

NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS

DAILY HANSARD

SECOND MEETING – EIGHTH SESSION

THURSDAY 5TH OCTOBER 2006

The Speaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea took the Chair at 9.35 a.m.

Prayers

ATTENDANCE

At prayers all were present with the exception of the Minister for Department of Lands and Survey, Education & Human Resources and the members for West New Georgia/Vona Vona, West Guadalcanal, East Honiara, Temotu Pele and West Kwaio.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. **Hon KEMAKEZA** to the Honourable Minister for Finance and Treasury: Will the Honourable Minister inform Parliament of the total cost of overseas trips made by the present government by the following:

- (i) politicians
- (ii) political appointees, and
- (iii) public servants.

Hon ULUFA'ALU: Mr Speaker, within the period referred to in the question, \$3.7 million was spent by politicians and \$2.7 by public servants and political appointees. Unfortunately Mr Speaker, we are not able in the short time to differentiate between political appointees and public officers.

Mr TOZAKA: Mr Speaker, in consideration of the poor financial situation the country is in and in the best management and control of our finances, is there any management rule issued to

the public service in terms of composition and nature of these visits?

Hon Ulufa'alu: Mr Speaker, the normal prudent thing in managing public finance is always applied. But since this is the first year of a newly elected Parliament, and Government, one would expect that kind of expenditure in place here. But hopefully in the course of the subsequent years we should be able to bring in some control over these expenditures.

Mr Kengava: Mr Speaker, the \$3.7 million, if I am correct on politicians, does this mean both Ministers and backbenchers?

Hon Ulufa'alu: Yes, Mr Speaker.

Mr Kengava: If backbenchers are included in these overseas trips what are their roles, Mr Speaker?

Hon Ulufa'alu: Mr Speaker, the backbenchers are members of delegations. This does not only happen to this government but every government in the past practiced the same thing. So I do not see any relevancy in the question.

Mr Kemakeza: Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Honourable Minister for Finance for the answers.

8. **Mr KEMAKEZA** to the Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade: Can the Minister inform Parliament on the present government's policy on One-China policy?

Hon OTI: The present Government including governments in the past do not recognize the One-China policy.

Mr Kemakeza: Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for his wonderful answer.

18. **Mr RIUMANA** to the Honourable Minister for Communication, Aviation and Meteorology: The Jajao airstrip in Hograno District has been officially tested and proved successful but to-date there were no commercial flights scheduled. Can the Minister inform Parliament the reasons or problems, if any, for delaying commencement of commercial flights?

Hon VAHOE: Mr Speaker, the statement in the question that the airfield has been officially tested and proved successful is correct. Airfield license number 001/06 was issued on 1st January 2006 by the Comptroller of Civil Aviation.

The question on why there have been no commercial flights to the airfield is one of the Solomon Airlines to answer, as the Department only sets the environment for aviation companies to operate. It does not undertake flying operations.

Mr Riumana: Has there been any collaboration or any working togetherness between your division and the Solomon Airlines? Has that message been translated to Solomon Airlines?

Hon Vahoe: Yes.

Mr Riumana: Mr Speaker, thank you Minister for Aviation.

19. **Hon RIUMANA** to the Honourable Minister for National Planning and Aid Coordination: Can the Minister inform Parliament on the level, distribution and allocation of funds to various sectors such as infrastructure, social service projects and income generating projects in the nine provinces of Solomon Islands?

Hon DARCY: Mr Speaker, in fact a lot of this information can be deduced from the development budget but I will summarise it to the House.

The total allocation to income generating projects under the 2006 Appropriation Act is \$28 million under the consolidated fund and \$37 million under non

consolidated, giving a total of \$65 million for income generating projects.

On social services, Mr Speaker, \$136 million is under the consolidated fund, \$3 million under the non consolidated fund giving a grand total of \$229.5 million for the social services sector.

On infrastructure, Mr Speaker, under the consolidated fund it is \$58.4 million, and the non consolidated fund is quite little, about \$0.3 million giving us a total of \$59 million. That is spread across the nine provinces of Solomon Islands, Mr Speaker.

Mr FONONO: Mr Speaker, these mere allocations under the budget for 2006, can the Minister inform the House as to how much of these were actually used on actual projects?

Hon Darcy: Mr Speaker, as we all know the government this year has actually commenced the fiscal year quite late and that we have so far expended about 40% to 47% of the total allocation under government budget.

Mr Riumana: Can the Minister inform the House if it is the government's policy to prioritise social services and infrastructures rather than income generating projects?

Hon Darcy: Yes, Mr Speaker. The usual exercise will have to be carried out during the process of budgeting and that prioritization will have to be made based on where we see is best to allocate expenditure resources towards the whole effort of growing the economy. All the areas that have been stated are very important priority areas. You cannot say social services are not important and you should just allocate to income generation. It is also important to develop the social conditions of citizens of this country. It has to be given equal priority.

Prioritization will have to be made based on the way that we see resources are available from both the consolidated and our donor partners. Yes, that is an exercise that will have to be normally carried out during the process of normal budgeting.

Mr Riumana: Mr Speaker, given that allocation, what is its tangible impact to the economy of the country?

Hon Darcy: Mr Speaker, yes, that requires quite an extensive exercise for us to actually see. I think it is important for us to understand that when projects are implemented it will take time for you to assess what is the actual impact of these projects.

We are talking about some projects that have just started. Some may be one year or two years old, and therefore it will take time for us to assess the impact of these projects. But I think overall we should be looking towards a better outcome from this project.

Mr Riumana: Mr Speaker, I wish to thank the Honourable Minister for answering my questions.

BILLS

Bills – Second Reading

The 2006 Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2006 (*debate continues*)

Hon Ulufa'alu: Mr Speaker, I rise to wind up the debate on the 2006 Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2006.

In winding up the debate, Mr Speaker, I wish to give thanks to honorable colleagues who have spoken very well during the debate of this bill. I would like to thank them for having expressed their support to the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. Of course Mr Speaker, the Millennium Fund must have done the trick.

Mr Speaker, whilst it is true the government is yet to fully implement its new approach to budgeting, it must also be always be true that when you are about to introduce changes you do not change every thing overnight because to do so is to cause chaos and confusion amongst our people and their institutions.

Hence the government has opted for a transition to change Mr Speaker. And this is why we called ourselves the Grand Coalition for Change.

(*hear, hear*)

Mr Speaker, to expect changes to be implemented overnight is unrealistic by those who expect it to happen because that is not life. Life does not happen that way.

In fact, Mr Speaker, some of us change from good to bad while others change from bad to good. And that is a normal thing in life. It is hoped here Mr Speaker, that the change the Grand Coalition is introducing will be smooth and will be for good. For it to be good Mr Speaker, we have to address the problems at their root causes. And the root cause of our problem Mr Speaker, is the dualistic life we are living.

As I have said during the debate of this bill Mr Speaker, 90% of Solomon Islanders' way of life has no value, it is void because it is not legal while only 10% is legal, as compared to our counterparts, our foreigners, our friends, our naturalised citizens who are in the opposite where 90% of their way of life is legal and only 10% is not legal. This is why foreigners have advantage over Solomon Islanders because the way the laws of the land have been constructed. And it has been constructed for a very good reason because it was constructed to serve the interest of foreigners. That is the way Solomon Islands was created, and it is up to us to reconstruct it so that it serves our interest and not theirs.

This is the legacy of colonialism, Mr Speaker. Not only in Solomon Islands but every where in the world. That is the legacy of colonialism. And unless Mr Speaker, we are aware of that and we know it because it is only by knowing can we do something about it. If you do not know you cannot do anything about it. You will keep blaming others for the state you are in.

Mr Speaker, I myself is living witness of what we do for ourselves. The disease that I have is not only inherited but is made worse by all the alcohol that I have taken during my lifetime, and all the tobacco I have smoked, and all possible womanisation, Mr Speaker.

(*laughter*)

Unless I know those were the root causes of my sickness Mr Speaker, would I do something about it? Isn't that the same as this country, Mr Speaker? Unless we know the root causes of our problem, we will do nothing about them and we will go on blaming others for the situation we brought unto ourselves. I hope making a guinea pig of myself will demonstrate the point to this honourable chamber so that we all look at ourselves and do something about it because only we ourselves can do it.

That is why it was said "I am the way, the truth and the life."

(hear, hear)

It means only you yourself can do something about it, and no one else. Even with all the billions of dollars in the world that somebody is ready to give to you Mr Speaker, it would not help you. That is why the acknowledgement of removing the log in your eyes before talking about the speck of dust in your neighbour's eyes. That is where it is coming from, and that is where all Solomon Islanders, especially the leaders in this Chamber and in the future Chamber must realise to do something about it, not only us today but those in the future.

There is an increase in lawlessness in the country Mr Speaker, because we are blaming others for it. We are contributing towards it without us knowing it.

Mr Speaker, this Government of Change is trying to lay the basis of change. This is why you will note in the budget itself that more than 30% of the budget structure has changed.

The Millennium Fund, Mr Speaker, should help constituencies legalize their structures. Honorable Members should not think that is their money Mr Speaker. No. It belongs to the constituencies. It belongs to the authorities. Hence Mr Speaker, there is a call for that \$20 million, about \$400,000 to be spent on the legalization of constituencies. That is for creating of legitimate structures that we already inherited from God's given grace and making them legal so that what is legitimate is also legal.

At the moment what is legitimate is not legal. What it means is what is legitimate is void in law. And if our way of life is void in

law, no wonder we are getting nowhere because we do not exist. Strictly speaking we do not exist. So if we do not exist and yet we exist, how is that so Mr Speaker?

The money should be used for that. In fact it is going to be used for establishment, capacity building, institutional strengthening and good governance in the constituencies, because we have to create a new base for the economy.

There is no base of our economy in Solomon Islands Mr Speaker. The base of the Solomon Islands' economy is in Australia, in New Zealand, Japan, Taiwan, in Europe. And that is why it is always top-down because the base is somewhere else.

Mr Fono (*interjecting*): Why don't you change it?

Hon Ulufa'alu: Now we are changing it, Mr Speaker. That is the roadmap that we have developed for the previous government Mr Speaker, and we are now here to implement it so that the base is created in this country. It is bottom up. Even the Lord Jesus Christ has to come down from heaven because life starts at the bottom.

If the Son of God did that what about us? Are we going to live in Australia all the time? Are we going to live in England all the time? No. The truth is we are in Solomon Islands so let us grow in Solomon Islands and not elsewhere.

That is what this budget Endeavour's to show us Mr Speaker. To talk about the expenditures we are asked to authorize here is because it is the way the Constitution was written, it is the way the law of the land is written that budgets will be prepared. There is no other way. What are the other ways, Mr Speaker? There is no other way of preparing the budget.

The law says this and so we do it according to the law except we have to change so that you do not start from top and fall down but you start from the bottom and grow up. Is that not consistent with everything in life where you start from the bottom and grow up but not growing down?

Mr Speaker, I do hope colleagues will understand the spirit of this supplementary

appropriation endeavouring Mr Speaker, to set the proper legal framework for the bottom-up perspective.

There is a bill coming, Mr Speaker, to deal with the bottom-up perspective and how to finance it. I do hope that honourable Members of this chamber will with their heart support the bill, because it is the right thing to do, so that we can end this top-down approach once and for all, and let us start growing from where life really begins according to the act of creation.

Mr Speaker, I want to repeat here that it is the act of creation that gives us ownership. If we are not a creator then we are not in the image of God, we are something else. I do not know what that something else is. The act of creation is the act that give us rightful ownership of something and because of that we comply to the rules of creation and because of compliance it is sustainable. That is what we Solomon Islanders should be doing.

This it self is a global revolution. It is a revolution that will change the face of the earth Mr Speaker because we attribute importance to human being rather than the dollar which is the mammon.

The human being becomes the centre of our thoughts, words and deeds so that our thought is only 20%, our word is 30% and our action is 50%. That is the universal formula. If you do not keep that balance and you think too much or deep in thought you will go mental. If you talk too much you will go mental too. This is doing more, less thinking a little bit more talking and action is more. So the formula is 20% thoughts, 30% words and 50% action. What a nice place Solomon Islands will be if we all do that. Unfortunately, we think too much and talk too much. No wonder we are going mental. We must balance it, it is straightforward.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that the corrigendum for this Supplementary Appropriation is now available and Members are privileged to receive the correction that has been sorted.

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

The 2006 Supplementary Appropriation Bill passed its second reading.

Committee of Supply commences

Mr Zama: Point of Order. As Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee the Committee has just finished its deliberations on the bill and the report of the Committee will not be available until Friday.

To give time to Members of Parliament to read through the report, I would sincerely seek if the Committee of the Whole House be delayed to Monday to allow time for Members to look through the Report and then deliberate with the third reading.

Mr Speaker: It has been suggested by the Honourable Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, only a suggestion and it is up to Parliament to decide that maybe time should be given for the report to be seen by Members before we proceed on the committee of supply, which should mean we may have to adjourn the consideration at the Committee of Supply under Order 35. It is a suggestion by the Honourable Chairman. What do the Hon. Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance would say?

