

NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS

DAILY HANSARD

SECOND MEETING – EIGHTH SESSION

MONDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2006

The Speaker, Rt. Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea took the Chair at 9.30 am.

Prayers.

ATTENDANCE

At prayers, all were present with the exception of the Ministers of Department of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Department of Justice & Legal Affairs, Department of Culture & Tourism and Members for West Guadalcanal, Maringe/Kokota, and East Makira.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND OF REPORTS

‘Institute of Public Administration and Management 2005 Report’

‘Special Audit Report into the Affairs of the Civil Aviation Division of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development’

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

9. Sir KEMAKEZA to the Minister for Provincial Government & Constituency Development: Will the Minister inform Parliament as to when the present Government will introduce the Federal Government Government Bill?

Hon WAIPORA: Mr Speaker, first of all I would like to thank the Hon. Member my good friend from Savo/Russells for raising this important question, which is very appropriate for the Government to inform the Parliament as well as the public.

Mr Speaker, the Grand Coalition for Change Government is following the constitutional process in the White Paper, which is the Member for Savo Russells tabled in the

House in December 2005. Mr Speaker, the immediate focus of the Government is to complete the drafting of a new Federal Constitution. The Government plans to have it completed by early 2007. That process involves careful review of the present draft by the Constitutional Congress which is to be appointed soon ensuring that its wording is consistent with the Constitutional Reform and is legally and procedurally sound. Having achieved that, it is the intention of the Government to have the new Federal Constitution endorsed by a constitutional convention planned for next year. If all goes to plan the new Federal Constitution will be brought into force by Parliament by a process of a time yet to be specified.

Mr Kemakeza: Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for his assurance and the answers given.

10. **Mr KEMAKEZA** to the Minister for Education & Human Resources Development: Will the Minister inform Parliament of the present Government’s policy on upgrading of existing community highs schools from Form 4 to Form 6?

Hon SOGAVARE: Mr Speaker, the Minister is still in the country and I think he is not in Parliament as yet. I would leave this question to be answered by him properly.

Question No. 10 deferred.

Mr Speaker: At this point in time because of an urgent call for my attention to matters in Hospital I will now suspend Parliament for five minutes so that the Speaker might take over the Chair.

Sitting suspended for five minutes

Sitting resumes and the Deputy Speaker took the Chair

Question No. 20 deferred.

21. **Mr RIUMANA** to the Minister for Agriculture & Livestock: The latest discovery of African Giant Snail taken in by careless logging companies posed potential risk to limited agricultural commodity of the country. What have been the measures taken by the Government through the Ministry to remedy potential outbreak?

Hon OLAVAE: Mr Speaker, in fact what happened really caught us by surprise because we have never experienced this problem in the last 28 years. When the episode was made known, responsible quarantine officers liaised with the company involved. Mr Speaker, the Bio Security Bill will be tabled in Parliament early next year to take on board any such occurrences in the future.

Mr Riumana: I am asking for what measures taken by the government to remedy any potential outbreak of this snail. We cannot wait for future bills.

Hon Olavae: Mr Speaker, I think I have already alluded to earlier the measures this government is taking or will be taking is by bringing in the Bio Security Bill early next year to take on board such problems occurring in future.

Mr Riumana: Mr Speaker, is it safe to wait for that bill to be passed before taking any measures?

Hon Olavae: Mr Speaker, in the interim quarantine officers have already liaised with the company involved and at the moment the officers will be monitoring the arrival and departure of any logging companies. Since the onslaught of this episode officers have already monitored or started monitoring all loggings ships. Before any logging ships depart the wharves the officers responsible have to check the arrival and departure of those boats.

Mr Riumana: Can the Minister inform this Parliament if this African giant snail has been discovered in other parts of the country?

Hon Olavae: Mr Speaker, at the moment this is the first kind of incident that happened in the country. So far I do not have information that the snail has affected the whole country.

Mr Riumana: Can the Minister inform Parliament what country is the source of the machinery that this African Giant Snail was found in this country because I understand that if the African snail is discovered in Honiara then it surely must also be discovered in other parts of the country?

Hon Olavae: Mr Speaker, so far I do not have any idea about where the source is from. But this is the first time that this snail is discovered in the country.

Hon SOGAVARE: Mr Speaker, the Member is asking a very important question and it is an issue that we all must be concerned about and we are taking it very seriously. If the Member for Kia/Hograno has any information that will help us on to address this issue we would welcome it.

Mr Riumana: I am very concerned because this logging company also operates in my constituency and therefore poses great risk to agricultural commodities in my constituency. That is why I want to know what measure has the government taken against this logging company.

Hon Olavae: Mr Speaker, I think my office has already worked on measures in the interim period to ensure all logging companies operating throughout the provinces are monitored or checked so that we minimize the risk of having these kinds of problems.

Mr Riumana: Mr Speaker, if the company is allowed to operate then the chances of them spreading this giant snail is greater. Can the Ministry just suspend the operations of this company while quarantine measures are put in place?

Hon Olavae: Mr Speaker, allowing the logging companies to operate throughout the provinces is nothing to do with my Ministry. If the landowners continue to entertain logging companies then the Ministry does not have any right whatsoever to stop them from operating. My officer's job is to ensure that the snails are not present in the logging boats.

Mr Kengava: What are the penalties of anyone found to bring in African snails into the country?

Hon Olavae: Mr Speaker, I have to check with the judiciary on any penalties because they are responsible for penalizing people. At the moment I don't know what the punishment is because I am not a lawyer.

Mr Kengava: Mr Speaker, yes, you are not a lawyer but a Minister but you could ask your quarantine officers to give you the answers.

This question is very important that if a company or whoever is found to bring in the African snail is in breach of any laws of the country, are there plans by the division to put charges on them?

Hon Olavae: I said that the Ministry has already liaised with the Ministry responsible to penalize the company that is responsible for bringing the snail. So let justice take its course, and as time goes on, surely they will be charged accordingly.

Mr Kwanairara: Mr Speaker, suspension of any logging license is a different matter under the Ministry of Forests. But what I want to ask is, are you satisfied with the measures that your department is taking at the moment? Are you satisfied that the measures taken so far will not spread the American snail throughout the country?

Hon Olavae: Yes, what the officers have done so far is satisfactory. I am satisfied with what they have done.

Mr Zama: Mr Speaker, I wish to ask a supplementary question out of interest. The yard where these African snails were found

directly relates to a company that is currently operating on Rendova too.

Mr Speaker, I would like to know if the Minister can directly target the areas the concerned company is operating so that awareness is made to the people concerned in their constituencies and in areas that this company operates.

Secondly, we have heard so much about the risks that the African snail poses, but our people living in the villages don't know the risks. They even do not know how an African snail looks like, which comes back to the first point of awareness. I want the department to directly target the area where the concerned company is operating so that the people are aware of this snail.

What is the department doing in trying to help our people in regards to awareness of this African snail?

Hon Olavae: Mr Speaker, since the snails were discovered, responsible officers have already taken measures and they have already started monitoring the places where the logging companies are operating throughout the provinces to prevent any future occurrence of the snail.

In regards to awareness, my Ministry's fundamental job is to carry out awareness program so that information is disseminated to the population. This should assist the people to be alert and aware of any occurrences in the future.

Mr Boyers: Mr Speaker, part of the answer the Minister has given on this issue, it is my understanding that this is not the first time this snail was found – this snail scare in Solomon Islands, since there are so many logging companies in our constituencies.

Can I ask the Minister responsible if he can ask the Department of Quarantine to supply comprehensive report on measures taken, issues surrounding the snail, what they have done and the history of this snail in Solomon Islands so that all Members of Parliament here can have a report so that we can be aware of the issues surrounding this particular snail and whether this is the first time it was found in this country.

Mr Speaker: That point has already been covered by the Prime Minister. He has assured Parliament that they will submit a report on that matter.

Mr Huniehu: Can the Minister look at the possibility of banning imports from countries that have snails abroad? Or to put in a milder way, can the Minister ensure that all imports coming into Solomon Islands meet the requirement standard to avoid importing goods that may contain this serious creature, snail?

Hon Olavae: Mr Speaker, I am going to liaise with all my officers to ensure the actions we are taking are within our legal framework.

Hon Sogavare: There was a suggestion made by the Member of Parliament for East Are Are is a good one. That is a policy decision the government is going to take after looking at reports and the seriousness of the issue and if there is need to ban imports from countries that have these snails, we will need to do it. It is in a policy decision the government is going to take after reading reports.

Mr Riumana: Mr Speaker, I thank the Honorable Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries for his answers. Just a comment before I sit down, I think in future it is good for Ministers to come together.

Question No. 23 deferred

STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr Fono: Point of order Mr Speaker, there is a deferred motion?

BILLS

Bills – First Reading

The Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment) Bill 2006

MOTIONS

Mr Huniehu: Point of order, Mr Speaker. The Gaming and Lotteries Act has been set down for

first reading today and not the second reading, but you amended that statement.

Mr Speaker: The first reading is distribution of the bill to the pigeonholes of all Members of Parliament. That is the first reading. It is now set down for the second reading. That is the Speaker's order.

Hon DARCY: Mr Speaker, point of order. The Prime Minister has just moved an amendment to Government business, and I thought I heard that the motion to thank His Excellency has been proposed to be the first to be dealt with, after which the motion to move the resolution by the Minister of Finance. Perhaps you could check with the Clerk just to correct that Mr Speaker?

Mr Speaker: According to the Clerk's Office, this debate on the Speech from the Throne will continue later.

Hon Darcy: Point of order, Mr Speaker. I think the Prime Minister has moved the amendment to government business in which you have granted leave for the Prime Minister to move. The first to be dealt with should be the motion to thank His Excellency.

Mr Speaker: Since there is no objection from the Clerk's Office to the amendment on the government business by the Prime Minister you can now debate the motion to the Speech from the Throne.

Motion of Thanks to His Excellency the Governor General *(debate to continue and conclude)*

Hon WAIPORA: Mr Speaker, I would like to take this chance to contribute to the Speech from the Throne by His Excellency, the Governor General.

Mr Speaker, other colleagues have already made contribution to the Speech from the Throne delivered by His Excellency, the Governor General on Monday 2nd October 2006. Today, I would like to join them to contribute as well to that very important traditional speech from the throne on behalf of my people of West Makira Constituency.

Mr Speaker, the people of West Makira Constituency would like to assure His Excellency, the Governor General for their humble pride, honour and privilege to have one of their leaders of their humble province attain that most highest and honoured leadership position in the land. Mr Speaker, I join my people in wishing him and his good lady, God's blessings.

Mr Speaker, with those humble words of greetings to His Excellency, I would now like to turn to the speech itself. I will confine myself within three areas:

1. Rural Development – a bottom-up and holistic approach on page five.
2. Federal System of Government on page 8.
3. Ethical leadership standard on page 6.

Mr Speaker, on rural development, under the present system of government, in my humble view, when we talk about rural development, we are actually talking about decentralisation and devolution of central government functions and powers to the rural areas.

This concept started way back during the 1970s up to 1980s, which done the former Local Government Act under the four district administrations under colonial rule were abolished to pave the way for the Provincial Government System. In 1981 the Provincial Government System came into place.

Mr Speaker, the intention to have provincial governments was for the effective delivery of government services to the rural areas on behalf of the central government. Any central government functions and powers that are to be transferred and delivered to the rural areas must be made through the decentralisation and devolution process between the central government and its agencies - the provincial governments, at present nine in all.

Mr Speaker, I cannot agree anymore with the people from every corner of this country leveling criticisms at the present provincial government system that it does not meet the expectations and aspirations of the people of the rural areas, and that it should be changed. However, as someone who has served

in the system for 20 years, I found there is nothing wrong with the system.

Mr Speaker, the problem is us, we ourselves. In this system, we have political problem, administration and management problem and financial problem. My department is seriously addressing these now.

