliament. But the way it

was put out made the ordinary minds of Solomon Islanders as a closed meeting contrary to section 70 of the Constitution Mr Speaker.

Having said that, that is the first matter I would like to raise, which is an unfortunate situation. As we know particularly from the international media is the reflection of the Parliament in Solomon Islands, which is currently under siege because of events that occurred last week. Sometimes the presentation of the picture to those who do not really understand the intricacies of what is happening in the country portrays a negative image of the Parliament in Solomon Islands. Is Parliament really under siege or is the country ruled by the military? Unfortunately that is not the case, Mr Speaker, and I would like to state it categorically clear to Solomon Islands in this Parliament that what is reflected outside does not necessarily reflect the spirit of parliamentary democracy in Solomon Islands.

Mr Speaker, the third matter I would like to raise in this meeting is that the next item on the business of Parliament this morning is the election of the Deputy Speaker. And as a candidate, Mr Speaker, the holding up of one Member of Parliament to participate in the proceedings of Parliament does affect the proceedings this morning, and because of that, Mr Speaker, I do not see a Parliament that is freely exercising its role in dispensing with its responsibilities, and therefore, Mr Speaker, I object and I detest any inclination to think that the Parliament in Solomon Islands is under duress in the performance of its duties.

But as a matter of privilege, Mr Speaker, and I as a candidate for the Deputy Speaker, do not fully appreciate and accept the election of the Deputy Speaker this morning, and I seek your ruling that this meeting to elect the position of the Deputy Speaker be postponed until a further date. I make this with due reference to my colleague candidate, the MP for Savo/Russells and the former Prime

Minister that I would like to come to Parliament on a level playing field Mr Speaker. As it is, it is heavily weighted against me, Mr Speaker, and therefore I seek your permission that the proposed meeting to elect the position of Deputy Speaker be postponed forthwith. Thank you Mr Speaker.

Hon RINI: Point of order Mr Speaker. The points raised by the honourable Member.....

Mr Oti: Objection Mr Speaker, under Standing Order 25 the Member raises the matter and it is for the Speaker to make a ruling. No discussion and no debate is allowed unless a motion is moved. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: Yes, that is what I was going to raise Honorable Prime Minister that matters of privileges are not matters of debate. An issue has been raised and it is up to the Speaker simply to rule. Since the Speaker has no other notices of any other business for this morning, I adjourn Parliament under Standing Order 10(5) until 9.30 am tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 11.45 a.m.