Hon Ulufa'alu: Mr Speaker, I have no difficulty with that but the Prime Minister is the one who is responsible for government business and so he would probably be the best person to answer that. I have no difficulty accepting that from the budget point of view.

Mr Speaker: Observing the debate at the second reading that does not seem to be any difficulty of the support of the Bill, but it is just a suggestion that may be the House should be given opportunity to see the report of the Public Accounts Committee before proceeding on to the Committee of Supply.

Hon Sogavare: Mr Speaker, it will depend on what will be in that report. If the recommendation is such that we will need to seriously amend something in the bill, which I do not know how do we look at that in terms of the Standing Orders. But as I said this Bill belongs to the Minister of Finance. As I said it depends really on what will be in that report. If the report is such that it just point out issues for

Parliament to take note of, then I do not think it stops Parliament to go ahead at the Committee of Supply in the Third Reading.

Mr Kemakeza: Point of Order, Mr Speaker. The report referred to by the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee is not compulsory. Since the whole House supports this Bill, I think it is wise that we dispose off this bill since the report is not available.

Committee of Supply resumes

The 2006 Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2006

Page 3 replaced with a corrigendum

Mr Fono: Mr Chairman, just a general comment. Can the Minister clarify that this bill is being rushed with and that is why the whole content of this bill comes under a corrigendum. I'm just wondering whether it was properly scrutinized by Cabinet before coming to Parliament. This is just a general question Mr Chairman before we proceed.

My understanding of a corrigendum is that it is for only one or two sections of a bill but not the whole content of a bill.

Mr Chairman: Corrigenda is a provision given to the Parliament and Ministry to correct what is needed to be corrected before consideration. I think the procedure is being taken care of but has the government any comment on this which has already been covered in the second reading debate.

Hon Sogavare: Mr Chairman, I do agree with what you said. That related issue was discussed in the concern raised during the debate and the government made it very clear that it will come up with a corrigendum in line with the procedures. So I do not see any reason why we should be concerned with it at this point in time. Let us proceed on with the deliberation on the committee of supply.

Mr Rini: Mr Chairman, I tend to go along with the Leader of Opposition about this corrigendum. For example, under Head 273 –

Department of Finance & Treasury, the sub-heads there are incomplete. There is no such a subhead in a budget - 001 - Public Service pay increase and what is next. If we go to subhead No. 2 – Electricity and Water 001- it is the same thing. And if you look at the subhead for telephone it is again subhead 001. 001 and what is next. We are voting on heads and subheads. This seems to be incomplete.

I suggest Mr Chairman that we suspend discussing this bill at the committee and allow the officials to complete the bill. The corrigendum is more confusing than the original bill. Mr Chairman I strongly suggest that we suspend the committee and let the officials come back with a correct amount with correct heads and subheads under the various heads we are going to appropriate this morning.

Mr Chairman: The Parliament under the Constitution is asked only to vote figures to heads of expenditures. Whilst we are referring to various other documents, these other documents are supposed to be explanatory notes on the Heads that are already provided and the schedules that are provided here. We are looking at heads and of course

Mr Rini: Mr Chairman, I quite understand that the Parliament is only to vote for the heads, but at least it should give a Member of Parliament the comparison of the original spending so that when we come to the items Members of Parliament can ask questions on why there is an increase or decrease. That is my point.

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, I thank the Member for Marovo for raising that point. But as you quite rightly pointed out, Mr Chairman, Parliament actually voted expenditures into the heads, and with this particular expenditure we are talking about these are normally centralized expenditures.

If you look at electricity, water, telephones, house rentals, these are centrally located expenditures and what we are saying here is that we appropriate those to a central subhead, and that is the Head of the Ministry of Finance. And from there, there are mechanisms provided under the Financial Instructions and the Public Finance Ordinance Act for you to

distribute these expenditures to the various Ministries but at the moment as has been practiced by the previous government all these expenditures are centrally located in the Department of Treasury. All our telephones, electricity and water bills are paid for by the Department of Finance. They are sent over to Finance it from there they are assessed to find out what amount is best for us to pay to the various creditors.

In fact, Mr Chairman, it will not change the normal process of the way we expend money because of the action taken by the previous government that all these expenditures are centralized, and therefore we have to provision the appropriate expenditure to meet the shortfalls we faced this year back into the central subhead in the Department of Finance.

Mr Rini: Mr Chairman, I do not agree with what the Member for Gizo and Kolombangara is saying. These expenditures are not centralized expenditures at the Ministry Finance. If you look at the Budget they are budgeted for in the various ministries and departments. These are not centralized expenditures. This is the first time that government has centralized all these. This is just for the convenience of officials for not doing a proper job. Mr Chairman, I do not agree.

I agree that there are central expenditures in various ministries to cover for the departments but they are not centralized expenditures as what the MP for Gizo/Kolombangara mentioned that these are centralized at the Ministry of Finance. It is true that the Ministry of Finance makes the payments but it makes the payments on various ministries and various heads appropriated for in the budget but these are not centralized expenditure. This will be the first time that they are centralized in the Ministry of Finance just for the convenience of officials.

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, I think that is a very wrong assessment of what we are trying to present here. What I mean by centralizing is the common expenditures like telephone, electricity and water. These are common expenditures that you cannot expect officials to abuse the way the expenditures are allocated. When all the

authorities send their bills to the Department of Finance, we cannot change them because the rate of electricity, water and telephone remains the same. What we are saying here is that these should be distributed to all the subheads of departments. The same effect will be achieved if we are to appropriate it to the department of Finance and then through departmental warrants they are distributed it to all the departments so that there is control in the way the ministries or departments consume these common utilities.

I do not think it is right for us to say that what is happening right now is that officials are trying to manipulate, and play up with the system to their convenience. No! That is wrong. I think it is wrong.

What we are saying here is to centralize the expenditure, the whole amount that we think should take us right to the end of the year so that we control the way it is distributed to the Departments. So that it is possible for us to say to them, 'please cut down on your electricity, telephone, or your water'.

This is a control measure and I want the Member for Marovo to recognize the fact that I am standing here answering these questions not as the Member for Gizo/Kolombangara.

Mr Zama: Mr Chairman, Members of Parliament would know that this Bill has won the overwhelming support of the whole House, and the views expressed by the Committee are quite important for Parliament to see. Mr Chairman, the point raised by the Honourable Member for Marovo is a valid point. Now Parliament being vested with the oversight responsibility is being denied that responsibility. Whilst it would be for the convenience of officials, so in my view are totally incompetent to complete a job that is supposed to be well presented to Parliament. I do not think and believe that Ministers should be defending the in-competency of the officials.

Whilst this Bill has won the support of the whole because they do not want to lose their bottom up approach support for their constituencies, I think Parliament should not be unnecessarily denied that oversight responsibility in terms of venting and looking at the bill properly, looking at the heads and subheads because while it may be proper and convenient

for the Ministry of Finance to aggregate those figures in the main heads, it would deny Parliament purpose of transparency and accountability to look at the subheads. In my view, it would only be proper for the officials in the Department of Finance to do a better job.

Mr Fono: That's all the more reason why I believe that this Bill has been rushed and not properly scrutinized by Cabinet. If you look at the original bill the heads are old. The Public Accounts Committee rejected it, and asked the officials to apportion the costs in line with the current budget where these costs are apportioned to the various departments.

We would have thought that the consideration in the Committee of Supply should have been done when we have access to the report of the Public Accounts Committee, the point that the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee raised earlier.

The point raised by the MP for Marovo is valid that now these items are all centralized in the Finance under this corrigendum. I still maintain that officials should properly ascertain this to apportion the cost to respective ministries so that we know exactly which Ministry overspent its budget on electricity and water, which Ministries overspent its budget on telephones bills so that it justifies the allocation under this supplementary budget. At the moment they are centralized and so do not give very good accountability. May be it is the government for change and so we are changing from the conventional practice of accounting that we used to have here in Parliament.

Hon Sogavare: I think it is not an issue of competency as raised here. In fact the Minister has explained what they are doing. The Parliament is here to vote items to the heads. It is not here to sit down and look at who spends more and who spends less. That is not the work of the Parliament, it is very clear. We are here to vote allocations to the heads. If the Opposition can justify by law that they are doing a legal thing right now on the floor of Parliament then I would be obliged to ask the suspension of the House on that matter.

Mr Chairman: I still stand with the comments I made earlier that as far as the Parliament is concerned it is only expected to allocate figures to heads of Ministries. If you can tell me that the figures that are being allocated against the various heads are wrong, then I might understand what we all talking about. Otherwise we might be talking about administrative explanatory notes and various other things. But if the heads can be contested that the figures are wrongly allocated against various heads then I can understand the complaints or concerns raised. But otherwise the Parliament is expected to allocate figures to heads and that is where my concentration is at the moment.

Mr Rini: Chairman, first of all I would like to withdraw my earlier statement of addressing the honorable Minister of Planning. I withdraw that, Mr Chairman.

Mr Chairman, the point here is not on legality or whatever we might say. The point here is that a supplementary is initiated or done in the original departments and then submitted to the Ministry of Finance. Therefore, why is it so hard for the Ministry of Finance to put the heads and subheads in their proper place? Or has the system changed? Before the Ministry of Finance prepared the budget and then advised Departments that, that is your budget for water and electricity. Department so and so and this is your budget. Has the system changed?

My point is that original submission comes from departments and Ministries to the Ministry of Finance, which means the Ministry of Finance, should just easily pick up the heads and subheads. That is my concern.

Hon Darcy: The nature of these expenditures is what we must look at on why we have to vote it to one head to ensure that whatever is distributed through a legal machinery is being accounted for.

The legal machinery to distribute money or expenditures to each departments, is what is called 'departmental warrant' and unless anyone of you here say it is legally wrong for the Department of Finance to distribute funds through departmental warrant then I will be surprised because that is the legal way of distributing funds to the ministries, as it is one

way of ensuring financial control and financial management.

On these particular expenditures we are referring to, these are expenditures that have always been abused by departments and the previous government knows this very well. The no care attitude in terms of the usage of telephone, electricity, water and so forth.

What we are saying here is to vote these into a particular head and we will see how we will allocate it in a best management way so that the resources of the government are not unnecessarily expended. That is what we are saying here. We are not doing this to everything but just to these particular expenditures. And the way they are put in this bill, in our view, is the best way to ensure expenditures that are appropriately authorized by this honorable House.

Mr Rini: Mr Chairman, if that is the case that everything is now centralized in the Ministry of Finance why then do we say in this budget that the people to authorize expenditures are the Permanent Secretaries. Has it changed? Are Permanent Secretaries no longer accounting officers? Is the power given to them by the Parliament to give authorization for expenditures been taken away? Is everything centralized in the Ministry of Finance now?

Hon Lilo: The system has never changed and the system will remain as it is unless we change the whole constitutional structure of this country and we go into different accounting system then the system will change.

The normal process of requesting expenditure will still have to be authorized by Accounting Officers. But when it comes to whether or not you have the provision to meet that particular expenditure that is where we are centralizing it is centralized under this particular head in the Ministry of Finance for allocation through departmental warrant. When that process is done then the authorizing officer through the normal requisition will still authorize the expenditures. And so there is no change at all.

Mr Gukuna: Listening to all the comments being made and looking at the corrigendum of

the bill, I have a feeling that we are being asked to approve this money to be given to the Ministry of Finance. Is that our job or are we supposed to give it to the Ministries?

My fear is that in the next budget we will be asked to give \$600million to the Ministry of Finance without the subheads. If we pass this budget, as it is, we are going to pass another big budget next year for the same things. Are we here to pass that kind of budget giving a big lump sum of money to the Ministry of Finance – is the question. I don't think the budgeting process of this country is supposed to be like that. We are supposed, as has been stated, to allocate money to the Accounting Officers. That means if we pass this then the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance is going to be the single Accounting Officer according to this bill.

What I'm saying is that we are now being asked to approve this money to be given to the Ministry of Finance. That is my view. But I have said my fear is that in the next budget it will be the same, there will be no argument but we will just pass. We pass this budget as is worded in this budget.

Mr Chairman: According to our present budget, although the various items appear under various departments, for example electricity, water, telephone, house rentals, they are actually paid centrally. The payments are done by Finance and payment vouchers are raised by the relevant ministries for these various items. Would that help clarify the situation or am I throwing some mud inside as well?

Hon Ulufa'alu: Mr Chairman, you are correct. We are getting muddled up over management matters. What the Chairman is saying is correct. Everything is paid for centrally. The accounting is done by respective heads and Ministries but the payment is done centrally. It's a management matter that we are now getting confused with.

Mr Huniehu: We all understand that the payments may be done centrally but the allocations and expenditures are ministerial. We need to know which ministries are overspending

and which are not. That is the point we are raising here.

I believe the Chairman of PAC is correct in demanding this Parliament to observe the relevant committees responsible to our parliamentary procedure. The Committee has met to discuss this supplementary appropriation bill 2006. Unfortunately, the Minister moved this supplementary appropriation bill before the committee met. This Parliament must be informed by the relevant committees of their views on the supplementary appropriation bill or any bill for that matter.