Mr Speaker, under the Provincial Government Act of 1997 provincial governments have powers to take over a lot of central government functions and powers but there is a lot of problem especially in the area of trained and experienced manpower to be able to facilitate and carry out the policies of the provincial governments.

Mr Speaker, there is also lack of understanding in the Provincial Government Act and most provinces do not have political will to do things for the province but engage more on personal interests like logging.

Mr Speaker, I would like at this juncture to take this opportunity to thank all the provincial staffs in all nine provinces for their efforts in trying to keep their respective provinces running.

Mr Speaker, I know for the last four to five years that some provinces had very big challenges in that they did not have senior staff to captain their provincial governments.

Mr Speaker, I must tell this House that this country has 229 managers to manage the affairs of this country. What I mean by this, is that we have 229 elected politicians altogether to govern this nation. These are, for Guadalcanal Province - 8 Members of Parliament, 21 Provincial Assembly Members, a total of 29 elected politicians.

Malaita Province has 14 Members of Parliament, 33 Provincial Assembly Members, a total of 47 elected politicians.

Western Province has 9 Members of Parliament, 26 Provincial Assembly Members, a total of 35 elected members.

Choiseul Province has 3 Members of Parliament, 14 Provincial Assembly Members, a total of 17 elected members.

Isabel Province has 3 Members of Parliament, 16 Provincial Assembly Members, a total of 19 elected members.

Makira and Ulawa Province has 4 Members of Parliament, 20 Provincial Assembly Members, a total of 20 elected members.

Central Province has 2 Members of Parliament, 10 Provincial Assembly Members, a total of 12 elected members.

Temotu Province has 3 Members of Parliament, 17 Provincial Assembly Members, a total of 20 elected politicians.

Renbel has 1 Member of Parliament, 10 Provincial Assembly Members, a total of 11 elected politicians.

Although I am not responsible for Honiara, I counted Honiara as well. Honiara has 3 Members of Parliament, 12 council members, a total of 15 elected members.

This is 50 Members of Parliament and 179 provincial assembly members, a total of 229 elected politicians Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, in my humble view, for a country that has about 500,000 people, I think we are over-governed. That is why in 1999 I suspended the area councils. The area councils are still sleeping to this day. They are suspended, not abolished as some were saying.

Mr Speaker, the delivery of services to the rural areas where more than 80% of the people of this country are, is very costly and very expensive. I will give you the picture.

Mr Speaker, with the new initiative policies of the government on rural development now, \$66,739,499 annually should be reaching the rural areas through various development services throughout the country. This comes from provincial services grants, the RCDF, SIG-ROC Micro Project and the Millennium Goal. They are as follows:

Malaita monthly service grant - \$246,858.41
Annually - \$2,962,300

Makira monthly service grant - \$147,200
Annually - \$1,766,406

Western Province monthly service grant - \$245,598
Annually - \$2,947,181

Isabel Province monthly service grant - \$171,362
Annually - \$2,056,355

Central Province monthly service grant - \$140,034,00
Annually - \$1,680,412

Choiseul Province monthly service grant- \$182,060
Annually - \$2,184,726

Renbel Province monthly service grant - \$131,861
Annually - \$1,582,360

Temotu monthly service grant - \$157,014
Annually - \$1,884,179

This is a total of \$19,739,499. That is the provincial services grants. The RCDF is \$18,800,000. I am talking especially about the rural areas. The Micro Project is \$9,400,000, the Millennium Goal is \$18,800. So the total we are talking about that we as managers should see going right down to the rural areas as we are working on the rural development plan we are starting off with \$66,739,499.

Mr Speaker, with more money being channeled through the rural populace my department will continue to work closely with the Department of the Public Service on the question of manpower and of course the training of staff for the provinces.

In fact, my Department is currently working on the exercise to make sure all vacant posts in all the provinces are filled as soon as possible. We are fully aware that the first and foremost interest of our people in the rural areas is the effective delivery of services to their doorsteps. Business people to deliver those rural development services, and my department will get this as soon as possible.

Mr Speaker, I have just answered a question this morning about the constitutional reform programme of the government. Mr Speaker, I will now turn to the federal system of government mentioned on page 8.

Mr Speaker, our people have made their decisions already that we should change to the federal system of government. As such, the outgoing government of Prime Minister, Sir Allan Kemakeza, among other policies has made a fundamental policy to introduce the federal

government system in Solomon Islands. The policy was made in response to the call by the people of Solomon Islands ever since independence in 1978, and recently in compliance with the Townsville Peace Agreement in 2000 for a change in the government system.

Mr Speaker, indeed, it is the wish of the people for a change of government from the present unitary government system to a federal system. Therefore, when the Grand Coalition for Change Government took over power in May this year, it upholds that policy and worked on from where the previous administration had left. In fact, the work had already been 50% done by the previous administration.

The draft federal constitution of Solomon Islands was done, and was launched on 5th November 2004 by the former Prime Minister, the MP for Savo/Russells. Mr Speaker, however the last government did not have time to complete the exercise due to unavoidable constraints.

The White Paper was thus introduced by the government and passed by Parliament in its final meeting in November – December 2005. The White Paper sets out a progress program to complete the task within the next 12 months. The time frame is not strictly compulsory, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, the immediate focus of this Government is to complete the drafting of the new federal constitution. The Government plans to have that completed by early 2007.

Sir, that process involves a careful review of the present draft by the Constitutional Congress which is to be appointed soon ensuring its wording is consistent with the constitutional reform goals and legally and procedurally sound.

The primary functions of the constitutional congress are to undertake assessment of the draft federal constitution and to prepare final instructions for the draft of a new constitution.

Mr Speaker, plan for the next phase of the constitutional reform. The project work plan has provided the appointment of up to 15 members of the Constitutional Congress. Having achieved that, Mr Speaker, it is the intention of the Government to have a new federal constitution endorsed by a constitutional

convention planned for next year. If all goes according to plan, the new federal constitution will be brought into force by Parliament by a process at a time yet to be specified, as I have said in answering a question this morning.

Mr Speaker, an independent expert assessment of the draft federal constitution has been undertaken. The Institute of Policy Studies in Victoria University, New Zealand managed the audit which was undertaken with the help of many constitutional experts.

The audit report was reviewed by constitutional experts at the Australian National University, the University of the South Pacific and the University of Papua New Guinea. The audit did not question the core constitutional visions of Solomon Islands but assessed the draft federal constitution against a number of standards to ensure that the constitutional reform goals maybe achieved in a legally, correct and procedurally sound manner.

Mr Speaker, local final consultations will begin soon. Consultations will be at provincial headquarters beginning this month to discuss the draft federal constitution with provincial elected leaders and elders. Consultations will also be made in Honiara with stakeholders and public awareness will be made over the SIBC. This process will hopefully be completed in December 2006.

With regards to funding of the constitutional reform, the SIG has decided not to seek funding outside for the project so that the Solomon Islands Government takes ownership and directs the constitutional reform process. Experiences in the past, Mr Speaker, of external funding have put SIG in the back seat.

The Solomon Islands Government will commit \$5million in the 2007 budget to complete the task. This shows how serious this Government is about completing the task. The bulk of the money will be spent on completion of the federal constitution of Solomon Islands, and commence the task of assisting the states to produce their constitutions.

Mr Speaker, the states will need the assistance of the government to make sure the states do the right thing in their own state constitutions.

Mr Speaker, I will be very brief on ethical leadership standard mentioned in the Speech.

Mr Speaker, you academics would understand very well what ethical leadership means. For those of us who are not academics, I will tell you the meaning of ethical leadership.

Mr Speaker, in my humble interpretation of ethical leadership, it means other people trusting us because we follow every thing the government has put for us to follow. Whether it is a small rule or big rule we must abide to them.

I have already alluded that we in this House are managers. With those in the lower houses in our provinces there are 229 managers of the affairs of this country, and we must be honest. If we are leaders we must uphold what is ethical. You academics understand very well what this means. But it needs trustworthy.

Mr Speaker, up to this time, I want to tell you the cost of my staying in Honiara, and my family since I was sworn in as the Minister of the Crown, the Government has incurred more than \$100,000 for accommodating me and my children in motels. We have been going from hotels to hotels. Why? I am not waiting for a house under maintenance. I am waiting for a house for somebody from this House to go out from, and that is the honourable Member for Shortlands.

When I talked about it that person says do not worry about it. Is that ethical leadership? \$100,000 unnecessarily spent Mr Speaker, when I have a house to stay, and I am entitled for the house to live inside.

Mr Taneko: Point of order, Mr Speaker.

Hon Waipora: Mr Speaker, he has already had his time to speak. This is my time to speak. What are all these rules for? Is it only just me that has to follow those rules?

Mr Taneko: Mr Speaker, this place is a place which he has said, ethical leadership.

Hon Waipora: Mr Speaker, he has already had his time, and I don't want you to interrupt me.

Mr Taneko: Mr Speaker, I am still explaining. We must not personalize things.

Mr Speaker: Order from the chair.

Hon Waipora: I am concern about the money of this country; the finances of this country must be spent in the right way, Mr Speaker. Why are we spending money on things that we should not spend money on? Mr Speaker, that is why I am talking about ethical leadership.

Mr Speaker: Order, order, please can you sit down Minister for Provincial Government.

Hon Waipora: If I sit down I am not going to talk again but have you heard it?

Mr Speaker: That issue will be handled by the appropriate authorities.

Hon Waipora: I am concerned about the money of this country being spent unnecessarily.

Mr Speaker: Minister you can continue with your speech but leave the issue not to be unnecessarily argued in Parliament.

Mr Taneko: Mr Speaker, I have not even explained my point of order. This house is not to personalise things. This house is in the accord of leadership that we have to show and respect. We are here as leaders, the 50 Members to speak outward of the justice in this nation on who is going to fix our benefits here?

Mr Speaker, I would like us to be humble and not to deal with issues that are outside of the motion, and not to personalize things. I have problems of my own and my people.

Mr Speaker: Order Member for Shortlands, take your seat please.

Hon Waipora: Mr Speaker, thank you very much for allowing me to speak on that. I am saying this because I am concerned about how we leaders of this country are spending money on right things. That is my concern.

With those few remarks, I support the motion.

Hon Tausinga: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to speak again to wind up the motion.

Mr Speaker, I was asked as to how long I would take to do the winding up. I suggested may be 10 minutes.

Mr Speaker, Solomon Islanders always try to be polite so they don't normal tell the exact time and so if I have to exceed 10 minutes then that is the Solomons' way.

Mr Speaker, there are three motions that are designed to be distinctive in the proceedings of Parliament. One is the motion of no confidence, the other is to offer thanks for the Speech from the Throne and the other motion is the motion of adjournment sine-die.

Except for the motion of no confidence, which is a constitutional requirement under section 34(1), the others are provided for in the Standing Orders of Parliament. Moreover, except the motion of no confidence, the wording of the motions of both the Speech from the Throne and the motion of adjournment sine-die Order 77(7) and Order 8(3) respectively are expressed in the Standing Orders and therefore are no constructions of Members of Parliament.

These are traditional in terms of their inclusion in the Parliament democracy because these are part of the Westminster model of government. Our acceptance of the Westminster model of government does indeed approve to the inclusion of this unique features of parliamentary democracy.

Members of Parliament need no reminding to the circumstances that usually give rise to the introduction of these motions. They are well versed of the circumstances. But perhaps Sir, suffice to say, the motion of no confidence is usually moved to remove a Prime Minister on grounds incompetence in leadership, either by way of alleged abuse of power or alleged compromising of sovereignty or other allegations.

The motion to offer thanks to the Speech from the Throne is to acknowledge and appreciates the Speech from the Throne but at the same time to make observations on the intentions of the government contained in the Speech and the relevancies of the intentions of

the development needs of the people of the country.

The motion to adjourn Parliament sine-die is termination of Parliament meeting because the Government no longer has any business to warrant continuity of the meeting, and is usually moved by the Prime Minister.

Therefore, the motion that is on debate now, and which I am now winding up is the Speech from the Throne - a motion I am introduced earlier in order to satisfy the requirement of the Westminster model, and as expressed by our Standing Orders.

Having said that, I wish to thank those who have spoken on the motion. Their observations are pointers on the manner the government should conduct developments for the people and the country.

However, in my listening to the debate of the motion and issues raised by Members who have spoken, I found that some members, in particular the Member for Savo/Russells, with due respect, misunderstood which motion was on debate and therefore was trying to debate my speech rather than the speech from the throne. This gave importance indeed to my speech and whether or not he really grasps what I titillated about is a matter for colleagues to make their own judgment on.

My speech, I believe, was an informed discussion of some of the issues raised or implied in the Speech from the Throne and as well appreciation on the various intentions the government has for the development of the country. It was designed to allow Members and Ministers in particular to add relevant discussions about their own ministries if necessary. It was not designed to be conclusive.

Perhaps my weakness that made the Member for Savo/Russells misconstrued me and my speech and tried to debate my speech was that my speech in some ways was very philosophical. And whilst I advance the idea of improving the life and the living of our citizens, the Member was talking about the absence of the Secretary to the Prime Minister. And whilst I observed impediments that need improvement for purposes of development, the Member was talking some books and documents from which government policies were derived from. And whilst I observe the interest of the present

government to work on areas that might help in the improvement of peoples living, the Member was lamenting on non-acknowledgement of the performance of the last regime, not realizing that we have no access to the past except its history.

We are living in the present and thus the government is trying to make things happen by providing the direction and the bearing upon which the country is to be steered forward.

Yes, maybe I was in many ways philosophical in my speech and I must apologize for my incomprehensiveness to the Member that made him misunderstood me and thus discuss the motion in rather wobbly way that made him out of context.

I have observed in debates both past and present Houses that there were observations made to elevate oneself particularly to get credit for the work that situations demanded and collectively agreed to by Members of Parliament and people.

I think this makes things interesting and perhaps feature well on the types of people that we have in leadership. But I take comfort on the wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi who said, "There are two types of people. One is those who make things happen and the other is those who want to take credit". He went to say that he wanted to be in the former category to be amongst those who make things happen because there is less competition on that. I share the same sentiment.

The focus of any development is people, people first, and that was my discussion in relation to the motion because that is the Government's development drive.

The notion to develop the country and hence to talk merely about attracting investors and other super or mega developments is not a bad proposition. In fact such intention form part of our policy direction and programs, but in my view is very cosmetic.

The Government is working towards and encouraging total development, foreign and local investors as well as people of the country in the concept of the bottom up approach.

The other Members who have spoken including the Member for East Are Are, and I hold highest respect for him, suggested that the bottom up approach is not new and that they have tried it before and it did not work or it did not achieve or achieved little outcomes.

The problem in this observation is that it demonstrated shortsightedness because really one has to know the kind of activities associated with a development in order to know the outcomes. There are some activities that are long term thus the outcomes are not immediate. Others are medium terms and therefore their outcomes are within few years, and there are short terms that can provide immediate outcomes.

To suggest previous governments have tried it and were disappointed with the results is wrong in its entity. The disappointment should be the inability of the government to make things work or relevant to the people who should be the focus of the development.

The development approach this government is advancing is not rural development but rather a bottom up approach, a way to go about rural development. Many who have spoken misconstrued it to mean the same thing. No, they are different concepts and policy direction altogether but targeting the same people.

Sir, the rural development that was initiated by previous governments including that of the recent regime was in relation to activities the government conceived to be appropriate development needs of the people.

The bottom up approach that is in the present development strategy of the government in coalition is the recognition of the rural people's potentials and have those potentials put into play on activities identified by the people themselves and not activities identified by the government as were previous cases.

We have to appreciate that the Government has two resources except that which it obtains from the resources of the people. Recognizing that the people own the resources, the government is redirecting its focus to the people and to have them engage on appropriate activities and to develop the potential current in their locality and on the resources that they own.

The Government is to help facilitate and provide the financial support and expertise and the opportunity for the marketing of their products.

We must not only provide opportunities for the participation of the people, but we must

also encourage other stakeholders, the non government organizations to play active roles in making people believe in themselves and their ordinary island style living for the influences that reach the people have changed them indeed in many ways. The foods they eat, the drinks they choose, the way they dress testify to the growing influences that can have their living dictate their life.

Some examples come to mind. There is a man who went fishing and returns after a hard day's fishing and sold all the fresh fish and then asks his seven years old daughter to buy the family a can of tuna and two packets of noodles for their dinner.

There is also this old man of 70 years whom his granddaughter asked him to join the family for the evening dinner. He was invited, come have some food said the daughter, what do we have for dinner replied the old man, fresh bonito from the sea said the daughter. The old man stop for a few seconds and then said, 'I am tired of eating bonito can I have a can of tuna please.

Thus the improvement of life and living goes beyond the economic activities of the people.

Often in the past rural development was thought out to mean that the government was a 'fix-it' man which gave rise to dependant mentality and which made development long sighted.

And those who were at the helms of leadership in the context of servants failed to recognize these phenomenons that perpetuate the government as a 'fix-it' man - a psychology that eroded the potentials of man.

Out of the unthinking notion of government is a fix-it man, comes the approach on institutional oriented reforms. And many of these reforms relate to departmental structures and job descriptions and placement of personals in positions that the government felt to be best for purposes of delivering services. And whilst I do appreciate that the government can make reforms in the government institutions, however, I fail that institutional focus alone is insufficient for improving the life and living of the people and the country.

In the bottom up approach the government is offering the opportunity to

reverse the money psychology - from money makes people to people making money.

There comes a time in the life of a nation when we have to ask what have we achieved in the last 28 years? What have our people gained from our independence from the United Kingdom? These questions require us to take stock of our situation, to take stock of our development policies and approaches, to take stock of our problems, but above all and importantly is to take stock of opportunities available to us.

The economic problems, and the social welfare and the advancement of six hundred thousand people rests on the collective participation of the three units of governance of the country - national government, Provincial government and community governance by village chiefs, elders, church leaders, and others like the business community.

We must recognize these and share the responsibility of nation building, and each must respect and support each other and each others' contributions and the way each of these units lead, and manages and serves contributes to the wellbeing of the social fabrics. If all works well the fabrics of society is secure and sound. But I must commend leaderships prior to independence and as well immediate after independence when rural development was supported by rural budgets, and this was the time when rural people engaged in cocoa and coconut plantings whose benefits we are harvesting today.

The encouragement provided by way of subsidies, expert advice and markets by the government and private enterprises were invaluable indeed. The bottom approach hopefully will go beyond by way of engaging people in activities and appreciate the role they can play in order to make their living better and as well as to appreciate the role each plays in building the country. There can be no better times to appreciate ones role in his/her welfare except by engaging in beneficial activities and as well there can be better way to appreciate ones role in helping to build the country except by participating in activities that go towards strengthening the country.

Sir, I have spent a fair bit of time discussing the bottom up approach simply to

explain what it is in the context of the new policy direction of the government, and perhaps to also draw the distinctions between the rural development concept and the bottom up approach.

I have observed in the debate that some Members of Parliament still confused themselves about democracy in the context of representing people. They are led to believe that democracy is representing people in both the government and Parliament and that we are respected because of the belief that we are leaders.

This notion is misguided because a representative is someone who takes the hopes, the desires and the expressions of the people he represents forward to the large domain of Parliament. Therefore, in the context of democracy parliamentarians including the Prime Minister and the executive government are all servants of the people whether out of ignorance or willful disregard of this democratic principle, there has been indeed serious deviation from this principle.

Our people require from elected leaders the use of our knowledge, our skills and devotion to be exercised with wisdom to provide essential platform services to make life comfortable from which they can look after themselves. They put their trust in elected representatives and they expect results. The results they received from successive governments have not been to their expectations, to say the least.

If we can see this as a master/servant relationship, the voters and their families being the master, we can see clearly that it is the people who are providing the resources and the environment.

It is their hard work, production, duties and taxes that feed the economy and the financial resources to the government. They employ representatives who hire others to make things work for them. The servant uses these resources for the welfare of the master. So the subject of leadership in the context of Members of Parliament and that Members of Parliament are leaders is misguided and can be misunderstood and alienate us from the people. Members of Parliament are the servants of the people.

The influence of the national motto might have greater say in our belief of ourselves that we are leaders. Because it says, "To lead is to serve". The fact that it advances the idea to lead made us believe that we are leaders thus the second part to serve becomes insignificant.

Had the national motto constructed in the reverse order and advances the idea of service before leadership perhaps we can clearly see the role of parliamentarians. In other words, if the national motto was written like "to serve is to lead" may be it would be easy for Members of Parliament to recognize and appreciate the roles each plays in the service of the people.

For I believe to the contrary of the national motto and on my own philosophy of stewardship and leadership, whilst the national motto is "to lead is to serve", mine is to serve is to lead.

The reason is because out of a servant born a leader, out of a leader born a statesman. In seeking to be a servant one has to conduct himself with humility. That is the basis of ascending the order from servant to leader, from leader to statesman. But again, Sir, humility comes with simplicity and so those who have spoken about leadership have done so for longer than 30 minutes on what it is and what it has to be. I have this to say.

Leadership is to say what is really necessary to be said and to mute and in every irrelevancies. For those who were critical and said that the people and the country have not achieved much from successive governments since independence, I have this to say. We have no access to the past except its history, we are here to effect actions for the present and to work towards the future. And as we take on the present it is always a day away on the future. We may not reach the future but we may benefit from the present day plan for the future.

On peace for the country, Sir, I have this to ask from all of you that we must have a peace day set aside for the country.

In the conduct of the affairs of the country, Sir, I have this to say. If you have a right heart, the nation is right. If your mind is clear, the nation is clear. If your plan is practical, the people benefit. If the people benefit the country benefits. If the country benefits there is much happiness and if there is happiness we will have

peace for all. If we live in peace there is nothing to worry about except to enjoy life to the fullest and to live it in every good way one day at a time.

I wish to conclude now by saying that we all recognize and appreciate that our focus must be people to provide opportunities for their participation in development and eventually to improve their life and their living.

Sir, I am amazed however at the unthinking rejections that many who spoke have made against the content of the Speech from the Throne, and yet also made unthinking endorsement and unthinking support at the conclusion of their debate. How can one reconcile both rejection and endorsement?

Sir, I end with our motto "To Lead is to Serve" but in the phrase of Sir Wilfred Grandfield who said: "The service we render to others is really the rent we pay for our room on this earth. It is obvious that man is himself a traveler that the purpose of this world is not to have and to hold but to give and save". There can be no other meaning.

I thank you once again for the opportunity to introduce the motion and thank you also to all the participants on the motion.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

Motion of Thanks to His Excellency was passed

"That the National Parliament of Solomon Islands, in accordance with section 103(1) of the Constitution, hereby resolves to empower the honorable Minister for Finance to authorize monies from the Consolidated Fund, until the expiration of four months from the beginning of the Financial Year 2007 or the coming into operations of the Appropriation Act, 2007 whichever is the earlier".

Hon ULUFA'ALU: Mr Speaker, I rise to move the motion standing in my name in today's order paper.

Mr Speaker, the motion before this Chamber is in order provided for under section 103(1) of the Constitution. Therefore, it is in order.

Mr Speaker, the Grand Coalition for Change Government came into office in May

this year and because of what the Government envisages to do it needs more than nine months preparation in order to have a proper budget for launching of its plan of actions. Hence, it was seen fit that the budget be prolonged and instead the provision of section 103 be brought into effect.

Mr Speaker, this is not the first time this particular section of the constitution is being used. In fact this would be the fifth time since the adoption of the Independence Order. It is a normal provision to use whenever the government is not in a position to bring forth the budget as scheduled.

Mr Speaker, the main reason for delaying the budget this year is because this government that came into office this year is determined to do things differently. Because of that the strategic plan in process has been changed from top down to bottom up. This is a radical change from the usual way we have adopted since the colonial times up until independence and up until this year. Hence, we need to redirect our thoughts, words and deeds in order to be in a position to change. And not only redirect our thoughts, words and deeds but all of us in the country need to do that.