Mr Chairman, we have been talking about transparency, good governance and accountability and yet we are doing the wrong things here again. The Parliament needs to read the reports of the Public Account Committee. We need to read the report so that we can be well briefed about these things. The Chairman himself raised his concern in the debate yesterday that he is not satisfied about the way this Bill came into this Parliament.

I said yesterday as the Chairman of the Bills & Legislation Committee that may be it came here through the back door and that is why we are arguing about operational issues here. Is this the government for change but we must do things right.

Mr Fono: I still maintain my stand that we will be failing our part on parliamentary oversight role if we go ahead with the Committee of Supply. Even the presentation of this corrigendum has no mention of the original estimates, the supplementary estimates and the revised estimates under each head. Do you see where I am coming from? Is this the normal way of presentation of budgets?

This presentation is not in line with the normal conventional practice of presenting bills in parliament. This corrigendum should reflect what is in the original bill like original estimates, supplementary estimates, revised estimates but the corrigendum figures do not show these. That is why it is important that these costs need to be ascertained or allotted to the various department, as you have rightly said, Mr Chairman, in the original budget this year that you have quoted so that we can see the original estimates for these expenditures. What is the supplementary

estimate that this supplementary budget is asking, which should give us the total revised estimate under this head for this year's budget? The presentation of this supplementary budget is not right in terms of the parliamentary oversight role. This is very, very important. This is not an administrative matter.

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, we are now trying to open a new debate on the Committee of Supply. The Committee of Supply is not supposed to be debating this. We are only supposed to be asking short question on what is presented in this bill.

Those on the other side should know that the format in which the appropriation bill is brought in the House is up to the manner the Minister of Finance sees fit. If you read the constitution, it basically says the estimates.

Mr Chairman, if you look at what we are trying to confuse ourselves with in here, as what you said initially, the Parliament is required to vote expenditures into the heads and through those heads there are mechanisms established by this very Parliament too as to how they are to be distributed to departments and ministries. Unless the other side says the departmental warrant is not the appropriate process of allocating resources I will be very surprised because that is the process of allocating resources to our departments. These expenditures we are talking about if you have done a good job last year we would not have come to this House trying to supplement these heads.

You have not done a good job last year. You are the one who rushed the 2006 Appropriation Act and then give us a problem to try to supplement it. In view, all that have been raised here, and I hope that you control the debate that is going on Mr Chairman, is basically that there is nothing to suggest that the format here is unlawful for us to bring to this House.

Mr Chairman: As far as the format is concern there is nothing wrong with it because we are looking at allocating funds to heads. I have already said that according to our substantive budget the various items we are talking about. I think it is good that we talk about these things

but the point is that these items are paid under finance although it might be seen in the various departments as over expenditure but the actual payments are done by Finance. So unless the figures against the various heads are not correct I want us to proceed. All the comments you raised in my view should be raised as questions for explanation of the figures against the various heads not necessarily that the format is wrong because under the Constitution section 102 the Parliament is only asked to vote expenditure to heads.

Head 273 – Ministry of Finance and National Reform - \$37,540,000

Mr Fono: This salary increase of Public Servants - is this the one recently paid or are they expecting any new increases to be paid later?

Hon Sanga: This is the overall allocation which will take us to the end of the year.

Mr Fono: The answer is not clear. Is it already being paid or not yet.

Hon Sanga: Some of it has been already received, but it will take us until the end of the year.

Mr Fono: Is it true that public servants are still expecting a pay rise catered for under this budget?

Hon Sanga: No, Mr Chairman.

Mr Huniehu: I thought supplementary expenditures are already expended and it is for the Parliament to bless. But it now seems this \$23 million is budgeted for to be paid next year.

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, salary increase is a continuous one. We cannot say it has already been paid. The fortnightly pays until the end of the year are still coming and so you pay as fortnight falls until the end of the year. So it is continuing.

In terms of this particular allocation you will also understand that between now until the end of the year, there is expenditure allocation

within the budget and therefore the award the Government has approved has been locked into the new pay structure and so it becomes a new pay structure. This is basically to supplement it, and when you put it into the budget it will take us right up to the end the year to cover both the existing and the additional award that has been awarded.

Mr Huniehu: Mr Chairman, the \$4 million for hosting of the Forum Economic Ministers. What special advantage is this Economic Ministers Meeting to Solomon Islands when we need \$4million to help our rural cocoa farmers? What are the benefits of hosting these Ministers? Are they coming here to see the burnt down China Town? We need \$4million for the rural people. It would have been better expended in the rural areas.

Hon Lilo: Solomon Islands is part of this Regional Organization, it is part of the Forum and there are benefits that the country receives through being part of regional organizations. We share information on economic governance, how we can grow economically, we share information on economic policies and so on, and it happened once a year. For us to now question why we should become part of this regional activity, I don't think it will good for us here to answer that kind of question because I am sure we all can say that. Our membership in the regional organization and also internationally has brought good benefits to this country. That's all what we can say Mr Chairman.

Mr Huniehu: Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Mr Oti: This will prevent the MP for East Are Are asking supplementary questions.

Hon Oti: I need to make this clarification. The hosting of the FEMM was made last year by my colleague, the Leader of Opposition when he was Minister for Planning, unfortunately there was a shortfall in the budget for that in this year's allocation. This is basically to top that up to meet the commitment that was made last year by the government.

Mr Huniehu: Mr Chairman, it is a commitment but since we have a government for change, we can change it on the best interest of the rural people.

This \$4million can be used to develop 1,000 hectares of cocoa in Isabel Province. Yes, it is true but it is used to pay for telephone bills, breakfast, fat meals of the Ministers who attended the meeting, and so it has no direct bearing to the rural people. No way, I am not convinced.

Mr Darcy: Mr Chairman, as what I've said if we are going to engage ourselves in that kind of questioning and comment, I am surprised. What more can we say then? You are just prompting people to ask questions here. The trips that you are taking to Malaysia and so forth are they worth something. We cannot just ask questions like that. Let us think broadly about these things and look deep into it what really are the benefits. You cannot just take a straight line, and say that million dollars should be given to rural development. No.

There are benefits we get out of our association with the Forum. I am sure the Honorable Leader of Opposition making the bid last year has seen the benefits of calling for this country to host this meeting. That's why we did it and we did it quite successfully.

Mr Fono: Mr Chairman, I understand that the original estimate was only \$1.4million under the current budget. Now there is an additional \$4million on top of that. I understand \$3.7million is for purchase of vehicles that was used during the Forum. Was there public tender for the purchase of those Mitsubishi vehicles?

This is parliamentary oversight. Was there a public tender issued by the government when purchasing those vehicles for the use of the Forum Economic Ministers, after which those new brand vehicles are now used by the Ministers?

My question is on the 3.7million. Was there a public tender made so that other vehicle dealers in Honiara also tender for the vehicles and was that the best price we have?

Mr Ulufa'alu: Yes, Mr Chairman, there was a public tender and that was the best price.

Mr Fono: Mr Chairman, can the Minister distribute the notice of public tender to Members of Parliament, because as far as we know it was only hand picked and there was no public tender.

Mr Ulufa'alu: Mr Chairman, we will distribute that to honorable colleagues. These are information known to exist. You just call at the office and pick it up.

Mr Fono: Mr Chairman, I want a copy of the public notice that was tendered out culminating in the government securing those new vehicles to be distributed to the pigeonholes of all Members of Parliament. This \$3.7million is quite a huge amount of money to handpick a dealer and paid the vehicles from him

Mr Darcy: Mr Chairman, as the Minister of Finance has stated, there was a public tender and that was the best price.

I am surprised that the Leader of Opposition had asked this question because it was him and MP for West New Georgia/Vona Vona who called for the tender because that tender was actually conducted during their time and not in our time.

Mr Rini: On electricity, telephone and house rentals. Can the Minister outline how much allocations are for the various Ministries on electricity, water and telephones? Which Ministries are expecting an increase and by how much? On telephones for \$3.8million, which ministries or departments are requesting for this additional amount, and how for the various departments and ministries and also the housing rental of \$1.5million?

Mr Darcy: Mr Chairman, we will provide those information because it is of great interest to the MP for Marovo and for the benefit of the MP for Marovo

Mr Huniehu: Mr Chairman, point of order. I don't want the Minister to deny this Parliament that they are not in the business of providing those kinds of information. These are the information we need in this Parliament, on which Ministries are overspending.

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, we have promised to supply that information, and that is not denying this House, it will be available and then you will know. The total aggregate amount is what we are trying to ask this Honorable House to vote into this particular head. But for details of those department and ministries that have overspent, we will definitely supply those information so that we can keep abreast of which departments have not been able to manage their resources properly.

Mr Huniehu: Can we take it in the future that this should be the way that accounts should be presented to this Parliament in ministerial expenditures and not in aggregates like this.

Mr Darcy: Mr Chairman, as I have said the Constitution and the Public Finance and Audit Act are very clear that the format of the appropriation bill into this House is in accordance with the format that the Minister of Finance likes it.

Head 273 agreed to.

Head 274 – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Tourism - \$1,328,000

Mr Rini: Mr Chairman, which particular overseas mission is really under pressure for this amount?

Mr Darcy: Mr Chairman, this is in relation to all of our offices because of the shortfall in the estimation made in the 2006 Appropriation Act and also because of movements in our exchange rate that gave rise to the need for extra supplementation of this particular budget to these missions.

Mr Rini: Mr Chairman, looking at this amount \$705,000 seems very small. It is not adequate for our entire overseas mission. I think this amount could only be for one mission. Is this amount enough?

Mr Darcy: Mr Chairman, as what I have said, what is being reflected here is based on the request made by the appropriate departments. If

you look at the five foreign missions that we have they all have different you know different currencies and one of the effect that have affecting the need for an extra supplementation is the changes in our currency, like our change rate going down and therefore we need to supplement for those losses in the foreign exchange when we actually do the transfers or repatriation of funds into these missions. At the same time there are some additional requirements required by these foreign missions and therefore give rise to these additional expenditures.

Hon Oti: Mr Chairman, (*inaudible*)

Head 274 agreed to

Head 279 – National Parliament – \$4,700,279

Mr Huniehu: The comment I wish to raise is in connection to that expenditure. It seems that the National Parliament is expending too much money on accommodation for Members of Parliament coming to attend meetings and lobbying themselves in the hotels.

I would like to know whether there are any plans to redevelop the Parliament Rest House so that Members of Parliament can be accommodated with less cost to the government. It would appear to me, Mr Speaker, that the cost of accommodated Members of Parliament in hotels is unbearable and too costly to tax payers of this country.

Hon Sogavare: Mr Chairman, thank you very much for bringing up that issue. In fact the government is seriously looking into that issue. We have set up a departmental committee to look at these issues, not only the site there but also further extension of Parliament, the second phase of the Parliament building.

Mr Huniehu: Mr Chairman, can the Prime Minister inform Parliament of any time frame for this development to proceed?

Hon Sogavare: Mr Chairman, the departmental committee is yet to submit its report to me, so I won't be able to inform Parliament of any time frame.

Mr Fono: Mr Chairman, can the Minister give an explanation of the various subheads of which is first, second and third so that it gives more light to Members of those subheads under head 279.

Hon Darcy: Those sub-items are salaries, housing and allowances. Subhead 1030 is salaries, 2080 is housing and 2106 is allowances.

Head 279 agreed to

Head 280 – Ministry of Natural Resources - \$401,621

Mr Huniehu: Once again my favorite question. What are the benefits of this Meeting to the rural people of Solomon Islands?

Hon Kua: I thank the MP for asking the same question, which he should understand the reasons already given. This country is part of all these organizations and we are duty bound to attend to host these meetings. .

Let me explain again that this is the agreement of the previous government to host this meeting in Solomon Islands. So this government is just carrying out what has already been agreed upon by the previous government last year. What is the reason for asking the same question again and again?

Mr Huniehu: That is not the point Mr Chairman. It is not because it belongs to the previous government. I am asking this question because the present government's focus is on the rural people. Does that mean everything that the previous government planned is what the current government is implementing when it came into power?

I don't want the Minister to give such an answer. He should reply Members of Parliament in a proper manner of the benefits these meetings are to the rural people.

Hon Kua: Mr Chairman, this request is for shortfall. What you are talking about on rural development will be seen in next year's budget. Do not take for assumption things that are not happening as yet. Just look at what we are

trying to do at this time, and shortfall is what we are talking about now and nothing new.

Mr Rini: Mr Chairman, can the Minister explain items 0271-0030 for \$401,721 and another one under the same head for \$549,000. This is for hosting the same meeting but you are applying for two increases. Are these two the same thing?

Mr Darcy: Mr Chairman, recurrent one is SIG funding, and the provision in the development expenditure is ROC funding, a donor funded expenditure. That's the difference.

Mr Rini: Mr Chairman, what does it means here in the explanatory note that the first one will be refunded by the Republic of China. Is this \$549,000 which appears here going to be reimbursed by the Republic of China?

Mr Darcy: Mr Chairman, the second one is funded by the ROC and the first one is SIG.

Head 280 agreed to

Head 281 – Prime Minister's Office – \$7,506,000

Mr Huniehu: I am only standing up because I do not see this explained in the corrigenda, this \$7,500,000, which book are we looking at?

Mr Rini: Mr Chairman, overseas travel. Apart from the Forum what other overseas trip will the Prime Minister take before the end of the year?

Hon Sogavare: Mr Chairman, this is only a provision. The Forum Meeting is one that is coming up, and there is an ACP Heads of Government Meeting in Sudan, Africa. This is only a provision.

Mr Huniehu: Mr Chairman, I understand that the Commission of Inquiry into the rioting in Chinatown has not taken place as yet. Is this \$2million in connection to that one or is it a different Commission of Inquiry?

Hon Sogavare: Mr Chairman, I can confirm that this inquiry is on the 18th April riot.

Mr Rini: Mr Chairman, this \$2 million allocated for reviewing of the general orders, what sort of work is going to be done here?

Hon Sanga: Mr Chairman, this provision really is to update the General Orders and to print new copies. My instruction is that it will cover all provinces. They will have to come up with new prints and supply them to every department, including all provinces.

Mr Huniehu: Mr Chairman, can we be informed of which people have carried out and implemented this General Orders review?

Hon Sanga: Mr Chairman, the review is ongoing. The review of rates have already been made public in terms of circulars from the Public Service Department.

Mr Huniehu: Sorry, I did not quite hear the Minister when he responded to my question. Are the reviews done by consultants or by just local people?

Mr Sanga: It is done by the Departments which have powers under the General Orders to revise the rates in terms of allowances and all that.

Head 281 agreed to.

Head 284 – Ministry of Provincial Government, Reconciliation and Peace - \$600,000

Mr Pacha: Mr Chairman, I want to know if this \$600,000 is only for food or for reconciliation purposes too.

Hon Ghio: The explanatory notes explain itself. The \$600,000 is for buying of food for Ontong Java. It is for food alone.

Mr Pacha: It is possible to put a bit more emphasis on reconciliation?

Hon Ghio: Mr Chairman, it only talks about food here, which I am responsible for. I am not responsible for peace and reconciliation. I am the Minister responsible for Home Affairs.

Mr Fono: Mr Chairman, why is it that the government only assists Ontong Java on food whilst most parts of the country are hard hit as well by natural disasters too and have submitted requests to the National Disaster Council? But has the Government only assisted Ontong Java and not other parts of the country?

Hon Ghio: This is a shortfall needing extra help which was assessed by officers, which qualified us to pay this amount. There are procedures for us to follow in making requests to the National Disaster Management Office. The province must assess it and submitted to my office to do the payment. This \$600,000 is going to be paid out by my office as it has been assessed by the appropriate authority.

Mr Kwanairara: Mr Chairman, I think reconciliation is one big issue that is not yet addressed. Looking at this \$600,000 just for food, I think it is important that the government must try to address reconciliation. I think this is one very important area and I want the Government if it can take note of that and increase this amount, not only for food but also for reconciliation as the honourable Member for South Guadalcanal has alluded to.

Mr Riumana: Mr Chairman, if this amount is to cater for the shortfall, do you have enough funds for reconciliation and food shortages in other parts of the country?

Hon Ghio: Mr Chairman, I think this amount of money is specifically for Ontong Java.

Head 284 agreed to

The sum of \$52, 129,621 being the subtotal of the recurrent expenditure agreed to

Development Expenditure

Head 473 – Millennium Development - \$20,000,000.

Mr Fono: Mr Chairman, in the closing remarks of the Minister of Finance, he mentioned there is a bill coming for this Millennium Development Funding. When is this bill going to come to

Parliament? Is the government going to wait for that bill before disbursement of the \$20million or is it going ahead to disburse the funds first and the bill comes in the next Parliament?

Hon Ulufa'alu: Mr Chairman, the bill is going to come next week.

Mr Fono: Thank you Mr Chairman, for the Minister's answer. It is important for the bill to come before disbursement of the money because a lot of us Members of Parliament are looking forward to this.

As I also raised in my debate, are there proper guidelines for us in the usage of that funding. Is it going to be distributed as attachment or part of the regulations of this bill? Can the Minister of Finance confirm this?

Hon Ulufa'alu: Mr Chairman, the Millennium Special Development Fund as you know, under the Constitution, only the Parliament can create the funds. Vesting of the money to the funds is done by the Minister of Finance under the Public Finance and Audit Act. That is the process we will be going through. The fund will cover three broad components, which are the legalization component, the productive sector and infrastructure and social services.

Mr Huniehu: Mr Chairman, if this Bill is going to be introduced next year, can the Minister ensure us that this \$20million for this year is paid this year?

Mr Chairman: I think the honourable Minister said it is going to be introduced next week.

Mr Fono: Mr Chairman, can the Minister confirm whether this is going to be paid in lump sum rather than paying it piecemeal or quarterly like the RCDF?

Hon Ulufa'alu: Mr Chairman, when the piece of legislation is passed it will spell out how the funds will be managed and controlled. That is the Bill that is going to come next week. It is the act that is going to set the basis of how it should be done.

Mr Kengava: Mr Chairman, just a point to note here that since the Millennium Fund is a special one, I would like maybe with the legislation also coming, maybe in future such special funds covered by special legislation, we should take into consideration the number of people in our constituencies when it comes to disbursement of the funds money so that it is a bit fair. Larger constituencies receiving \$400,000 like the smaller ones, I do not think is fair. This is the concern of my people in North West Choiseul. I think we should now start looking at sharing special funds to constituency based on population.

Hon Ulufa'alu: Mr Chairman, we are now getting into the debate of the merits and demerits of the fund. Can we keep that to the time when the bill is introduced?

Mr Kengava: It is a point to note and not a debate.

Head 473 agreed to

Head 480 – Ministry of Natural Resources - \$549,000

Mr Fono: Mr Chairman, why is this cost put under Development Estimate? Is it capital cost in nature?

Do we still not have any reimbursement from the Republic of China as yet?

Hon Kaua: Mr Chairman, that is the contribution of the Republic of China towards the hosting of the SOPAC Meeting here.

Mr Fono: The Minister did not really get my question. Have they reimbursed us or not?

Hon Kaua: Mr Chairman, it has already reimbursed the Solomon Islands Government. It is in your basket now.

Mr Rini: Mr Chairman, I just want to ask a general question. I want to know out of this \$40 million in contingency warrant, is that \$40 million included in this supplementary used up and that is why it is here or is it only \$10.2million in contingency warrant used up in

this supplementary. I just want clarification on that.

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, the total contingency warrant is \$10.2million and the additional expenditure requirement as required under section 102(3) of the Constitution is \$42 million.

Mr Rini: Mr Chairman, is there still another \$30million in contingency warrant that the government can use on other things that might arise?

You said that only \$10million out of the \$40 million has been used. Now we are putting another \$40million needing approval now. Does that mean the government can still use another \$30million still within the contingency warrant if any need arises?

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, no. The only total amount that has been utilized under the contingency warrant under the 2006 Appropriation Act is the \$10million out of the \$40 million provision for contingency warrant. You will find in this bill before us we have decided to reduce that contingency warrant from \$20million to \$10million. You will find that in clause 4 of the bill Mr Chairman. That does not mean the \$30million is still available for the government to use. No. We have actually reduced that in this bill.

Head 480 agreed to.

The sum of \$20,549,000 as subtotal of the Development Expenditure agreed to.

The schedule is agreed to.

The sum of \$72,678,261 as the grand total of both the Recurrent and Development Expenditures agreed to

The Schedule agreed to

Clauses

Clause 1 agreed to

Clause 2 agreed to

Clause 3 agreed to

Clause 4

Mr Rini: Mr Chairman, my reading of section 4 reduces the contingency warrant from \$40 million to \$20million. That is \$10million in the development and \$10million in the recurrent and so the government still has \$20million in contingency warrant if the need for any expenditure arises. Can the Minister confirm the government still has \$20million in contingency warrant it can use?

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, yes, there is still a contingency provision because the Constitution says that any appropriation will have to have that kind of provision and that is why we still have that provision. But the actual ceiling has been reduced from the overall \$40million to now only\$20 million, taking into consideration that it is only about five months towards the end of the year so it has to be reduced.

Clause 4 agreed to

The Preamble is agreed to

(Parliament is resumed)

Hon Ulufa'alu: Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the 2006 Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2006 has been through the Committee of Supply with amendments.

Bills – Third Reading

The 2006 Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2006

Hon Ulufa'alu: Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the 2006 Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2006 be read the third time and do pass as amended.

The Bill is carried.

MOTIONS

Sitting suspended for lunch break

Hon Sogavare: Mr Speaker, I wish to move an amendment to Government Business on today's order paper and the amendment is that the motion to be moved by the Minister of Finance and Treasury will not be moved today but will be moved on Monday 9th October 2006. Thank you Mr Speaker.

Government Business is amended

Motion to give Thanks to His Excellency's Address continues

Hon KAUA: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me the floor to join the Deputy Prime Minister and previous speakers in offering a vote of thanks to His Excellency the Governor-General on the occasion of delivering his maiden speech from the throne to the nation on the floor of Parliament on 2nd October 2006.

Mr Speaker, this is a rare occasion for the Head of State to perform such a traditional ceremony required of him through the democratic process under the Westminster system of government since the country adopted when we attained Independence in July 1978.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency for graciously accorded his services of obligation in undertaking the responsibility of performing the task in delivering the speech from the throne in opening of the newly elected Parliament of Solomon Islands after the general election early this year.

Mr Speaker, His Excellency the Governor-General in his earlier remarks congratulates the Honorable Prime Minister, Ministers of the Crown, the Leader of Opposition, the Leader of Independent group and all Members of National Parliament and emphasizes the role of each and every Member of Parliament in their respective jurisdictions expected to contribute in decision making in their deliberations and undertakings to govern and lead this nation.

He went on to emphatically stress the notion by our people of their expectations of all Members, the confidence in leadership, vision of the national legislatures, hence uttering of the national motto "to lead is to serve" as you diligently lead the people and the nation forward

to the harbor of peace, tranquility and progress with vision and wisdom.

Mr Speaker, to me this is a fundamental principle expected by all of us to uphold our quest to lead this nation forward. The responsibility in doing so rests on all of our shoulders of each and every Member of this honorable legislature, the highest House of the land. We need to be vigilant in contributing towards the affairs of our people and nation. We cannot keep on murmuring over the past and telling each other who is going to do what in order to gain recognition or scoring political expediency. That would be best left for others to decide.

Hence political bickering, smearing on each other in Parliament and gaining score is not the avenue in getting this nation forward.

Since the government assumed the office for the last five months, to expect any tangible impact or major changes at this early hour does not make sense. Mr Speaker, obviously we need to be reminded of our past and build on the present for the future.

The policy guidelines of the current Grand Coalition for Change Government outlined by the Governor General is a strong same subsequent past of speeches is a mechanism, achieved as a vision to adopt in addressing the way forward as an attempt to provide a strategic focus in the development considerations of the fundamental significance to create a peaceful progress and prosperous nation for our people in the 25th century. This is not new to any government who has attempted in the past to subscribe for the same in pursuit of a way forward in fulfilling the same vision creating a better nation for all.

Mr Speaker, being one who has worked and observed policy strategies of past years, I can say with confidence that it is only style and the use of English words did change but the fundamental principles remain intact. Therefore, to criticize the intention of the Government at this early stage, Mr Speaker, I believe it is too early for one to do so. We need to be reminded of our duties for our country. As the saying goes, "Do not expect what your government and country can do for you, but what you can do for yourself and also for the betterment of your people and country" for that matter.

With those few words Mr Speaker, before I resume my seat, I wish to support the motion.

Mr MAGGA: Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to contribute briefly to the Speech from the throne.

Mr Speaker, the Speech from the Throne delivered by His Excellency the Governor General highlights the policies of the Grand Coalition Government for Change designed to move the country forward.

Mr Speaker, as leaders of our beloved nation Solomon Islands we are being reminded that the strength of this nation lies on its people. Successive governments after independence have failed miserably to empower the 85% of our rural dwellers to engage in meaningful development. This is why the Grand Coalition Government for Change firmly believes that any sustainable and equitable development designed for our village dwellers can only be achieved through a bottom up and holistic approach policy that entails the empowerment of our village communities through appropriate advancement strategies.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, if we are to advance this nation forward to a better future, it requires the participation of our village dwellers towards our development goals and strategy.

Mr Speaker, I believe that this bottom up and holistic approach policy can only be served effectively if the provincial government system is abolished and replaced with a better local government system.

The state government based on the federal system that we are anticipating to establish is far more expensive and would not accommodate this bottom up approach policy that we would like to pursue.

Mr Speaker, if we want to bring development down to the rural areas then the only way out is close down the provincial system and replace it by legalizing the 50 constituencies into local government agencies, and appoint the 50 Members of Parliament as presidents. Mr Speaker, ward members within each constituency will be elected as counselors to assist the presidents and the village chiefs will be drawn in as ex-officio members of the local government.