Our leaders in the Public Service, our politicians as leaders, the provinces, the women, the men, the youths, the boys and girls need to re-orient our thoughts and words and deeds. And doing that is not an easy thing because we are used to the way we have been doing things for more than 100 years since the colonial power established this country as British Solomon Islands Protectorate in 1893. So for a very long time we have been doing things the way it suit them, which is from top to down.

The strategy is from top to down because the bottom of their plans, their strategies is actually in the colonial government then at that time the UK. This country was an integral part of UK as a colony hence that particular strategy was adopted for the creation of this country. Unfortunately, since independence Mr Speaker, we kept the strategy up to this day. And we begin to realize that the more we keep the same strategy the more we drifted away from ourselves, the truth about us.

The strategy of top down the colonial government adopted was based on three pillars

of colonialism, which I keep saying until we have enough of it, are divide and rule, alienation and dependent growth. Those are the three pillars.

Under the bottom up strategy, Mr Speaker, there is need to change those three pillars to diversity in unity for nation building realizing that our strength is in our diversity. That is where our strength is. Our strength is also in that unity of diversity because it was said that no two persons are equal even twins. That is recognition of that diversity as the essence of unity for nation building. It is only in unity can we do things. When there is no unity there is nothing we can do and that unity is the base of the diversity.

The second pillar is legalization. Our way of life should be our laws. This is accepting the fact that we are who we are. And who we are cannot be somebody else, hence our way of life on how we own things and how we develop things and how we inherit things should be the law of the land and not the other one where it is alienation. We alienate ourselves from our true self and try to be somebody when we cannot be that somebody.

The third pillar is interdependent growth. It means that our diversity should give us the basis of what we are good at as individuals and collectively. And what we are good at is what we should be developing so that we need each other and that is where the growth of love should be found because we are indispensable to one another. That is how the government of the day is designing its strategy to change from top down to bottom up. In fact it is the real godly way of living. When we do that we would now embark on the work of creation.

It is important that creation is what makes us human beings. That image of God as the creator, and that is what we are as creators, and the qualification for ownership is that we are creators. We create it. If you do not create it then you do not own it. It is simple as that.

The four words creation, ownership, compliance and sustainability are the same. It is when we give these words the analysis required that we can accept the real meaning of being made in God's image and we then are truly God's people. It is something not to be claimed. That is what the Government is doing and to do

it is not an easy thing within the nine months of the normal budget preparation.

As I said earlier, Mr Speaker, it is a change of our thoughts, words and our deeds, which is not an easy thing to do. Because when you get locked up in a certain way of doing things you think there is no other way of doing that thing. No, Sir. We have discovered there is another way and that another way is of essence godliness, which is recognizing our diversity as the essence of our unity and our unity is the only way forward in building the nation.

Legalizing our way of life given to us by God is another way. And interdependence, realizing the differences we have as the basis of our gift should be developed to enrich our livelihood in terms of unity. That is the only other way out.

The perpetual state of slavery suffered by this country as well as many other countries in the world, is a state where we become perpetual slaves. We are slaves in our own land. It is a very simple thing because this country was created for them and not for us, and because it was made for them we have to be slaves to do things for them.

The only other part of the world that has gone slightly different from this is South East Asia, and that is why South East Asia is the fastest growing economy in the world today because they are doing it the right way. Therefore, we in Solomon Islands and the Pacific must do it that way too because we are part of South East Asia and we should be doing it their way, in other words our way. Our way should become the way we should move forward.

To be able to do this will need more time for us to put our thoughts together, our words and actions together. We need to study these things, we need to know these things and we need to preach these things because we are talking about ourselves. No one else will do it for us. Even with all the money in the world they cannot do it for us because it was never meant to be like that.

Man was created in God's image and he does it for himself. So with all the billion of dollars no one can do it for us except ourselves. There is no single country in the world that is developed because it continues receiving aid

until it is developed. That is not true. All such countries are going backwards.

Look at the continent of Africa today, look at Caribbean, and look at what is happening in the Pacific. So it is ourselves who can do it and no one else. Others will help us but they cannot replace us. That is an important statement. Others can help you but they cannot replace you because it is not meant to be like that by creation. That is what we are trying to ask this Parliament through this resolution to give the Government of the day sufficient time to be able to prepare the budget that will lay this new strategy.

In fact, during this meeting of Parliament you can see the order in which matters from Finance have appeared. There is the supplementary appropriation bill which was already passed, and now this motion and the next one is the actual legislation itself to set up the strategy, the bottom up perspective. We have to do it by law in order to be able to do it. Because there is no other way to do it but it is the law of the land that we have to do it with. Three motions have been passed on this floor of Parliament in the past preparing the way forward, and I thank the last government for accepting those three motions. Now is the implementation of it with the bill, Mr Speaker, a legislation so that it has the authority because only when it is legislated on that way of doing things becomes a law and it means it is now alive and something that is alive can grow because it is alive. When it is not a law it is void, which means it is dead and something that is dead cannot grow. No wonder a lot of our things are legitimate but are not lawful hence are dead.

Our land, our resources and our trees are dead and unless we alienate them to the law they will have value and grow. That is what is happening in this country, and not only in this country but many other countries in the world find themselves in that situation as well, and we are not different from those countries.

The problems we are facing these days are symptoms of that legacy. Unless we in this country address this legacy of us not existing, unless we make ourselves exist and become alive we will then do things because living people can do things, can talk and discuss.

People who are void and dead will not be able to do things. Unfortunately, Mr Speaker we cannot change because that is not the way God meant it to be. But we have made ourselves to be dead by our laws. We are deliberately dead by ourselves, and it is not the act of God.

Mr Speaker, what we are doing is we ourselves disputing the act of God. We are evoking the wrath of God upon us because we are not doing it the way He has given to our ancestors - the way our ancestors inherited this land. Our ancestors' inheritance is worth nothing as far as the law of the land is concerned but the foreign way of doing things is worth everything. That is the denial we are doing unto ourselves and that is why we are heading nowhere like many developing countries in the world.

What Solomon Islands is introducing is a global revolution and it is something that we should all be proud of to be associated with because in a way we will help others as well. I would like to ask the Chamber that we need to pray about these things because that is the way we should be going forward. With divine guidance we will do it.

The roadmap, Mr Speaker, is the basis of what we should be doing. I ask this Chamber to be patient with the Government and the endurance so that we get on and do it and together we will do it. But if we are divided we can thank no one because we shall not do it. This calls for unity, unity nationwide, working together, sharing together, consulting together. That is what unity calls for, this new strategy that we want to embark on.

Mr Speaker, with these few words, I do not want to talk more because the reasons for the motion are very clear. It was something to do so that we can change the strategy we have been developing this country

With these, Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

(Debate commences)

Mr HUNIEHU: Mr Speaker, I shall be very brief in my contribution to this very important motion seeking Parliament to agree that the National Budget be tabled the first quarter of 2007.

Mr Speaker, I think the question that must be asked and must be answered by every Member of Parliament is, is this motion at this point in time in the best interest of the people of Solomon Islands? I think this is the most crucial question that must be asked and answered by each and everyone of us before we later on take a vote on the motion.

I think the Minister of Finance may be genuine in asking Parliament to agree with him that the present Government does not have enough time to prepare a Budget for presentation in this Meeting of Parliament.

The fiscal year goes from December to December and Solomon Islands, our development partners, and Members of Parliament were expecting that the tabling of the 2006- 2007 Appropriation Bill should be tabled either in November or December.

Mr Speaker, I can understand as to why the Minister of Finance is asking the Parliament to defer the presentation of the Appropriation Bill. Of course, as he had said it is constitutional for the Minister of Finance to do what he did but, in my humble view this is a blatant abuse of section 103 of the Constitution, which reads "if the Appropriation Act in respect of any financial year has not come into operation by the beginning of that financial year, the Parliament by resolution may empower the Minister of Finance to authorize the issue of monies from the Consolidated Fund for the purpose of meeting expenditure necessary to carry on the public services at the level not exceeding the level of these services in the previous financial year, until the expiration of the four months from the beginning of that financial year or the coming into operation of the Appropriation Act, whichever is the earlier". That is part of section 103 of the Constitution.

I said the Minister of Finance is abusing this section because of my sincere belief that this Government had ample time to prepare the budget. It is only when Parliament does not have enough time that invoking of this section is absolutely necessary. But in this case, Mr Speaker, this Government has ample time from April up until now to prepare for the budget and all of us Members of Parliament have been expecting the Budget to be the main business of Parliament this year.

The explanation given to this House and to this nation by the Minister of Finance did not convince me one bit.

I could not understand, sense and believe that this government does not have the time to prepare a budget. I believe that a budget can be produced within two or three weeks if it has to be.

It is not a question of the public service not prepared to deliver a budget to the Cabinet to approve. Mr Speaker, it is normal practice, and I am of the opinion that the preliminary figures are already there. The structure of the budget is already there. Is the Minister saying he has a new structure? For the last 28 years since independence Mr Speaker, this Parliament has debated budgets structured on the same method. What kind of a new structure is the Minister of Finance talking about? Is it the new bottom-up approach? No, Mr Speaker, I think it is erroneous for him to convince himself that that is the reason for moving this budget to next year.

The Government had already unleashed its statement of policy in June. It has unleashed its program of action in June or July, Mr Speaker, and these are the documents the budget will be structured upon. If those policy statements and programs of actions were not presented to the people of this country by none other than the Prime Minister, then I would agree with him. But the Prime Minister in his introduction or unleashing of the statement said that the government has statements of policies, it has a structure and it will deliver the bottom-up approach, which is a new government focus to the people of this nation.

The people of this nation from day one have been expecting the delivery of services by the notion of these documents Mr Speaker. But where are those? Are we going to prolong the delivery of these services for another four months next year Mr Speaker? When the budget is introduced next year say in April or May next year then it will take another one year to implement and we are delaying the implementation process. This is not good enough for a government that just handpicked new permanent secretaries to do the job, only to prolong a budget, which is a simple document that can be produced if this side of the House is to take on power. I think the inadequacies of the

government, the inadequacies of our officers to perform must not be used to effect rural development in this country.

I am focused and I will not support any actions by government, any government that delays the delivery of rural development in this country. I will not support any actions that delay the delivery of those important services.

The Minister said this is not a new thing, it has happened five times before. Of course, Mr Speaker, I am not denying that it had happened five times before but when it happened before it was for good reasons. One was when a government was formed after July, August or September in a fiscal year and so it needs time to prepare themselves. When there is a change of government after July/August and September, then of course, this is a genuine reason to request Parliament to authorize the budget, to authorize the Minister of Finance to expend funds under the consolidated fund for the first three or four months of the following year. But this is not to be and that is why I said this is a blatant abuse of the constitution privilege, and this Parliament must not be in the business of abusing constitutional privilege. And here the Minister of Finance is just trying to do that.

If he cannot produce a budget then may I ask the Prime Minister to sideline him? That is the normal conventional way in a Cabinet system of government because we are denying the people of this country the services they deserve. We are denying the people of this country. We are prolonging the people of this country, the services they require.

Is this all in the interest of the bottom-up approach that we have been talking about Mr Speaker? I do not think so because all the actions of the government since it took office is negative to the bottom-up approach.

The Minister was talking about top-down approach but the top-down approach as we know, Mr Speaker, must be influenced by donors' funds. The donors want their taxpayers' funds to be expended on the areas of expenditure, the programs they think will help our economy better than we think. That is the top-down approach because the donors from abroad do not trust Solomon Islanders administering their funds. If they want their funds to be expended on RAMSI, on agriculture,

on education, what can you do and what can you say because beggars have no choice.

We are talking about a bottom-up approach that very much hinges on some people's aid assistance. How can Australia agree with you when there is a diplomatic problem with our bilateral relationship? The only people who agree with us are our friends from the ROC, but not the rest of the people.