This, I believe, will be the best sort of local government we need to have in this country. Mr Speaker, this is the sort of government our people need today. We have now realized that the foreign system of government that we have adopted is no longer operational to our advantage. This is because, Mr Speaker, Solomon Islands' culture is diverse in nature that it cannot collaborate with the provincial system or the state system for that matter.

Mr Speaker, this is the only way this bottom up and holistic approach policy can be implemented meaningfully.

Mr Speaker, I would now like to comment briefly on the initiative taken by the government to establish three important commissions. As we all know they are the Commission of Inquiry into the Honiara Riots, the Commission of Inquiry into Land Dealings on Guadalcanal and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Mr Speaker, the Government of Solomon Islands has all the legal right to establish any commission of inquiry on any subject matter. As a sovereign state, and tiny as we are on the world map and in the international arena, we have equal voting rights with some of the superpowers like the United States, the United Kingdom or even Australia on any international forums or international meetings.

In this context, under international law and under various international conventions, the rest of the independent states including Solomon Islands are signatory to, Australia or any foreign state has no legal right to interfere in the domestic laws of Solomon Islands.

These Commissions of Inquiry, Mr Speaker, were established by the Government under the pretext of our domestic laws. The Government has the sovereign right to establish these commissions of inquiry in compliance with the Commission of Inquiry Act passed by the Parliament of Solomon Islands. Therefore, Australia for that matter has no obligation whatsoever in interfering with the establishment of these commissions of Inquiry. Only the courts of law can interfere with these commissions of inquiry, and this particular case that has been argued a lot in the paper the High Court of Solomon Islands has already ruled that

the Commission of Inquiry into the Honiara Riots can now proceed without any interference.

Mr Speaker, I would like to comment further on the Speech from the Throne that relates to our young people. Mr Speaker, I agree that our young people are leaders of tomorrow, but the government must realize that if we cannot manage and nurture our youths properly then they will definitely turn out to be criminals for tomorrow.

Mr Speaker, because unemployment rate in Solomon Islands is now at its highest peak, the youths of our nation is a time bomb. And mark my word, Mr Speaker, once this time bomb explodes no one, not even the security forces or even RAMSI can handle them. Mr Speaker, the 55% of our national population are youths and we cannot sit back and take for granted that Solomon Islands will be okay with our young people, not at all Mr Speaker.

I would like, Mr Speaker, to recommend to the Government to amalgamate the Ministry of Planning and Aid Coordination into Ministry of Finance and create a new Ministry of Youth, Women and Sports. This is highly imperative, Mr Speaker, if we are to dismantle this time bomb. This, Honorable Members is very important that our young people need to be looked after. We can only do that if we create a sole ministry for Youth, Women and Sports.

Mr Speaker, I don't want to prolong my speech as others would want to raise something with regards to the speech from the throne. Thank you very much, and I resume my seat.

Mr HUNIEHU: Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing me the floor of Parliament to contribute very briefly to the Speech from the Throne moved by the representative of the Queen of England, and the Queen of the Commonwealth. Mr Speaker, to really appreciate and understand the Speech from the Throne one has to really understand the person presenting the speech in this Parliament. That is the first point I wish to raise. Because here is a person decorated with the wisdom in Public Service, the wisdom in politics, and representing the Queen of England. Therefore, Mr Speaker, we have to really understand the person himself and the message he has for this Parliament. Otherwise, Mr

Speaker, we will be debating this Speech from the Throne out of context.

Mr Speaker, the Governor General made a plea in the reassuring the people of Solomon Islands that in spite of the turbulences this country faced during the last five months since this government came to power, he hopes that Members of Parliament, in particular the government side, will come to their mind and restore confidence and peace for the peace loving people of Solomon Islands.

The timing of the speech, Mr Speaker, I am sure has given the Governor General a lot of thoughts about what he has to say in the Speech, in particular when a vote no confidence is looming over the floor of Parliament when moving the speech, in particular, Mr Speaker, when the Governor General knew the public outcry for reassurance by the people of Solomon Islands of the way to lead us into prosperity in the future. Therefore, Mr Speaker, I am not surprised that he himself said that the Speech is historical. And I don't want to assume what he meant by this speech to be historical. But I guess, Mr Speaker, maybe because this Speech is the least volume speech of all.

I have participated in contributing to Governor General speeches in the past, but the way they are structured, the way they are written is completely different from this one. May be that is why he said this is a historical speech.

In speeches of the past, all ministries provided their contribution to the speechwriters to be included - all ministries of the government, and there was the government statement delivered by the Governor General underpinning the policy objectives of all the combined ministries of the government for the four years that they are in power. This speech did not contain elaborate policy statements from each government ministries.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Development Planning were the first one to decide on policy statements on behalf of the Ministries. I thought Mr Speaker, this policies statement unleashed by them should be part and partial of the Governor General's presentation. That is why there is no meat in the Speech. Or is this the new direction this government would like to us follow that when there is a Governor General's speech from the

throne, all the ministries pull their contributions from the speech from the throne and throw it on the floor of Parliament as if they were the Governor General's.

We do not need too many Governor General's, Mr Speaker, we only need one, and we only need one Governor General to present a coordinated speech on behalf of all the ministries. No wonder when you hear the Minister for Home Affairs delivering his speech yesterday, it only proves the point that his Permanent Secretary wants to make a mark on the floor of Parliament, and not only him Mr Speaker, but all the Ministers who have spoken.

But the Governor General was the one who is supposed to deliver these statements and you are to defend the statement. That is what I would call a traditional speech from the throne, Mr Speaker. The methodology and strategies adopted by this present government is erroneous.

Most important of all, Mr Speaker, the Governor General mentioned nothing about the legal and judicial issues on the floor of Parliament. These are the issues of the hour, of the week, of the month and they would remain as issues of the year, four years and the decade. There was no mention of the judicial system and how the government should maintain its relationship with the judicial system.

Mr Speaker, whilst the first part of the Speech acknowledges the new government, appointment of the speakers, Leaders of the Opposition, I saw the first part of the speech as directional to Members of Parliament and especially the government.

The Governor General really made directional issues and I will tell you what I mean by directional or instructional statements in the first part of the speech. For example, Mr Speaker, the Governor General being an experienced politician must have sighted the reason for making those statements. He must see some problems ahead of us. He must have sighted that if something is not done to re-navigate or to recourse something will happen and the interests of the people of Solomon Islands will be put into chaos. That is why he made these directional and instructional statements in the first part of the speech. I said you have to understand the man in order to

understand the statements unleashed in this Honorable Chamber.

I think I know him well because I have been in Parliament with him long enough to understand his views about development, to understand his views about politics and to understand his views about the administrative process of this country and to understand his views about rural development Mr Speaker. All of these are not new to him.

He said from his own words, Mr Speaker, that our people throughout the nation are eagerly contemplating enormous reform changes by the current administration, particularly through the rural development policy initiatives being announced by the Grand Coalition for Change Government. He was merely invoking statements made by the Honorable Prime Minister and his Ministers when dealing with the bottom up approach, when speaking about the bottom up approach.

The reforms that we talk about in this Parliament must be implemented in the best interest of the people of Solomon Islands. That is why this was inserted in his speech and that is why he agreed to re-emphasize this in the speech.

What would happen if the reform is not implemented? What are the barriers? I am sure he must have sensed that whilst we have been saying the right things, we are steering the boat into the reef. That is why he re-emphasized the statement, Mr Speaker. You must read the lips of the Governor General in order to understand the real meaning of him echoing these words on the floor of Parliament. And he is saying directly to all Members of Parliament that if we are to lead this country to prosperity we must be committed, we must do what we say in the interest of our people.

Sir, this is another love letter from the Governor General to all Members of Parliament, in particular the Ministers. This is a love letter from the Governor General to all Members of the National Parliament. "Our people hold great confidence in your leadership abilities and capabilities to provide leadership vision as national legislators. May I respectfully draw your attention as a reminder to the beautiful motto of our nation as you begin your leadership journey of four years - *"to lead is to serve"*. May you

diligently lead our people and nation forward to the harbors of peace, tranquility and prosperity with vision and wisdom”.

Is this statement made by the Governor General good enough for us to digest in exercising our leadership principles in this Parliament in the best interest of our people of Solomon Islands?

It is very clear, Mr Speaker, that he reminded us of our responsibilities, of the motto we adopted since independence - “to lead is to serve”. What is leadership in this context Mr Speaker? What does the Governor General mean when he talks re-emphasizing leadership and service to our people?

Can you guess what the Governor General meant by re-emphasising ‘to lead is to serve our people’ Mr Speaker? How do you interpret this as a statement?

Leadership in partnership. We have to develop a partnership and a leadership that recognises the interest of all stakeholders and other key players of the nation Mr Speaker. Partnership is what he meant. Our people’s interest must be put first in our leadership principles. And what are our people’s interests Mr Speaker? It is rural development. Six thousand villages in the communities have village economies which must be taken very seriously when we provide leadership. That is why when he saw us steering the boat into the reef, he started to send signals to the captains. Of course, every ship must have a captain.

Mr Speaker, leadership in mutual understanding, respect and benefit. This is what ‘to lead is to serve’ is all about. Mutual understanding, respect and cooperation.

The Governor General must have sighted that we are already off the track in exercising these leadership principles. And we have Mr Speaker, over the last five months. You do not have to ask me where did you get your information. You just look at the Solomon Star and the media and they tell it all. That is not leadership. Leadership is exercising mutual respect, mutual benefit and mutual understanding, and mutual cooperation with development partners and those who have vested interest and stakeholders in the Solomon Islands Mr Speaker.

Solomon Islands, as someone said before Mr Speaker, is not an island in the sky for you to do whatever you like, fade away with the clouds, fade away and there is no effect in the evening. Mr Speaker, we are part of the global world, we are part of a global strategy and we are part of a global system. Therefore, whatever we do here, whatever decisions we make here that run counters to the interest of our development partners and our friends overseas is going to be felt here and abroad. This is outside the leadership principle of mutual understanding, respect and mutual benefit Mr Speaker.

Sir, the words “may you diligently lead our people and nation forward to the harbours of peace, tranquility and prosperity with vision and wisdom”, is what he said. He said ‘*with vision and wisdom.*’ That means we have no wisdom. He must have seen this Parliament and this government not having wisdom to lead and that is why he said, “may we have the vision and wisdom to lead our people”. That is what he meant here. The honorable Member for East Are Are is telling the truth. That is what I meant, Mr Speaker.

His statements are not said in abstract. They are said in perfect condition for us to understand and to realise what our responsibilities are as leaders of this country.

Mr Speaker, I also want to remind us that one of the key foundation foreign policy of our government since independence is ‘friends to all and enemies to none’. This is a Christian foreign policy. But now Mr Speaker, this wisdom since independence has evaporated into thin air and we are developing foreign policies based on confrontation, anger and what not.

Is this where you leading us the new Coalition Change Government Mr Speaker? This is a question for you to answer. I still maintain that we should hold the principle of ‘enemies to none and friends to all’. I am a better Christian than you on that side.

(laughter)

Mr Speaker, I disagreed with one thing he said in here that this government has a mission and a vision. He should have turned those two words around. This government

should have a vision and a mission. But he said this government has a mission and a vision. You cannot do that. You have to have a vision in order to lead the people. The mission should be drawn out of the vision. Tell him he is mistaken when said that here. I think he deliberately said it in the speech, Mr Speaker. The next time he reads the speech we will tell him to say the right words.

Sir, that is my interpretation of the first part of a very small speech. That is my interpretation. It is a tall order on Members of Parliament, it is a tall order on the government and it is tall order on my friend the Prime Minister for us to behave, for us to lead the people of this country. Without effective leadership and purposeful leadership, we cannot lead a nation so divided with thousands of islands with seventy dialogues and with various ethnic groups in this country.

Problems have risen as a result of a leadership that did not give priority attention to the diversity, culture, to the fragmentation of people of Solomon Islands. We have to recognize that we say in this Parliament, what we do, our policy actions, if it is not well received by the people in the context of unity and diversity, Mr Speaker, something will crop up and someone will do something wrong.

I hope, Mr Speaker, all of us realizes, all of us understand the first message presented in the Speech. He also says from Sikaiana, Ontong Java to Rennell and Bellona, we are one people. We are one people. So why develop policies to split us and divide us further.

Mr Speaker, we are one people and we should have one development plan, we should have one focus, we should have one policy, we should have one overall plan. But it is our actions as a government that will continue to divide the people of this country. It is what we do that other sectors of the community do not like it that divides us. And some of these disagreements are based on very fundamental issues in leadership.

What is leadership, Mr Speaker? Is fair leadership to become arrogant? Is fair leadership to practice flexibility? Is fair leadership to practice over flexibility? Is fair leadership when hitting the brick you do not climb up? No, you take a reverse gear, stand up

and think I cannot climb up because I have no foot I cannot walk this way because I have no sides, I cannot move this side because my eyesight is not there and so you have to reverse back. That is what you should do. And when you reverse you rethink what course of action you should take from that point on. That is what I think as fair leadership. That is what I think to lead is to serve is all about.