If you are talking about the bottom-up approach you are talking about different people's money because the development budget is made up of more than 80% of foreign money. And under the recurrent budget all the surplus money is what you have paid the salaries with. There is no surplus to talk about the bottom-up approach.

I will want to know what will be the public service wage bill in the next budget. We have already spent the savings we need to save in order to introduce the bottom up approach for the benefit of the rural people of this country.

The \$200million that was saved last year has already been expended by this government. All the savings are gone, and all the surpluses are gone.

Hon Darcy: Point of order Mr Speaker. The \$200million surplus the Member for East Are Are is continuing to mention in this House is absolutely erroneous. There is no \$200million surplus made by the previous government. I want him to get his facts right before he started flagging anything that is surplus in this House. Thank you.

Mr Huniehu: I thank him for his clarifications. Reports were tabled in Parliament last year, I read it and I am not talking out of nonsense.

May I ask the Minister for Development Planning to continue speaking?

I was talking about the top-down approach the Minister of Finance was talking about. In reality we have no control over the top-down approach the Minister was talking about.

The only way we can have control of the top-down approach is if we have better relationship with our donor partners. That is only how we can influence them on how we can spend the money here. That is all I believe. If

we continue to entertain the confrontational policies, it will be difficult for us to introduce the bottom-up approach that we wanted.

I like the bottom-up approach, it sounds good but like I said, I want the Minister to define how deep is the bottom up approach he is talking about. I want the Minister to clarify this when he winds up his motion.

Mr Speaker, the problem is that the Minister thinks he owns this country. He thinks that he owns Parliament. No. It is the little people in the Langa Langa constituency, it is the little people in our constituencies who own this country. We are only servants. I think the Deputy Prime Minister puts it in a better terminology today. I have forgotten the word he used because I am starting to have memory lapses. But we are here as servants of the people. It was the first time I agreed with him that we are here to serve the people.

Yes, this is not the way we serve the people. No, Mr Speaker. As leaders and our motto 'to lead is to serve', this is not the way we should be serving our people.

The delaying of the budget, Mr Speaker, boils down to one thing. It is because from day one the government engaged in the wrong direction. It decided to employ confrontational politics with the legal fraternity, moving into our diplomatic fraternity, and now it is affecting their budget.

The Minister of Finance is now saying let us mend this relationship first before we introduce the budget when things are much clearer. I warn you, Mr Speaker, that if you remain in power it will not be mended. Our relationship will continue to deteriorate as long as the fugitive lawyer is the centre of our diplomatic row, Mr Speaker.

That is the truth, Mr Speaker. Let us tell the truth, face the truth and face the consequences of the truth. We are no longer kids. Some of us have lost all our hairs in this Parliament, some of us have grown from our beautiful black hairs into what is called grey hairs now but we are still not learning.

Mr Speaker, the dignity of Parliament, the respectability of Parliament, the honorability of Parliament and the respectability of Parliament will be completely tarnished if we pass this kind of motion. It has no meaning to

me. You have nine months on your side to prepare for this motion, and I can only blame yourself for not doing your work.

The Ministers, Mr Speaker, what have they been doing? But I know that I should not accuse them because the budget of all the ministries are already ready, and if they are all ready why are you prolonging the budget. What sort of new money are you going to bring in? Prolong for what?

Mr Speaker, if this motion is defeated I can assure this House that in the next three or four weeks a budget should be ready. I have done my homework. I rang the ministries because I am the spokesman for finance and treasury. I do not want the mover of the motion to say when he responds that the ministries are not ready. I have done my research Mr Speaker. He can use other excuses but not that excuse.

The Cabinet wants this budget this year, and the Opposition wants this budget this year too, and the whole nation wants the budget this year, and not next year. Next year is time to move on, time to implement the bottom up approval. If you move it to next year we are going to implement the bottom-up approach in 2008, and in 2008 you may not be sitting there. Who knows? The politics of this country can change from one corner to the other corner. It would be a great privilege, Mr Speaker, to start implementing the bottom-up approach, which the Minister himself and his Task Force Committee have written a big book. It is big like this, a thickest book I have ever read. Why delay it? You have already done it two to three years ago in your Task Force Committee. Is that true? It is all in a big document. But when it came out of the Ministry of Development Planning last time, the NR criticized it. It should be his thick book on the bottom-up approach that should find its way to the floor of Parliament. There is nothing wrong with that book. You take it down and let us go ahead to introduce it.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, may I just remind my good friend and the government that this motion is a blatant abuse of constitutional provisions, which only is providing provisions for a government who has good excuse, good reasons to request Parliament to approve funds

at the same level of expenditure this year for next year when they prepare for a budget.

Mr Speaker, I also wish to warn my Minister of Finance that even if he introduces the new budget next year, with our current confrontational policy with our bilateral partners, he may not find new funding or new increases for his bottom-up approach. And therefore, he will get more criticisms when he introduces it next year, so this is the time to introduce the budget when these things have not yet surfaced.

Mr Speaker, because of the statement of policy and the program of action, the public has read it already. There is nothing wrong with the government's statement of policy and its program of action. There is nothing wrong. Go ahead and implement it. The problem is that everyone knows about the issue of the fugitive lawyer who is now hiding in the Solomon Islands Embassy in Papua New Guinea, which is causing more danger and more harm. A foreigner to this country than anytime before Mr Speaker, and now he is contacting another man, the former investor in Anuha to join him. I am sorry for this country, Mr Speaker.

With those few remarks, Mr Speaker, I oppose this motion.

Sitting suspended for lunch break

Parliament resumes at 1.30pm

Debate on the motion by the Minister for Finance and Treasury continues

Mr FONO: Thank you Mr Speaker for allowing me the floor to contribute very briefly to this very important motion constitutionally relevant to the situation we are in which was moved by the Minister for Finance this morning.

Mr Speaker, I thank the Minister or Government for moving this motion in order for us not to experience any constitutional crisis if such a motion is not passed because the budget will not be tabled at this meeting.

Whilst I thank the Minister for moving the motion and the constitutional requirement that allows such a motion to come to this House, I do not accept the reasons for the delay of the

Appropriation Bill that we should meet again either next month or December to look into it.

Mr Speaker, before a budget comes to Parliament the budget framework has to be produced by the Government of the day outlining areas that Accounting Officers will be looking at in formulating the budget, so that it is in line with the policy directives of the Government.

Sir, I do not see any justification for the period stated by the Minister that the Government needs nine months before they can produce the budget. Sir, I know that only human beings are born after nine months but not the budget. I can see ample time since this government took office in May this year and having produced its policy statement within the first hundred days. I believe that had there been political will accounting officers should have produced the budget for the budget session to be held this year.

My understanding and also my research, Mr Speaker, I found out that accounting officers have been directed to send their submissions to Finance and Treasury by September last month. The period between September and December is ample time for accounting officers, especially the Treasury Department to put together the budget so that Parliament is convened in early December to debate the 2007 appropriation bill.

Therefore I fail to accept the excuse that the Government needs ample time, the Government needs about nine months to prepare the budget. Mr Speaker, there are quite a lot of qualified highly paid accounting officers, and I believe if there had been proper directives, and the government with the political will should have produced the budget so that Parliament reconvene in early December to consider the budget for next year.

Mr Speaker, previous government's budget framework was normally given out in June and July and by September submissions should have gone down to the Budget Unit within the Department of Finance to put together the budget. Therefore, I fail to see the justification for the delay.

As highlighted by the previous speaker, I think it is important that the fiscal year 2007 starts off with the Grand Coalition for Change Government's budget. Otherwise the so much

talked about bottom up approach we are debating now will be seen as irrelevant.

Mr Speaker, may be one of the reasons for the delay the Minister has not highlighted was that there was no consultative meeting with donor partners, a normal trend in previous years that before the budget is produced there was supposed to be a donor consultative meeting between the Solomon Islands Government and our development partners. Why did the Government not hold that consultative meeting over the past few months or even between now and December? Because only then, Mr Speaker, would the government be in a position to know the commitments of the donor partners.

At the moment even the quarterly consultative meetings between the government and donors is already a thing of the past. This is making it very difficult for us to gauge donor support. Our development budget, as has been the case is 90% funded by donors whether we like it or not. Donors continue to play a much bigger role in providing financial support to the government.

At this state we cannot do away with aid as advocated by certain groups or individuals. Why? Because the economic base of our nation is narrow and we have a land tenure system where land is not available for development no matter how much we tried. Take for example, bigger projects like the Bina Harbour, which has been in the books of governments. Even the Auluta Palm Oil Project the previous government was trying to put in place, up until today the land there is not yet secured. Therefore, land reform should be one of the priorities of the government. The Government should address it so that land is available for development so that it broadens our economic base hence increase government revenue to meet its commitment in the budget. If we do not address this, I am afraid we will continue to depend on donor assistance to provide in our budget providing that budget support for us.

Mr Speaker, as I have said perhaps one of the reasons for the delay is that the Government does not have any commitment from donors towards the 2007 budget. I would believe that the strategy we take in creating enemies has severed our relationship with donors. That may have been the contributing

factor to the reason why this motion comes in at this time.

Sir, as far as I know even donors like Australia and New Zealand are providing funds for the recurrent budget of the government. For example, the New Zealand funding under the education sector for 40 million in 2006, is a recurrent cost. I also understand under AUSAid is providing health sector support for health services. May be the Minister could clarify that. That is why it is very dangerous if this diplomatic standoff that our government is doing with Australia is not resolved and if Australia Government decided to turn off its support, I do not think our government is in a position to support our health sector. Australia even provides direct recurrent cost to the hospital supporting patients with food and logistic. It is an issue the Government should be mindful of to create goodwill and strengthen the relationship with our donor partners so that we do not create enemies that in the end our people will suffer.

Mr Speaker, it is very important that the government holds this consultative meeting prior to the budget coming to the House, so that we know exactly the donors' commitment to the 2007 budget is. At the moment I am afraid there has not been any consultative meeting arranged before the budget as has been the trend. Otherwise may I ask, where will money come from to support the 2007 budget? Our domestic revenue is not enough given the recent pay increases, the payroll cost of public officers and we politicians.

Mr Speaker, my advice to the government is that it must hold the consultative meeting with donor partners in order for the Government to gauge donors' commitment. This is very important so that donors have confidence on the government and make commitments towards the 2007 budget.

As I have said the delay can also be seen as a step the government is taking to save its face during this diplomatic standoff between Australia and the Solomon Islands Government. As I have said may be Australia is not making commitment to our budget next year and that is why it has to be delayed until next year. This is very important.

Mr Speaker, the delay can only be acceptable if the proposed vote of no-confidence

goes through and a new government is formed. That new government should consider the budget for next year. If the government is confident that it will defeat the vote of no-confidence, my advice is for the government to call for the budget session in December because it would have ample time. We have at least two more months. I have information that accounting officers have already submitted their ministerial proposals to the Budget Unit to put together the 2007 Budget. There is no excuse whatsoever that it is because of time factor that the government wants to delay the budget to next year.

Mr Speaker, I am surprised as well to hear the government business that we will not debate the Millennium Development Fund Bill highlighted by the Minister of Finance during the debate on the supplementary appropriation bill that we have passed. Are we considering that bill so that it paves the way on how to implement the millennium development funding? I fail to hear that in the statement of government business read by the Prime Minister today.

Is it true to say that the Bill did not find its way to the floor of this House because the Prime Minister is afraid of the vote of no-confidence and so he wanted Parliament to sine die on Wednesday, may I ask Mr Speaker? He has the number and so he should be confident and allow this Meeting to stand sine die on Friday to allow time for us to debate this Millennium Development Fund Bill. This is very important so that MPs can implement the millennium funding according to regulations laid down in that Bill. This is very important otherwise in the absence of considering that piece of legislation the millennium fund is likely going to be paid like the micro projects.