I failed to see, Mr Speaker, this fair leadership that I have emphasised was practiced throughout the last five months. This is where I am calling on all of us and the government to be more thoughtful about the course of action we are going to take. This country does not only belong to you but it belongs to the people in the villages. It belongs to tribal people in the village. It belongs to them. You are here reaping their sweats. They pay us to do service for them, but not to be so anymore.

He talks about creating a new and better Solomon Islands. That is your policy. He was only emphasising your policy of creating a new and better Solomon Islands. We have to analyze today the issues and actions over the last five months. Do they fare well with this creating a new and better Solomon Islands Mr Speaker? When you assess and value this with the issues created in the media, it is far from well.

Creating a better Solomon Islands to me means creating a better relationship with our development partners because they are part and they will always continue to be part and partial of Solomon Islands because our development budget is more or less provided to us by those people.

Creating a standoff between one of our biggest donors is not creating a new and better Solomon Islands because it is the greatest contributor to RAMSI which is providing peace and security in this country and they are our net contributor to most of our budgets. Is this what we mean by creating a new and better Solomon Islands? No, this is creating a new and poorer Solomon Islands. You write the right things but it is your captaincy, it is your leadership that is failing.

The Governor General knows this because he writes this speech. And he goes on to say, "a new political direction necessary to take the nation forward". Of course, the

new political direction the Governor General is saying here is not taking the nation forward but it is taking the nation backward. That is the truth.

These are the pressing issues, Mr Speaker, facing our people and the nation. What are the pressing issues? Can you tell me? We are not addressing the pressing issues. We are only addressing the pressing issues that are in our interests here in Honiara and that of the government itself. We are not addressing the pressing issues that relates to the people of Solomon Islands, the little people in the villages.

I just returned from my constituency and I toured three constituencies. My people asked me, "honorable when will the million dollars you are talking about - the bottom up approach be implemented. That is their question, and we have to find answers to these questions. All they hear is the standoff between Australia and Solomon Islands, recruitment of Julian Moti as the Attorney General. Do you think they are interested in such issues? Not at all. They are only interested in what we can do to benefit them. And it is not happening during the last five months. If you go back to your constituencies, your people will repeat the same thing I am talking about.

Page 4 talks about the new political direction calling for a new mission and a new vision for our country. I said it should be the other way round. The vision for this country is to provide more financial resources to the rural, agricultural farmers in this country.

The Minister of Finance yesterday could not find word enough to convince me on what he calls the issue of ownership. He blames the foreigners as owing Solomon Islands. I refuse to agree with him. Foreigners do not own Solomon Islands. It is Solomon Islanders who own Solomon Islands. The problem is that most resources in this country are informal. Three-quarter of the resources of this country are owned by customary ownership and not by foreigners. Foreigners only come here because we invite them to invest and they are only investing in only less than 10% of land which is government land.

The only reason why foreigners are manipulating the banking system is because we have failed miserably to transform the informal

sector which made up three-quarter of this country's resources into transact-able value. And who is to be blamed. Do we blame the foreigners? No, you blame yourself because foreigners do not pass legislation in this country. It is you and me. The only foreigner who will be speaking in this Parliament is Julian Moti when he comes in as the next Attorney General. He is already employed.

Mr Speaker: Could you refrain from mentioning names please?

Mr Huniehu: I withdraw Mr Speaker. Yes, I am calling on my Minister of Finance to please stop complaining about foreigners manipulating, foreigners misusing the banking system, the economic system because it is your job to cause redirection. That is your job. That is what you have been assigned to do and the Minister for Development Planning. Both of you are known economists. If you cannot do it now how can you expect me to do it? I am not a qualified economist. Your question falls on you yourself. If you turn back you can see the other one - the Minister of Development Planning is sitting behind you. That is your question to answer.

Mr Speaker, that is the problem with the third world. The third world is so enriched with resources and yet there are no laws made to recognize the value of these resources. You start working on the law tomorrow the Minister of Finance so that we can use this enormity of wealth into transact-able value for the banks or whatever.

Yes, the Governor General talks about the bottom up approach. I want the Minister of Finance to clarify what he means by the bottom up approach because the bottom up approach had started even before the colonial times. The Minister of Finance whenever he talks he always blame the colonial people. What do you blame them for? They have gone back a long time ago leaving this country for you to manage, and so why keep bothering them. May be when they hear you talking about the colonial people they laugh at you and say an intelligent person who has all the legal tools at his hands to do it, is still referring and blaming the colonial people. Some of these days we have to put our thinking and our statements in Parliament right.

I want him to redefine what this bottom up approach is. Bottom up approach to me is a subsidy scheme where after the colonial government has left is cancelled, is withdrawn. That is a bottom up approach. And it was the colonial bottom up approach that created the coconut and the cocoa industry and it is the Solomon Islands Government that destroyed these policies, and I want us to reintroduce these policies.

You talk about land disputes but there were no land disputes when the coconut, copra and cocoa were planted many years ago. Why? Because each individual landowner went and farmed his own land and there is no land dispute. This is where we should be moving towards. You provide the funds and I can guarantee and assure you that 200,000 hectares of cocoa and coconut can be planted. You need to find money for the subsidize scheme.

The Minister of Agriculture is listening very intently because that is what he needed. He was complaining the other day when he was speaking that he has no money to implement his policies but this is where he should be drawing his wisdom from the MP for East Are Are.

Mr Speaker, the Governor General talks about creating a God fearing society. I shivered when I heard this in Parliament because what we do is causing enmity. Our Constitution talks about one people, the Governor General talks about one people one country but we are doing the opposite. We burned down the China Town. Chinese people are citizens of this country but we are responsible to that because it is incited by Members of Parliament. Is this what we called a God fearing Society?

I can assure you that some of you are bishops and reverends that if there is a meeting held in Lawson Tama for you to preach I will not attend that meeting because you are doing the opposite. I love people more than you. We must not misuse text from the Bible, and we must not misuse text from God, the Father of the universe.

This is not leading and serving our people with the highest respect and ethical standard. I do not want to talk about ethical standard because I am not qualified to talk about it. May be the reverend should talk about what is ethical leadership.

I am saying this because the Governor General mentions ethical leadership. The second part of the Governor General's Speech, the second theme is about constitutional reform, ethical leadership, truth and reconciliation. After we corrected the principles of our leadership before we can talk about truth and reconciliation. Let us talk about ethnical leadership and let us talk about constitutional reform.

Talking about constitutional reform means talking about development reform. If we do not correct the leadership principles that we exercise and practice, how can we correct the truth and reconciliation of this nation because it must come out from a heart, a true heart that pumps out peace, tranquility and reconciliation or whatever you call it.

Mr Speaker, the Governor General was right when he said that we must repent first of our leadership inaccuracies before we talk about reform. He was totally right. He was just right to the point, and I am pleased that he mentioned this. Although I was disappointed that this speech does not reflect a traditional speech because it does not contain all ministerial contributions but when he talks about constitutional reform, after telling us to readjust our leadership principles, I think he is on the right track and all of us should support him.

He said 'let us not forget that nation building is a continuing and challenging task. We are as a nation have been through a lot of very trying and difficult times within a recent past'. He was not talking two or three years ago. Mr Speaker, when he mentioned the recent past he was talking about two or three or four months ago. So this speech is a vote of no confidence in the government. It is a vote of no confidence in the government. Little we do realize that he was only talking about the recent past. I am surprised the Cabinet approved this speech for him to deliver in this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, he then went on to emphasize the importance of maintaining good and cordial relationship with our development partners like Taiwan, Australia, England, USA, Cuba, Libya, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and everyone because they are all contributors to national interest, and he was right. He is a politician. He is a very senior

politician so what he was saying is intended for us to digest in the most holistic way.

He is also telling us to rectify problems and reconcile with our development partners and our bilateral friends. That is what this statement is talking about because if we fail to do that Mr Speaker, he fears as the Governor General that some of these aids will be withdrawn, will be reduced or will be seriously affected and therefore will have an implied cost to the rural people of Solomon Islands. I don't want this to have an implied cost to the people of East Are Are because we have a dream. We have a dream and from that dream was a vision drawn and from the vision was a mission and what we are doing now is affecting our dream, our vision and our mission.

I am sorry the Minister of Foreign Affairs is not here but I would like to recommend that we start the process of reconciling our differences with Australia because there is no need to continue with this stand off. It is not in the interest of Solomon Islands. It is not in the interest of Solomon Islands people.

What is the problem not to begin the process of reconciliation and dialogue, and resolve it? Immediately! I do not see any problems, I do not see any issues. If it is personal take it back to your home and not on the floor of Parliament. And it is personal, I believe.

I would like us when we negotiate with our development partners not to have any barriers at all with our negotiation process. Now if you negotiate to increase funding from Australia they will tell you that the relationship between your country and Australia is on the rocks, it is in the wilderness. Why can't we sort out our differences, the differences that were not based on any tangible reason and dispute?

Mr Speaker, then the third part of his speech he starts talking about development. He starts talking about the logging development, fisheries development, he started talking about agriculture development, he started talking about infrastructure, he started talking renewable energy. That is the last part of his speech and so it was a well timed and thought out speech.

He talks about increase of financial assistance to the rural people. He talks about an

economic system that benefits the little people of this country. He talks about law reform that will enable certain ministries to perform better in revenue collection and what not Mr Speaker, and he is in a way instructing Members of Parliament and government what to do.

In the last part of his speech he devoted much time in talking about these resources and how to get them. First he talks about correction of our leadership principles. Second he talks about the need to reconcile differences with our development partners. He talks about the need to have constitutional reform, ethical leadership, and then he talks about the real menu, the real course defined in his own words - real development.

I will remain in this Parliament for only one purpose and that is to underpin the need for this government, for this Parliament to think more positively about rural development.

I have criticized my good Minister of Finance yesterday that whilst this government's focus is on rural development, the first thing it did was increasing our pay, which is contrary to the interest and the principle of mutual benefit leadership in the country.

Mr Speaker, when we talk about the forestry issue, I want to say in this Parliament that every time we complain that foreigners get 65% of the contract agreement and the locals get 45% and the government in terms of revenue gets may be 20% and the locals get 15% and that is the reason why many local companies apply for concessions, exemptions, duty remissions but now it is not possible. But in a logging operation, the machinery is expensive but because of the lucrative nature of the logging business it is not hard for Solomon Islanders who own 400,000 cubic meters to own their own machineries. It is the government that has to develop the financial mechanism to recognize these resources to enable resource owners to own machines so that resource owners can have full control of the revenue derived from their own resources.

Whilst we failed miserably to address this in this Parliament and the government, why should we continue to say that Solomon Islands is owned by foreigners. I cannot see any logic in this kind of argument. No logic. It is up to us.

One of the presidents in America also cited what I am talking about. He said there is no poverty in third world countries. Their problem is translating and transforming the enormity of wealth they own into the formal system. What does he mean? That is what I'm talking about. So I reject that Solomon Islands is not owned by foreigners. Our laws permitted them to invest in this country. If the laws are not good then change them, and do not make sweeping statements in this Parliament about the ownership of this country. You are offending many of us Mr Speaker.

We can do it. Why not start up a cooperative store in Honiara and inject \$50million worth of capital in it and have the ownership to the people of Solomon Islands, the constituencies. Can it be done? Yes, it can be done. The capital is there.

Over the last years when the RCDF was introduced Members of Parliament have expended hundreds of millions of dollars. Why can't we refocus, why can't we rethink our strategies? Are we just here to complain that our legal system is owned by foreigners, the economic system is owned by foreigners, and so what do Solomon Islanders own?

Mr Speaker, if we continue to complain nothing will happen. We will complain today, tomorrow, next year and when we come back to Parliament we still complain and nothing will happen.

Did God make you to continue complaining? No. He has given you the best IQs. He has given us the best IQs to be part of the solution and not continue to be part of the problem. That is the simple message I think this speech is talking about.

The Speech is also talking about land reform. Yes, the Governor General was right. If the obstacle to development is the inadequacies of our laws then why not do it according to the Governor General. We need proper land reform, and this is a dear subject matter of the Prime Minister. He has written a big thesis about it, and I hope if he survives the vote of no confidence tomorrow he should start doing something positive about land reform, which is emphasised in this Speech from the Throne.

Many Members have already touched on other key issues the Governor General talks

about in the Speech from the Throne and so I do not need to continue to repeat those sentiments already raised. I think they are all valid.

The reason why I am here is to remind Parliament of what I think the real message of the Governor General is contained in what he termed as a historic Speech from the Throne because it is the most simplest and it is the only one that does not have contributions from most of the ministries of the government.

Mr Speaker, I hope and pray that Solomon Islands will continue to patch together as one nation. I hope and pray that our political differences should not be used as a tool to widen our relationships as a group together, widen our relationships with our overseas partners, overseas bilateral friends. I hope that our political desirability to be better all the time is not used as a tool to divide and rule this nation, as it will not help anyone. The Governor General talks about political stability. He talks about political stability because he knows that without political stability we will continue to behave like what we have been doing.

When the former SIAC Government was in power, Mr Speaker, the Prime Minister then was using his position of leadership to wield support from the backbenchers. He was successful. Maybe he got five or six backbenchers but now they have all left him and I see this practice repeated again this time.