In the last government even the micro that was used to be paid under Planning is quite transparent and accountable. I am surprised the current government brings this back to Parliament to be given out as lump sum creating room for misuse and abuse. Therefore, it is important that the millennium funding needs to be properly accounted for through a piece of legislation the Minister of Finance is talking about. It needs to come during this meeting so

that it is implemented according to that piece of legislation.

Mr Speaker, if we want to gain the confidence and trust of our donor partners in implementing such funding schemes, I think it is not only appropriate but very timely for this piece of legislation to come through.

Mr Speaker, as also highlighted by the previous speaker, the timing of the Budget is very important. When it comes to the fiscal year 2007, we want to implement the bottom up approach strategy that the current government is talking so much about. Otherwise in the first quarter of next year we will only restrict ourselves to this year's budget allocation. And this year's budget belongs to the previous government. Further delay is not a move in the right direction so that the Grand Coalition could implement its programs.

People in the rural areas have very high expectations on this government because of the much talked about bottom up approach that it advocated very much. May be some of them have not been using it and that is why they think it is new. Some of us have been implementing our constituency plan, which is the bottom up because it is the people who decide where the priorities are. We have a model of constituency development, if anyone wants to learn more about this we welcome you to come to Malaita and come to my constituency.

It is very important that this current government as of next year must start implementing its bottom up approach. That is the invitation I am giving either come to Central Kwa'arae in Malaita or Central Makira in Makira Province because that is where we are practicing rural development.

Mr Speaker, I see the lame excuse of requesting Parliament through this motion for the budget to come next year as not acceptable. I would like to call on the Prime Minister and his good government to please reconsider your decision and bring in the appropriation bill or the relevant legislation so that Parliament is convened in early December to discuss the 2007 Appropriation Bill.

With these few remarks, Mr Speaker, I oppose this motion.

Mr NIUASI: Mr Speaker, thank you very much for allowing me to talk on this important constitutional legislation brought before us by the good Minister of Finance.

Mr Speaker, one can see that since this government came into power in May, it has been doing a lot of things in trying to address financial discrepancies, which have been causing a lot of problems within the ministries. There has been a lot of work carried out, in which some of these reports are before us, if we have not collected them from our pigeonholes as yet, so that the Parliament has some information about what is going on in the financial system of the government.

Mr Speaker, besides that, the Government when it came into power, is quite busy with the supplementation so that it is legal for the government to spend until December. Therefore, in trying to get accurate figures - the figures which we will put to supplementary, a lot of work needs to be done by putting together figures and seeing where they are fit for this Government to put supplementation before this honorable House.

Mr Speaker, the bottom up approach development or strategy that all of us are talking about, to me, is not an easy thing to carry out. Mr Speaker, as I have seen myself and understand myself, these policies to some of us have been referring to and have been translated, it would take time to turn them into monetary values, which in fact we must be careful about how we place money against these policies in order to work and work better for Solomon Islands.

Mr Speaker, having seen all things and having noted the work that must be done, the Government is not intending to delay this budget but because we knew the work that will be undertaken, the tasks towards we will be asking the ministries to take will not be just the same as other budget provisions we used to produce over the past years.

Mr Speaker, one should know that over the last 28 years we were applying the standard budget to which we only increase a provision which we think will cover the program or policies of the government of day, and then present it to Parliament for debate. In my view, Mr Speaker, this is not the type of budget we

have been experienced. As it is, the budget will be a program budget, which to me is individual expenditure or its individual policies will have to be clearly identified and then valued according to what it is supposed to be spent on.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, I can see that unless we give enough ample time for this government to seriously draw up a budget that would reflect the program which the government is thinking of putting in place in 2007, we might not put the compass right, the ship might wreck on the reef, which is what we don't want in trying to apply our financial needs which as leaders we want to carry out to our population as far as the rural areas.

Mr Speaker, having listened to some of our speakers, some have been saying, what can beggars do but accept. I must clarify this statement that my people of West Are Are are not beggars. We have resources which have not yet been touched. This bottom up approach is a strategy my people are looking forward to so that we too can decide on developments that will be conducive to our constituency and thereafter go forward to develop our constituencies.

Mr Speaker, beggars are people who do not have anything. I think MPs of this honorable chamber should respect our country. We should be proud that our resources are still intact hence we need to exploit them. Only when we have good policies and a good budget that would address the conduciveness of the development of rural areas financially, we cannot go in the right direction.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, this constitutional requirement is a provision asking this honorable House to put in place in case we collide with the legal requirement of legislation.

We are aware of what our commitments are. As leaders ourselves we are mandated by our voters to carry forward the developments, the programs and the aspiration of our voters. Hence, we are just as concern as anybody to do the right thing for this nation to be good leaders to our constituencies and the country as a whole. Therefore, Mr Speaker, as I would illustrate (this is a cup) four of my fingers can in but my hand cannot go in. That means not everything we want would go in at once as all of us would like to do. This means we got to have plans that would place them according to their priorities so

that when we put them in place they are carried out effectively and maximum benefits should be enjoyed by our rural population to which we always refer to as the 85% of Solomon Islands.

Having contributed to this important constitutional legislation, all of us honorable MPs should appreciate the fact that we are going into a new direction in which the government of the day would like to show and prove to other nations that we are people who mean business. We are serious and we want to decide on what is supposed to happen in our country and then follow suit. Therefore, I do not think this piece of constitutional legislation, which the Minister of Finance asked of us is not timely. I think it is timely. Likewise Mr Speaker, we always refer to rural areas and we always tell the Government what have you done so far? Mr Speaker, I think we have to be reasonable to each other. Because we all have the capability and we all have the qualities but we must know that we cannot do them at once and therefore we need to expand them or to allocate them according to their priorities as and when time comes.

Mr Speaker, I can assure the other side of the House that the government is very much serious about the good contributions that all of you have been putting across. We are very much serious about the nation as a whole. Therefore, with this brief contribution to this important constitutional legislation, I see it as proper and should safeguard us should there be any delays, we cannot confront ourselves with the legality of those requirements.

Mr Speaker, I would only ask if time could be given to us. I think patience is a good thing because unless we are patient with each other, we cannot do anything good. But patience gives us time to think about what we will do, what we are going to do, and how are we going to do it. Therefore, without going any further, Mr Speaker, I support this piece of legislation.

Hon DARCY: Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister of Finance for moving this very important motion.

Mr Speaker, this motion is very simple, simple in the sense that it is provided for in our Constitution. Let me just remind us of that constitutional provision that provides for this

motion because it seems that we are going away from the bounds of this motion.

Section 103(1) of the constitution states that "If the Appropriation Act in respect of any financial year has not come into operation by the beginning of that financial year, Parliament by resolution may empower the Minister of Finance". That is basically what the Minister of Finance is seeking here. These are provisions or tools guiding the Minister of Finance within a fiscal year to ensure that the financial resources of the government are properly expended, the financial resources of the government are expended in accordance to law.

I wanted to make sure that we all must understand this aspect because quite often we think that when Ministers of Finance come in here and make this kind of resolution, we think that Ministers of Finance are not serious about preparing the budget. No, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I want to assure this House that this Government is absolutely serious with all the processes that we have put in place to ensure the 2007 budget must be prepared, and well prepared before it is presented to this House.

In fact, Mr Speaker, we have started and the work so far has been going on very well. We will be working very hard in the remaining months of this year to ensure the process of budget preparation is completed. But as you know, Mr Speaker, that task requires a lot of work because of the new policy strategy this government is taking, and that is rural development strategy.

We need time to talk to departments, we need time to consult provincial governments so that we can come up with the right estimation, with the kind of projects we need to undertake in the provinces so that we can carry on the whole strategy of rural development.

Because of that we are saying that in spite of the work that we are putting together right now we believe that in the remaining three months of this year we should be able to complete the process of preparing the budget that we may jump to the next fiscal year. We may jump into the next fiscal year.

If say, for instance, Mr Speaker, that in January next year that we have to call for Parliament or whether it be within the first week

of January or the second week of January next year, you have to tell us what provision are we going to use to expend government funds. What provision? It has to be this.

That is why I said these are tools provided to ensure that the financial resources of the government are expended within the law. You must obtain that approval from this Parliament to make sure that with all the hard work you are putting together to prepare the budget, we must make sure that if we have to jump beyond this fiscal year, we should expend government resources within what the law provides for.

This is very important, because as I have said this Government has announced that the main thrust of its policy is on rural development. In ensuring that it puts together a best program that reflects that kind of rural development strategy, we have to work to ensure that departments and provincial governments understand the whole policy thrust of this government, and that we are getting the right input from departments, the right inputs from provincial governments to ensure that it has the best budget that will reflect the kind of rural development strategy the Government is trying to deliver to the people.

Sir, I can understand what a lot of Members have said that this is not a new concept, this rural development strategy. Of course, yes but we would like to avoid the kind of rural development strategy that we have been embarking on previously where we ended up with some problems we are facing. For instance, Mr Speaker, there were some very well intended programs made in the past, and you know these very well, Mr Speaker, under your regime schemes like assistance to small business, eco-tourism funding scheme, agricultural funding scheme are put in place but do these assistances reach the rural areas.

Mr Speaker, today this government has received reports that have actually pointed differently. Funds have not actually reached the people right down there in the rural areas. The small business assistance scheme in the Ministry of Commerce, instead of going down right down to the rural people, only people in town are using this fund.

The eco-tourism funding is intended for our people in the rural areas, but we have been receiving a lot of false projects in the name of tourism but instead of going down to the people in the rural areas to really start a tourism project, people are only using it in town. That is the kind of thing we are trying to avoid here. So give us a little bit of time so that we can ensure we understand where we have gone wrong with some of these schemes in the past and make improvements.

We are not saying the budget will be delayed right up to the end of the third quarter of next year. No, we are doing what we can to ensure that within the remaining months of this year we will ensure the budget is prepared. But in the event that we jump a little bit in the early part of next year maybe first week of January or second week of January, surely the court of this country has already ruled that if you come by the end of the fiscal year you must make sure that you require the approval of Parliament before that resources are spent.

That is basically what we are saying. If we have to call Parliament in the first week of January, which I believe is the kind of schedule we are looking at here or the second week of January, we will require some kind of authority from Parliament to ensure we spend resources from the government consolidated fund for purposes of delivering services to our people in the rural areas.

Mr Speaker, the Member of Parliament for East Are Are quite rightly point out that over the last 28 years the budgetary system in this country is based on what is called incremental budgeting. This is, every year we come and say let us increase the budget by say 5% or 10%. Mr Speaker, do you know that that is exactly why every year we have supplementary in this House.

With that incremental we are not designing programs and projects and making the best decision on how we are spending the resources because it is determined by that increment. We put in 5% increment and say that is enough for that particular program. When the time comes for us to implement the expenditure we either have a shortfall in the expenditure or that those whom we intend to carry on those projects basically find themselves in a very bad

and awkward situation not being able to implement those projects? Why, because it wasn't properly designed by them. It wasn't them. We basically impose that expenditure to them. We have to change that and that is what we are trying to say here.

We are not saying that we are going to come up with a perfect system here. What we are trying to say here is let us try to change the way we have been doing budgeting in this country. So that instead only us giving the monetary ceiling to them, we ask people to come up with a submission and say what is it that you in Temotu with an advantage in terms of economic development or social development you will be able to carry it out and then carried it out quite successfully, please come up with a choice, put it to the government and the government will provide you with appropriate resources.

We are giving the choice to the people. That is the bottom up approach, and not the bottom up referred to by the MP for East Are Are that in English it is called, bottom up the bottle and go up, all at once, we throw it all inside. No, may be that is what we have been doing and that is why we have gone wrong.

Now we have to make the change and we have to make a difference. That is why it is important not to disturb the whole process that is going on right now in planning and designing the kind of program that will eventually be established in the budget for 2007.

Obviously as what I've said we have the risk of running over this current fiscal year into next year. If we have to run over into next year, that is why this provision is here. I must say that it is one provision that we to thank our founding fathers, and the architects of our constitution to see it fit to be included in our constitution so that we do not go in the wrong direction the way we manage the financial resources of our people and of the government of this country.