Mr Speaker, I was expecting the Integrity Bill to be the first one moved on the floor of Parliament. Never to be. But he was continuing and repeating what his former colleague did during SIAC, and it will never work. Or are we waiting for the number to increase in our parties before we can move the Integrity Bill because the Integrity Bill will stop crossing the floor? This is political corruption. Little do we realise that this can be seen as political corruption.

I hope our leadership will patch us together, not only us here but those who have vested interest in this country and the people in the rural areas.

With those few remarks, Mr Speaker, I support the Speech from the Throne.

(applause)

Mr TOM: Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing me to contribute by way of thanking His Excellency the Governor General of Solomon Islands, for the Speech from the Throne delivered in this honourable House on Monday 2nd October 2006.

Mr Speaker, as a new face in this honourable chamber, I was also deeply moved by His Excellency's reassurance to all Members of Parliament that our people hold great confidence in our leadership abilities and capabilities to provide leadership vision as national legislators, reminding us of the beautiful motto of our nation "*TO LEAD IS TO SERVE*".

For those familiar with speeches from the throne, this speech may not have the tradition and the expected tone and content but it was a timely speech, most appropriate and relevant for this nation at this particular point in time.

This Speech from the Throne highlights the political directions of the government, emphasising the pressing issues, and indeed endeavours to direct our thoughts and minds to what is important and what our responsibilities are whether we are Members of Parliament, public officers, the private sector or just ordinary citizens. We all have roles to play and the quicker we recognise what that role is, the sooner we can all achieve peace, progress and prosperity. This is why I say the Speech is timely, appropriate and relevant for us at this important and crucial time in the development of our beloved country.

It was relatively a long speech and covers many important and relevant aspects and the hope and the desire of our people to make progress in our political, social and economic development, but I wish only to highlight two important areas, which I feel have not been adequately covered by those who have contributed to this motion.

Firstly, Mr Speaker, 28 years of independence, 85 years of colonial rule, more than 400 years of our Whiteman exposure have taken us so far from the Melanesian culture and the traditions of our ancestors of 5,000 years that for the past 400 years we have gotten used to not being told what to do by those in authority.

The Speech from the throne has outlined with a ring of authority the development strategy of a new Solomon Islands. It is high time we are awoken to the reality that we search our nation and take advice and heed instructions from those in authority.

Although under the Constitution the Governor General has no executive powers to direct the affairs of the government, it is well within the Melanesian culture and tradition that we take advice and instruction from our chiefs, our heads of tribes and clans. In this regard, Mr Speaker, may I urge Members of Parliament and leaders of this nation to note that the directional and instructive message of the speech from the throne in our true Melanesian tradition, it is always wise to listen to our chiefs and those who are leaders and hold responsible positions be it executive or otherwise.

This traditional speech from the throne has been absent for a while and the Governor General must be congratulated for re-establishing a fine and important tradition that also reflects a truly Melanesian tradition of the big chief addressing an event especially such a big meeting as a Parliament.

In our structure of government, I see the Governor General as also representing all our traditional chiefs and community leaders, and I am encouraged that the current administration as indicated in the Speech will take measure to recognize our traditional chiefs and their important role in our nation.

Most of our population lives in village or rural areas and whether we appreciate it or not our traditional chiefs have an important role in the welfare of our people even in Honiara, where chiefs have an important role in our ethnic communities. It is therefore very important that they are given due recognition if our country is to make any progress in our social, economical or political development.

Just as our Governor General plays an important role in the overall framework of our government structure, our traditional chiefs do have an important role to play in the running of our nation that mandated us no need to be given, it is by virtue of our traditions already there. We have all witnessed the important role our traditional chiefs have played in the many crises facing this nation, especially during the ethnic

tension. It is indeed wise and prudent that we take measures to engage and involve our traditional chiefs in the governance of this nation.

It is heartening and very encouraging to learn that the Makira/Ulawa Provincial Government is in the process of engaging traditional chiefs in its political development and that the Boaboa House of Chiefs in Malaita is spearheading an educational programme on the role and function of our traditional chiefs. These are encouraging developments, and I am sure the government will take the liberty and responsibility to progress forward the need to not only recognise the good work carried out by our traditional chiefs but to ensure that our chiefly system is not just another avenue for conman and charlatans to further reduce the credibility of our most important leadership aspect of our beloved country.

Let us come to the rescue and the Makira Ulawa Provincial Government and the Boaboa House of Chiefs may have the directions that we should go.

Mr Speaker, the important role of chiefs has a lot to do with the peace and harmony that should go hand in hand with the peace and tranquility of the environment. Solomon Islands is truly a unique environment with a lot of potential for the betterment of our people.

The tourism potential of this nation as stated in the Speech is indeed huge. Our environment is already an attractive tourist destination, beautiful palm fringe beaches, pristine oceanic marine life and tropical forest. The Solomon Islands indeed is a paradise undiscovered. Three things stand in the way, however - malaria, expensive airfares and of course violence. Mr Speaker, whilst malaria and airfares can be dealt with somewhat easily the human factor in violence is indeed a disincentive for tourists coming to Solomon Islands. This is where the work of traditional chiefs is very important.

Mr Speaker, chiefs can easily be agents of change. Giving recognition to our chiefs can excel the role of traditional chiefs cannot be over emphasised, and whether it is political stability, economical vibrancy or social harmony, our traditional chiefs have a vital role to play in the development of Solomon Islands.

I highlighted the work of chiefs because I believe this is a missing link in our governance and the sooner we address this important issue the better it is for us.

Let me now turn to another important aspect of national development highlighted in the Speech from the Throne. This is the Government's commitment to assist the churches by directing 10% of state revenue to the churches to carry out their duties to the nation.

This is an important Christian principle known as tithing. Being a Christian nation we have to live by what we preach. This is not pride nor is it taking the name of God in vain. This is reality to practice what we preach 'to lead is to serve'.

The Government recognizes the important role of the churches and wants to acknowledge the invaluable role they play in national development. They have done much in health and education. With this state assistance the Government believes it can take on a lot of responsibilities currently borne by the government.

I wish to put on record for the benefit of all donor partners that Christian faith is foundational in the development of this nation. Donor partners must also respect our Christian heritage and follow the example the government that has set by respecting the work of the churches. It is sad to see aid workers and consultants sometimes disregarding our Christian beliefs and principles in the way they provide assistance and conducting the lives in public.

An open challenge to our cultures, faiths and beliefs is unacceptable. Let us not forget that Solomon Islands is a Christian country. In helping Solomon Islands to develop it must never be forgotten that this nation is founded on Christian principles, which in many ways is reflective of the worthy values of our culture and traditions.

Disregard of such values demean our people and stand in the way of community engagement and participation. Our people's allegiance is first and foremost to God before Government and all donor partners and friends of Solomon Islands must appreciate and respect that fact.

It is the responsibility of all of us in this honourable House to fully appreciate God's mercy upon our nation and indeed echo the resounding chorus of ending remarks of His Excellency the Governor General – God save the Solomon Islands, God bless Solomon Islands.

With these few remarks, Mr Speaker, may I once again thank His Excellency the Governor General for delivering the speech, and in so doing I resume my seat in support of the motion.

(applause)

Mr TANEKO: Mr Speaker, I will be very brief this afternoon in contributing to this very important motion in thanking His Excellency the Governor General for the Speech from the Throne on Monday delivered to us on the 2nd October 2006.

Mr Speaker, as we all can hear from Members who have contributed mentioning the bottom-up approach, therefore, I will begin my speech of today from the end of the Governor General's Speech. And I quote from his speech on page 20: "*May I now appeal to everyone of us, to continue to work together in peace and harmony, in our collective effort to rebuild this beautiful nation, the Solomon Islands. May we be reminded that our plans and prosperity can only come about, "if we have faith in the living God". He is the same God who promised and reminded King Solomon in the Book of Proverbs, of the Old Testament*" and if I can remember that is in Proverbs chapter 5.

Sir, this nation Solomon Islands is owned by 50 Members mandated by the people whom we represent in our constituencies.

I thank my people of Shortlands who mandated me to represent them in this House of Parliament to be their legislator, to be their voice given to me to represent them in this House of the Parliament, the highest authority body of the nation Solomon Islands.

Mr Speaker, much have been said in this House and much have been repeated. I am now in my 5th year in this House, the second term and much have been said.

Mr Speaker, in his Excellency's speech he said, "If we have faith in the living God". Mr Speaker, the Bible says "That faith without

action is dead". Therefore, all 50 Members with an open heart must come forward to rebuild the nation from the bottom of our heart, before the bottom up approach can succeed.

That is the reality. The practical side to it is in you and in me. Why Mr Speaker? Because the fear is that two kingdoms are in us. One is the kingdom of the earth the hell and the kingdom Heaven. The choice is us.

We are representatives of our people's culture. It is now 28 years since independence and our book the Constitution with its 145 sections is to be implemented and to be enforced by legislators of this Parliament. I thank you, Mr Speaker, for brining this nation to where we are now as an independent country.

Mr Speaker, if we are truly an independent country we should be loving people and nation and this begins from the leadership. Leadership is the highest authority.

I do not want to see the 49 Members as different nations. You are my brothers, you are my families, you are my children. This is the only way we can rebuild and reconcile this nation as one nation and unite to bring the other speeches that have been said and the speech from the throne can be implemented totally from the heart. It cannot be implemented, it cannot be practical if we just say the words. The words have to come from the very bottom of our heart as leaders.

The nation is already 28 years. Mr Speaker, I totally believe that we have to come out from the Egypt position. We are still in Egypt. We have talk about the economic growth of Solomon Islands. We have talk about changes needed for Solomon Islands. I thank this government for the vision that it has, but the mission has to be done to change Solomon Islands for the betterment of the future of our people.

But we must be real and practical and to be implemented by leaders including you on the government side as well as us on the Opposition side so that we can change this nation Solomon Islands.

Solomon Islands will not change if you and I do not change. We can read all the speeches, we can all make presentations in this House but if you and I are do not change Solomon Islands will never change.

We talk about the bottom up approach. At this very time now the people who mandated us are sweating in order to live so that they can find their fruits for today.

Being empowered, Mr Speaker, by those poor people from the four corners of Solomon Islands, what have we done Mr Speaker? Are we going to continue repeating in this House that His Excellency's speech is demise to us all? That is not something new.

We have been repeating the same things. Some of you are not in this House for more than five terms. I am now in my second term. But if there is not enough action to change Solomon Islands in the way that you and I want to change our people for their betterment for the future, then I am sorry. We can talk as much as we want in this House, we can write as legislators to change the law but if there is no action nothing will happen.

Sir, when Solomon Islands became independence we were happy. We were led by different leadership before independence, the colonial days and somebody brought in laws for us to follow.

It is our responsibility to make it fair and just for our own laws to suit our nation from the bottom to the top so that we can enjoy harmony and peace in Solomon Islands. If we don't change enough the way that we live and live happy in our nation Solomon Islands, I don't know what will happen to us. It is our duty.

We talk about agriculture, we talk about schools, we talk about all those things and I don't want to repeat myself and that is why I want to shorten my speech because everybody have said everything and we will continue to repeat the same things. But I just want to remind us, Mr Speaker, that I am standing here sharing the voice of my people, representing my people, it is true that our people and our culture are God traditional given culture for man to rule and reign as leadership with our chiefs and elders. Therefore, the truth is to strengthen that area so that we can check.

Mr Speaker, I will give you one example that my people are suffering today. So to whom are they looking at? They are looking at their honorable to deliver the services. That mentality is still in our people, and so we have to

educate them so that they can see the government of the day as the body that is responsible of delivering the services.

One example is this development fund that we now have for our people. You know what we are teaching our people to depend on handouts. Let us move out from Egypt, let us move out from Egypt Solomon Islands as mentioned by His Excellency that this country is beautiful country with more resources. Who is going to turn this into a cash community to bless the nation? It must be you and me with plans and vision and the mission has to be completed by you and me. I am sure the Prime Minister is listening.

If the mission is right that we have to change the nation, first we have to change our hearts, the heart of our nation, the heart of our children, the heart of our people. We don't want to turn into criminals, we want them to be Christian people practically. That is all that is needed and we will change the nation out of Egypt.

You know, Mr Speaker, when those people left Egypt they wandered 40 years in the wilderness but they still think of Egypt as still better. Why? It is because of free food. Even though they are in slavery there, they still think of Egypt so that they have free meals. That is what we are teaching our people some times. Let us come out, and let us send them to work at their resources. This is being practical and not guessing.

I will tell you one parable. The 50 constituencies are not the same. Some people live on different things. Their way of life, how they find their money is different. Let us give them the best incentives of what they own.

Bless them if they are producing more logs to bless the nations of Solomon Islands. But they must return the little blessing to their constituencies, back to their provinces to bless province. I believe this time the Provincial Governments continue to receive from the National Government. I would like provincial government and Members of Parliament to change the attitude. We have to come out.

Sir, we talk about ethical leadership, and that is true for all of us here. As an independent country we should not be colonial minded in this House. Let us be responsible in representing our

people so that we can be owners and partners of the places we represent. We must have the ownership of every development that we will have.