Sir, if time allows us and I know that all our people, the skillful human resource in our departments and also our provincial governments are working very hard right now, if time is right and that we are able to get the best input and efforts from our people, we should be able to have a budget that next year, if we come in here, we will be able to debate it properly, and

in the context that the government has sets its agenda for this country to move on from here on, and that is growing the economy through encouraging our rural economy so that they can become part of tax payers of this country.

Right now we are talking about economic growth in Solomon Islands. We are saying the economy is growing, but the economy is growing simply because of the exploitation of our natural resources coupled with the labor force of only about 10 to 15% of our total population being part of our tax system, what we need to do is work towards in the next five to ten years to increase our people in the rural areas to be part of this tax payers in this country. They must be.

Sir, if we our rural people included and actively participating in contributing towards our tax system, Mr Speaker, we can all say this country has grown. The grown in the economy of Solomon Islands is fully justified in that way.

Mr Speaker, just a recap on this motion, it is a very simple motion, a motion that is provided for in our constitution. It is a motion that allows the Minister of Finance an additional tool to ensure that he spends the resources of the people and government of this country according to law and to ensure that we give time to properly undertake the preparation of the budget in accordance with the policy direction of the government.

With those few remarks, Mr Speaker, I would like to ask you all to support this motion.

Mr ZAMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me the floor to briefly contribute on this motion by the Honorable Minister of Finance and Treasury.

The motion reads that "the National Parliament of Solomon Islands, in accordance with section 103(1) of the constitution, hereby resolves to empower the Minister of Finance to authorize the issue of monies from the consolidated fund". And this is where I have some difficulties, "until the expiration of four months from the beginning of the financial year 2007 or the coming into operation of the Appropriation Act 2007. But I gain some consolation whichever is the end.

Mr Speaker, I will briefly deliberate on this motion and will be coming in from three

angles. Firstly, Mr Speaker, as an independent elected Member of Parliament for South New Georgia Rendova and Tetepari constituency, secondly as the Chairman, of the Public Accounts Committee, and thirdly as a government backbencher.

Mr Speaker, quite frankly I have some difficulties in absorbing this motion. When I first read it on Friday, I was honestly of the view that I think government has to be serious in its approach in terms of the 2007 appropriation bill. But that said, as I have said I am coming from three dimensions.

Mr Speaker, the Government was elected into office for almost six months and I think and believe it has come up with some drastic policies that would wish to really address the issues this country has gone through over the last 28 years.

On that note, Mr Speaker, I am a little bit saddened by the comments made by the Member of Parliament for East Are Are when he labeled our people as beggars or this country as beggars. Mr Speaker, I think that is a sad comment to make, especially from a leader who has been in Parliament for almost four terms or almost 16 years.

The people of this country are people represented by their Members of Parliament and if they are being seen as beggars, it is very unfortunate. Very unfortunate in the sense that those people are in positions they are in today not because of choice or not because of their own making, but because of the actions and because of the policies that governments, past governments have failed to address situations this country has gone through. And so it will be unfair to call our people or this country is begging country or people or beggars.

Mr Speaker, giving an opened envelop or open approval to the government to allow it deliberate on the 2007 appropriation bill, whilst it would be convenient for the purposes of satisfying that requirement of the constitution, it would be very unfair for the government to see that as a buffer for it be complacent in terms of the preparation of the 2007 appropriation bill.

I would therefore, Mr Speaker, call on the government, the department of Finance, the department of National Planning and Aid

Coordination and the officials to use this opportunity to work out on the framework.

However, having said that, Mr Speaker, I am coming in from another angle as a government backbencher. This government has obviously come up with policies that are constituency focused, people centered and growth oriented which have been lacking for the last 27 years.

In order for any government for that matter to be able to realize these goals or these policies into workable programs, the appropriate budget framework must be worked out to be able to address the appropriate sectors.

Like the Minister of Planning has rightly stated, Mr Speaker, there have been some very good policy intentions by the last government. Unfortunately those policies have not reached the people in which they are intended to address or serve. That is why it is important that this government, the Grand Coalition for Change Government came up with must be truly reflected in the new budget approach that it intends to present to Parliament.

Mr Speaker, for the last 27 years, this Parliament has approved budgets based on incremental basis. For that matter unless we have crystal ball to be able to realistically focus how much we will earn and how much spending we intend to incur, we will continue to raise in this Parliament supplementary appropriation bills. And maybe for that matter too, Mr Speaker, the government sees it fit to seek this provision under the Constitution.

The other approach, Mr Speaker, in terms of budget preparation is a zero based budget. I think this is where the government intends to really focus its attention in terms of the new framework that endeavors to address the bottom up approach.

Mr Speaker, I have been given by the government over the last weekend a small task to come up with a new framework to address the bottom up rural centre approach.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to report to Parliament that I will be presenting to Government Caucus tomorrow this proposed new framework based on the conventional approach to combine the recurrent budget and the development budget and endeavoring to address the issues that have arisen over the last

years. I think this is the very reason why this government has seen it fit to seek Parliament's approval to extend the timing which the appropriation bill 2007 is to be presented to Parliament. But that said, Mr Speaker, coming back to the point where I am coming from, as an independent member, the government must not be complacent in terms of budget preparation and not in the full four months of 2007.

But I would be standing behind the government to support it in terms of its budget preparation and to ensure that our constituencies are properly focused on because it has been the intention of this government to make sure our constituencies would be the central focus of economic growth centres. This has been lacking in the last twenty seven years.

Mr Speaker, budgets are very easy tools to prepare. But whilst it is going to be a daunting task to try and truly focus on the bottom-up approach, Mr Speaker, the central focus is that all budgets are revenue driven. But in this new approach, it intends to draw up the budget on a demand driven basis. This is where we are going to strike the best balance between the two approaches - a revenue driven approach and a demand driven approach.

I think and believe there are capable members on the government bench and also on my committee who would be prepared to assist the government to try and get this focus to fruition.

Mr Speaker, with those very few comments, I would want to sincerely ask my government, the Minister of Finance, Minister of Planning, the Minister of Mines, Foreign Affairs and all my very good hard working Ministers to work together to be able to bring this new approach so that Parliament would be given the opportunity to properly scrutinize the 2007 Appropriation Bill so that we do not come to repeat the same approaches where we have continuously put supplementary appropriation bills.

Mr Speaker, with those comments, when I came in here I half-heartedly support it but now I support the motion by the Honorable Minister for Finance, and I will continue to seek him and his officials. I have used one word over the week where I have labeled them as incompetent, but if that is harsh, this preparation

of the officials Mr Speaker, then it can be seen from a positive point. It is to really encourage them to prove their worth in the department. But that said Mr Speaker, Ministers and government, please let us get this budget framework together over the next few days, and try and put numbers that truly reflect the policies of the government to try and address the bottom-up concept which is going to be a new thing for this Parliament and for this country.

With those remarks, Mr Speaker, I support the motion.

Mr TOZAKA: Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing me to contribute to this motion.

Mr Speaker, I rise to contribute to the motion moved by the Honorable Minister for Finance and Treasury to consider approval in Parliament of the respective Minister for authorization of monies in the consolidated fund in the time frame according to the motion. Mr Speaker, I would also like to thank him for moving this motion.

Mr Speaker, at the outset I would like to register my disappointment on the government's failure to produce this fundamental public policy tool to implement the development and operational program of the government to address the real issues facing our people and country at this point of time.

Mr Speaker, having listened carefully to the mover of the motion, I am not convinced of the reasons given why the budget has to be delayed and not tabled this time to this honorable House for consideration and approval.

Sir, six months is a lot of time to produce this work especially with the luxurious and magnitude of skillful manpower the government has through the partnership arrangement with RAMSI. We have a lot of time. Six months is a lot of time. And most of us including myself have been confronted in the past in times like this when government was requested to come up with a budget, and we had to sit down, we have to produce the job in time as directed by the government.

Time here is of essence Mr Speaker. It is very important in our relationship with the other two pillars of organization that are here with us to rebuild this nation. I will come back to that later.

Mr Speaker, what is the real delay of this budget? Sir, work is important, work and producing, work hard and producing results. We have to sweat. We have to be committed, we have to be dedicated, we have to have allegiance, we have to be allegiance to our government.

If the government wants us to produce this work we have to do it with respect. We have to learn how to humble ourselves. We have to learn how to appreciate the fact that true I failed in governing the country. I have failed in these areas for not governing this country properly. Therefore, I have requested friends to come and help me give me back the sovereignty that I lost, Mr Speaker.

Another key here is the question of how do we sustain? How are we going to hold this sovereignty so that we do not derail back to the pre ethnic tension?

When I look at the situation under the microscope of the principle for good governance, transparency, accountability, this motion failed in three accounts of the principle, Mr Speaker.

If some of us, Solomon Islanders are questioning the credibility of this motion, how do we expect others outside coming to help us rebuild this nation will not question us whether we are true or not.

Mr Speaker, the honorable mover of the motion, the honorable Minister talked about three pillars. I endorse that. There are three pillars in our institution building here right now. One is government, the second is the donors, and the third is the mission that we ask to come and help us. Those are the three pillars.

These three pillars have their own diversities and they have their own characteristics in carrying out their business. It is not an easy task to coordinate and communicate with these three pillars and who they are. But the upper hand that we have in our country is that we own this nation. We are the government or in fact you are the government. Therefore, Mr Speaker, I can see the difficulties here. The problem of sitting down together and addressing this issue collectively. Appreciating each other that one has the skill the other does not, some of the incapacities that we do not have. This is the time when the countries

representing the Mission are here to help us and so let us use this opportunity. Let us use this opportunity whilst they are helping us to address the issues of this nation, one of which is the budget that we are supposed to be working together on.

Mr Speaker, having said that the arrival of this Mission to help us has enabled the return of law and order and a stabilization of our financial situation. There are positive signs of economic recovery and the machineries of the government are beginning to work again. Good news, Mr Speaker. Good news!

This initiative, Mr Speaker, by the outgoing government has encouraged confidence and trust on the part of donors and investors to resume working together with us and our people. Therefore, Mr Speaker, in the context of this motion, it reflects badly on our capacity and on our capability to govern ourselves properly. It sends a message of the old familiar characteristic, symptoms and patterns that questions our credibility and dignity.

Mr Speaker, this is not a forward movement. This is a repetitive forward and backward movement leading things to speculation. We do not know which way we are going. We are going forward and going backwards.

I am one hundred percent will put my hands up in support of the Government's policy on rural development and the nature and mechanisms it proposed to put in place to move this development. I am one hundred percent supportive of that, and I am also in support of the government's message of change. I subscribe to that.

This motion is bringing us back to where we were before and does not reflect the forward movement, Mr Speaker. It is putting us back.

Those of us on this side of the House would like to work together with you, and that is what is called 'unity in diversity', which our country depends upon in returning this country back to normalcy. We have to work together, but that is not shown by this motion.

Mr Speaker, having said that Solomon Islands is no longer a cocoon. We are no longer lonely people anymore. We are part and parcel

of the family of nations. We are part of the globalization program whether we like it or not but we are part of it. What that means, Mr Speaker, is that we have to play our part to able to participate in the world economy.

We have signed conventions and protocols with international organizations. And those international organizations and those countries that we have signed these protocols with have their own timings. They have their own time too. They have their own budgets too like us.

The question here is, are they going to wait for us Mr Speaker, while we attend to our budget like this? They know that our budget is operational from January to the end of the year, and normally at this time of the year we meet to talk about our national budget ready for next year. Everybody knows that. This year when we are not doing that they are asking what is wrong with us.

Sir, we have to pay up our debts too. We say we are all right but we have millions of dollars indebted to other organizations. Now we are going to pay these debts according to their timing. How does this motion help us to address these debts? Since we are representing our people, how do our people see this motion today?

Mr Speaker, the message that we are telling our people now in this motion is a 'waiting' message, hiding out mentality. That is where it comes from – hiding out mentality. We are saying 'wait, wait, wait, it is okay, tomorrow, it will come tomorrow'. We are telling our people not to worry sit back and relax, everything is all right.

Does this message sound familiar to us? Yes, it sounds familiar to us. That is why we want to make a change. We have to make a change and I am glad that the Government has called itself the Grand Coalition of Change. I was looking for that change to take effect in this budget and not waiting but move on. Let us move the nation forward as our people want it so.

Mr Speaker, the working together of the three key organizations I have already stated is the key to sustainability and reconstruction of this country. Our hope is in unity in diversity.

We must unite together. We must work together.

The initiative to bring about improved leadership management and coordination on this partnership is an essence of what we need in nation building.

Mr Speaker, if the government of the day has not taken control of this very important role of coordinating the three arms, the three institutions that I referred to, then I urge the government that it does so because I see that the way forward is based on our working together with these three arms.

I know, Mr Speaker, that human as we are we have our own diversities, we have our pride. We have pride on where we come from. But in this situation, Mr Speaker, as leaders we have to forget our strong feelings. We have to put aside our strong feelings and we have to work in the best interest of our people and country.

Sir, with these few comments, I resume my seat.

Mr HAOMAE: Mr Speaker, I am duty bound to thank the honorable Minister of Finance for moving this motion on the floor of this Parliament. I shall, in debating the motion, offer some observations. Some based on experience pertaining to the operation of Parliament.

In my view, I submit that all constitutional provisions are there for something. They are included in the constitution to provide for something. Hence, section 103 of the Constitution can only be utilized if certain preconditions are met. When those situations or circumstances are not there, I submit to you that this provision should not apply.

As I have said at the outset, Mr Speaker, all constitutional provisions are there for their own respective purposes. If the circumstances at that point in time affecting Solomon Islands does not appeal for that constitutional provision to be utilized and it is utilized then we are abusing that particular provision. I think that is the submission by the MP for East Are Are.

In my view, Mr Speaker, this particular provision of the constitution can only be utilized if three preconditions are met. The first precondition is when a budget is defeated then that constitutional provision applies. The second

precondition is if the government is formed in the latter part of the year, say, October, November or December whether through political situations or because a general election happens during that particular time.

The honorable Leader of Opposition was correct in observing that if this motion of no-confidence goes through then that condition applies because the government is formed at a latter part of the year, it shall use that particular provision, then it is not abuse.

The third precondition is when a general election is held at the latter part of the year and the new government has no time to put its policies and programs together, budget guidelines together then that particular provision can be utilized.

The question therefore arises whether the government has ample time to put the budget together. I wish to offer you some observations on the history of this motion in Parliament.

The first of such a motion was moved in 1979 when the honourable Minister of Finance now was the Leader of Opposition and the budget was defeated. So the honourable Minister then moved this constitutional provision so that the government can utilize the funds on the same level of that particular year until a new budget is prepared. That situation, Mr Speaker, I submit to you meets the criteria and conditions to make this constitutional provision utilized.

In 1980, the general election was held and the government then submitted its budget just in time. Just an observation on that.

There was a change of government in 1981 but the Government, and I think the present Minister of Finance was Minister of Finance at that time, and he prepared the budget. The budget went through as usual just like his time now, and that is why I am debating this motion with a bit of disappointment.

The 1984 General Election was okay. The 1989 general election was also straightforward. In 1993 general election, the National Coalition Partnership Government came into office in June that year. (I am speaking from experience because I was a Member of Parliament at that time too).

The Government at that time came up with very brand new ideas. The development of

rural land and the Land Recording Act was also their idea. That was a really new thing like the bottom up approach we are now talking about. I was in Parliament at that time on this same seat when it was introduced. It was a new one and the budget was to follow the programs at that time. They came into power in June and with all the new programs, with all of their new thinking to change the framework of the budget to make it compatible and palatable with their new ideas to address land as a front to advance the economic development of this country. They were performing. They also said their budget is also a program budget and not an incremental budget. I really disagree with the MP for West Are Are on that point.

The program of the government then and their budget is a program budget. The MP for West Are Are at that time was in Finance and they put everything right. It was a program budget but they were able to do it within the time provided for by Parliament and the budget was brought to Parliament in November.

In 1997, Mr Speaker, the budget at that time also came in at the right time. The Government at that time led by the honorable Finance Minister had their reform programs very good ones, and I supported them that time. New thinking, very new. It sort of intermixed with old thinking but it is also a new thinking like the present government is advancing now. It is a new thinking. They did not call it bottom up approach but it was also a new thinking. But they did produce a budget during that time.

The argument that previous budgets were incremental budgets, I totally disagree with that. In 1993 I was there at the creation of the budget and so was in 1997.

This idea of previous budgets as incremental budgets as was mentioned by the Minister of Planning, I totally disagree with him because the evidence shows otherwise. The government at that time came up with brand new ideas like what we have now but they managed. They put together their programs and manage to bring the budget to Parliament.

I want to submit that to you, Mr Speaker, just to underlie a bit of my disappointment. My observations are not meant to belittle anyone nor to be critical. I am

offering my observations and comments for purposes of making improvements.

Therefore, it all boils down in my view to what is called 'performance', whether the government is performing or the interest of half million, 500,000 people of this nation.

I am asking a question, Mr Speaker, I am not passing any judgment. I am asking a question whether the government is performing, in view of the fact that the budget is still to come. Because in leadership, in governing the affairs of the state or province or whatever, there is also such a thing as paralysis of analysis where you analyze every time and nothing happens. I would like to impress this on the Minister for National Planning so that he does not go into this disease called paralysis of analysis. Because in the event that he goes in, nothing will happen and I am worrying about the performance of the government.

I want to join my Leader of Opposition in asking why is the bill promised by the Minister of Finance last week still not brought to Parliament. If money is given it must go by structure so that the money can flow. That was what the Minister of Planning was saying today about certain programs in certain Ministries that were abused whether by politicians or Ministers, I do not know because I am a new MP or whether by Public Servants who were responsible for those funds. But they must go by structure, and that is why this bill is important because we in Small Malaita are ready.

When you talk about the bottom up approach - the approach from right down and going up and simultaneously it goes up and down as consultation process. I believe other constituencies in the country are also ready. So why do we delay the budget?

This then leads me to the question of performance. Otherwise we are just playing around with ourselves. Some of us are serious because we are leaders of our nation. We are put here to ensure we provide that particular leadership.

I researched the whole thing so that I could debate the millennium bill but it did not come. I am not too sure whether it is due to other concentrations. That will be explained by the Minister of Finance but certain constituencies in

the country are already in gear for purposes of the bottom up approach and it looks as though next year there will be nothing. If the structure is not there I would like to caution the Minister of Finance not to give us money. The structure must be in place for purposes of ensuring the developments take place because they must be coordinated and it must be top tail within the provincial government system that is in place at the moment. That is my short contribution.

Sir, I am beginning to question the performance of the government, in view, of the fact that the budget has been deferred for next year. There is no Parliament that I have been in that deferred its budget. The governments before have their programs too, like the one you have this time. They also did new things in 1993 and 1997, and is not an incremental budgets but budgets carried out by programs.

In fact, Mr Speaker, a program budget is very easy. As long as you have the right information it is only a matter of moving heads and subheads. The development budget is much more easier if you know what you are doing. If the policies are already there, the policy statements - the framework, which guides the budget guidelines and it is the budget guidelines that guide the Ministers and its officials on the budgets of their respective ministries.

I was a public servant at one time, Mr Speaker, and a Minister also at one time, and so that would be very easy for me. I can do it in about one day rather than six months. That is why I think being in power for six months and asking to delay the budget to next year, to me is not in the best thinking. I think I have to take this motion with a lot of disappointment but I will give the government the benefit of doubt at this particular point in time.

As I said at the outset, Mr Speaker, if my contribution in one way or another appears to be critical then it is not my intention, and also it is not meant to belittle anyone. I am merely offering observations from the perspective, and I want the government to perform for the people of this nation.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I resume my seat.

(applause)

Hon Ulufa'alu: Mr Speaker, I rise to wind up the debate on this motion.

Mr Speaker, all those who have spoken spoke well of the motion and all agree that it is a motion provided for by the constitution. Its timing is where everyone has different opinions.

Mr Speaker, the change of the budget from the usual increment to demand full budgetary strategy are different things. The one which the government of the day hopes to pursue is demanding creation so that when you make something you make something that is on demand where people will buy it. You do not make something that just sits down there that people do not buy. That is what has been happening in the past where our strategy has been supply strategy, and because it is supply strategy we are left at the mercy of our importers. Hence whatever they give to us is all we get whereas here we are trying to look at what this country needs amongst ourselves so that it is demand oriented so that we produce things that there are people to buy. This is making the economy growing internally rather than externally all the time. That is the change in the strategy to this budget.]

To be able to bring about that change we need to reorient our thinking process, our talking process, our deeds process, we need to rethink these things, and we need to look at them and study them.

Our officials, Mr Speaker, our expertise do not necessarily have the relevant training on this kind of budget strategy. Hence they will need time to study matters, and that is what we are merely asking for here. I am surprised that Members who have spoken continue to place the emphasis on incremental budget which is supply - an induced type of budgeting. That is not a surprise because that is what the colonial masters led us to believe that that is the way to go forward to produce things to supply them and they decide at what price whether it is one dollar for one metric ton or two dollar per metric that does not matter. Is that not what we have been having in the past, Mr Speaker?

Our budget strategy is supply induced whereas what we are trying to design here is a demand driven budget strategy so that it is driven by what we need. In fact it will be based on our needs and not somebody else's need.

That itself is a major shift from one type of strategy to another. It is a major shift, and that shift needs to be studied closely and to be taught. Even honorable Members of this chamber do not know this, and yet we pride ourselves as knowing it.

No, Mr Speaker, we do not know but that does not mean we cannot learn from it. We can because everything is within the reach of man believing that we are all made in God's image. So it is within our reach but we have to be dedicated towards that objective. Our lifestyle must be geared towards achieving that kind of objective.

If we are making a lip service of it Mr Speaker, it will be just another lip service which has happened in the past where people talk about people centred development, people talk doing things for the people and yet it was not for the people but for some living ghosts from Anagoa that we have been saving.

That is what this budget strategy is all about Mr Speaker, and it is a pity that honorable colleagues in this Chamber did not seem to understand this. They still think that we should go the old way, the incremental way the supply way because that is the way we should be doing things.

We tried that for more than a hundred years but it did not work. Do we still have to continue another hundred years doing the same thing that did not work? It is logical therefore to try something else so that might work, Mr Speaker? There are regions in the world today who changed their budget strategy to demand driven that are growing faster in the world today than this country. So that is what we should be doing.

Mr Speaker, I fail to see the argument that honorable colleagues in this chamber have been fostering. But that does not surprise me, Mr Speaker, because most of the time we do not know what we are talking about. We claimed to know when in fact we do not know.

Mr Speaker, the time is now come for us to open ourselves up, and start to learn some new things because the old ones did not seem to work, and the old ones seem to take us nowhere.

Mr Speaker, our bureaucracy has to be reoriented in their thinking process, in their talking process and in their action process. It is

what you think that you say, and it is what you say that you do, then you are right. But if you think differently, you talk differently and you do it differently, what a world this will be. There will be no one living with you in that world. Is that not what we have been doing in this country for all these years?

Mr Speaker, give this government an opportunity to do what it advocates to do, and help it through unity to do it so that all of us can build this nation, not only for ourselves but more so for our children who are going to be our judge as to whether we have done a good job or not. Some of us, Mr Speaker, may pass away from the face of the earth in shame.

Sir, that is what this motion is all about. It is trying to argue the case to give the government time to do a good job of what it proposes to do. There is wisdom in having time. There is wisdom in giving yourself time to do things properly, and there is brutality in doing things quickly.

With those few comments, Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The motion is carried

Hon Sogavare: Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn.

The House adjourned at 3:45 p.m.