I thank the government for including in the supplementary appropriation bill 2006 this new millennium fund which is going to change our constituency. This is a beginning of a new journey, a new future for Solomon Islands. We must strengthen that area, have an office, man the budget and may be it would be better to draw up a budget for each constituency. So that we know exactly what we own, how we want to live and how we want to change our constituency. Only the governing body remains the same. We have tried many things and now we preach about the bottom up approach and so let us have a budget drawn from the constituency level to the provincial level to the national level. May be that is what we want so that we know exactly how many high schools are needed, how many clinics are needed, what type of roads are needed so that the economy grows from each of the constituencies.

I am speaking more loudly, Mr Speaker, because I want the bottom up approach to be implemented starting this year 2006. The mission must be completed. And that mission can only be completed by that side and this side of the House. We are now coming to trying times. And that trying time must first be tested from your own hearts. You and me. We are responsible to finish and complete the mission so that one day Mr Speaker, when I am an old man they will say we have done a good job. When we are old we can say yes I have changed the nation Solomon Islands into a better nation to live in. We would be happy when we are old. Otherwise when we get old we will say I have done something that hurts my brother and I have done something that hurts my nation. I am doing things to help my nation.

Sir, I want to thank the Governor General, His Excellency for a message that reminds all of us. I can criticize and I can say what I want but this message is a message for you and me to be reminded of what we are doing. We must continue to complete the mission for the betterment of our nation for all of us to enjoy.

If we in this House make wrong decisions for our people, the consequences suffered by the nation will be blamed on us. Our job in here so that the nation can go forward is that we must be of one mind as already mentioned in the speech. There is no other way.

Mr Speaker, as I mentioned at the end of Parliament last year in Deuteronomy 28:11, 12 & 13 that there is no other way, and that is very true. If we can only do God's principle and will we will be fine. We have tested all the democratic process of the laws of the land but the law is God given. Why not go back to His principle bearing in mind His supreme words. May be that is the only way for Solomon Islands. Let us be an extraordinary nation of the world. Let us follow the principles in the Bible.

My good Minister of Works mentioned let us test the tithes and offerings so that they can be a blessing for us. He is a miraculous God. We mentioned that many times in here and so let us test the word because it is supreme.

I challenge all of us in here that we call ourselves Christian, but when we are going to test the word, the supreme word that the Book of John 1:1 says "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word is God". Let us tell the truth that this is mentioned in His Excellency's speech. He said that truth and reconciliation will set us free. So let us test it. The constitution is knowledge and wisdom given by God to this nation in 1978, who brought the nation Solomon Islands into independence. That is the vision and mission of this nation. Our mission is to turn this nation into a true and independent country. A true and independent country where we stand independently. We love each other, we embrace each other, we make the nation grow in the way we want as leaders.

Our people are listening to us. All they are interested is when do we give them enough money, when do we buy enough copra, when do we buy their timber, when do we buy their marine products. That is what they are expecting.

We can say as much as we want in this Parliament while the poor people who give us and mandate us their power are looking for you and me to deliver the services through the government machinery of the day. I give you an

example. There is shortage of shipping services now in my constituency and I thank the House for their support to order a vessel. But I tell you the truth that it is painful to run the Shortlands Shipping Services in my constituency. That is the truth and reality. At the time when privatization was made in this House the thinking is that owning a vessel will make you a multi millionaire or a rich man or whatever. But I believe shipping transportation should be left with the Ministry of Infrastructure for the government of the day to service its people. That is how I see it.

In the colonial days when they came in, Mr Speaker, they visit all the provinces or the constituencies twice or monthly. Now when I visit my people once a month it costs a fortune to visit the Shortlands constituency. Why? Because when we do not make right decisions it is painful to run a private company of your own. It is a pain, pain, pain unless the government of the day sees it fit by allocating more finances for a particular private vessel to service the constituency then we will be right. It is something that is hard.

Mr Speaker, the speech itself is something for you and me and our people of the nation to be reminded that if this nation wants to live happy, if we want to enjoy harmony, peace and unity, it has to be in you and me. Let us own Solomon Islands for the future betterment our people. Nobody is going to bring peace here, but it has to be us as leaders being leaders of our people, our Churches as the speech says. We own this nation SI. Now we are complaining about foreigners. No, instead we should thank them. You have seen how they helped us but again be reminded that the nation when they come they have to be in partnership with us, they have to support this nation.

Mr Speaker, with these remarks, I support the motion.

Mr HAOMAE: Mr Speaker, my contribution to the motion will not be from the perspective of a person qualified in economics, planning or finance, but it will be from the perspective of a person who graduated from the University of the Village and with the basic wisdom of the hereditary chiefs of Small Malaita constituency.

The evil that men do live after them but the good are buried with their bones. I therefore, Mr Speaker, wish to take this opportunity to thank the work done by the past governments including the colonial governments and other succeeding governments. The fact that mistakes were made only proves that they were or are humans.

Mr Speaker, my observation of the speech from the Throne, if it appears to be critical, that is not my intention. My intention is to make improvements.

Mr Speaker, the Speech is poorly written. It reads like a composition and not a speech. As I have already said at the outset, my observations are meant to be with the intention of making improvements and not being critical.

Mr Speaker, the Speech from the Throne has underlying currents of insecurity. What else can you say? It has undercurrents of spiritual insecurity. That is why it refers and keeps reminding us of things in the Bible. In Christian aspects it indicates that there is spiritual insecurity in these four corners of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, it also implies political insecurity. That is my reading of the speech from the Throne that it carries undercurrents of political insecurity.

Mr Speaker, it also carries undercurrents of socio economic and commercial insecurity. As I have said at the outset, Mr Speaker, if my contribution appears to be critical that is not my intention. My intention is to make improvement.

Mr Speaker, the Speech also carries the message of uncertainty and is not very optimistic. You can deduce that particular message from terminologies such as 'hope, hopefully - that which hopefully would be operational by mid 2007'. That carries the message of uncertainty. It is not very optimistic. I would have thought that the Speech from the Throne should inspire people of this nation coming from His Excellency the Governor General. It should not carry undercurrents of insecurity or not being very optimistic.

Mr Speaker, I want to say something the Speech did not mention. The Speech did not mention good governance, respect - the objective of uplifting the standard of living to

develop this nation. I think the Speech has not outlined these virtues to inspire the people of this nation, the youths, the women, the very sectors of this country throughout the four corners starting from Shortlands to Tikopia and Anuta.

Mr Speaker, the Speech outlined areas of reform and so I would like to talk about reforms. At the outset, let me say that the bottom up approach is a strategy and is not a philosophy - a political philosophy by which the country should aspire to follow. It is not a national objective. It is a strategy.

The Speech does not outline any national philosophy or national objective to which Solomon Islands should endeavor to aspire to attain. That is what I would like to see in this Speech. Whether we should aspire to emulate the economic miracle, as has happened in Singapore or the national objective should go so that we can return to where our ancestors had been, or we steer a middle course, to outline a basic philosophy, a national objective to which this nation should sail to reach that particular harbour. Mr Speaker, with due respect I submit that I have not seen this in this Speech.

As I said at the outset, Mr Speaker, my observations are not meant to be critical, my intention is to make improvements.

On the issue of reform, Mr Speaker, which spreads throughout the Speech, I therefore do not wish to repeat what other colleagues have said but I will dwell mainly on the aspects of reform.

Mr Speaker, for any reform to succeed there are three main preconditions. The first is political will whether the Government of the day or this National Parliament or the people of this country as a whole have the political will to effect those reforms.

Mr Speaker, the second precondition for any reform to succeed is that you need technical know-how. At the behest of pursuing any economic reform programme in the Public Service, we have to have technical people, people who know how for purposes of efficiently and effectively carrying out those reforms, not only in the Public Service but also in statutory authorities, in government's portfolio companies and in the private sector, which is the engine for growth. That is very

important for any reform to succeed. The precondition of technical know-how must be there if not you mark my words that it will not succeed.

Mr Speaker, the third is wider public support. It is a precondition for any reform program to succeed. I wish to relate those three preconditions to the Speech in my contribution which is intended to make improvements, and if I sound critical, as I have said at the outset, that is not my intention. My intention is to be helpful to the government as the Member of Parliament for Small Malaita Constituency.

Mr Speaker, if you read through the Speech, as I had said earlier, it has undercurrents of insecurity. The political will might be there but it is mixed with other considerations, and therefore I would like to ask the government that if the reform program is to succeed it needs political will.

If you read on page 8 of the Speech on federalism, decentralization and diversification, the Grand Coalition is therefore embarking on finalizing the new Federal System, which hopefully would be operational by mid 2007. 'Hopefully', is not embracing a total political will. It connotes elements of uncertainty. It is not very pessimistic. That is not political will.

Why is there no political will on that fundamental aspect to make constitutional adjustments in order to transform it from the unitary system to federation, may I ask? I do not detect political will there. I only deduce political uncertainty. So I would like to impress on the government to inspire political will.

Political will does not only embrace the 50 Members of this Parliament. It also embraces everyone in the country, the civil society, the youths of this nation, the women, the Churches so that they hold the fabrics of our society together from collapsing.

The stakeholders in economic development, the private sector and everyone should pull together. This embraces the political will. The Government must aspire to ensure the collective political will of the country must come up in order to effect the necessary reforms however painful they may be. I will standby to support it, but you must have political will and not half will or half caste or uncertainty, half minded or not very pessimistic.

Mr Speaker, we have to be realistic and put the reality to our people. Don't hide those things to our people. If the undercurrent of that particular phrase is in the movement, in the aspects that there are certain provinces who are at this particular point in time need development projects for purposes of that development before we enter into the federal system of government then let us face it. Let us not run away from it because we are political leaders of this nation. We must not run away from responsibility. If I want to run away from responsibility I would not have stood for the electorate of Small Malaita Constituency to be their Member of Parliament. But No! I stood with a clear conscience that come what may, I will pursue it further.

I would like to ask the government not to have political uncertainty. Just go ahead to do your work and hold the bull by the horn, and not to be half hearted. Prior to ensuring that you convince our people, the Members of Parliament, Provincial Members and the various sectors of our community must rally behind the reform program. Do not chase them out. As I have already said at the outset political will is a pre-condition for any reform programs to succeed. Failing that, Mr Speaker I have to tell you straightaway, and you will hear it from the MP for Small Malaita Constituency that it will not succeed.

Mr Speaker, technical know-how is very important. We are living in a world where science is so advanced with brainy and intelligent people and all those things have become informational age that it needs our people, Solomon Islanders with the technical know-how to implement those reforms. If there are no Solomon Islanders in place at the moment because they are either trained in overseas technical institutes or universities, or they are still small or because they are not yet born then there is no harm in recruiting genuine and enlightened people to come and help us in terms of technical knowledge.

It is quite straightforward that if there are no qualified people with technical knowledge or know-how to implement those reform programs, no matter how many reform programs you may have it will be difficult to succeed. Because one thing is a plan for you to

have a program and the other one is for implementing of that program. Having one is a different matter and implementing it for the benefit of this nation is another matter.

For purposes of the implementation of any reform program, people with technical know-how, is a pre-condition. If you do not have that then you can get it from the MP for Small Malaita and your reform program will have a heart to succeed.

Mr Speaker, for any program reform program to succeed, it needs wider public support from everyone starting with the Cabinet, the backbenchers of the government, the 50 Members of Parliament, the Public Service and their Unions, teachers which the Ministry of Education is yet to solve their problem. I mean he is handling the situation at the moment.

The economic stakeholders the private sector, the statutory authorities, the portfolio companies of the government, the civil society, the teachers, the women, (I have heard there are differences that women are now speaking louder), is what we do not need. We need to take them on board to support the reform program.

Our people in the rural areas, if they don't support the reform program, it will not succeed although they are copra cutters or farmers. And also our development partners because no man is an island and if no man is, how can a country be. We also need our development partners and wider public support for purposes of any reform program to succeed. My reading of the strategy of the bottom up approach, we in Small Malaita are already ready, you are late but it will be funded by development aid. And so we need wider public report in order for any reform program to succeed.

Sir, I talk too much on reform because reform is from page 1 to the last page, apart from the salutations in the speech. Including the theme which says "creating a new and better Solomons" is a theme, if read properly is a reform, whether it is a reform of human beings sideways or underway or top way or side cut but it connotes a reform agenda.

Sir, I want to impress on the government to be a bit careful with the interest, the lives, the daily living of the people of this nation - the

20,000 people of Small Malaita Constituency inclusive. We are also part of the country. Even if the population of Small Mala is small but we are part and parcel of Solomon Islands as a nation.

Therefore, on their behalf I want to ask the government to be careful with the lives of our people and their interests. When restraint is necessary please exercise restraint in handling the affairs of the state. I've just returned from my Constituency of Small Malaita last week where I held a lot of meetings in the three wards. I have already given to the Ministers the plan of Small Malaita Constituency. With due courtesy I have given a copy of the plan to the Honourable Prime Minister, a copy to my friend, the Minister for Provincial Government, MP for West Makira and the Minister for Infrastructure Development. I am thinking of giving one copy to my friend, the Minister for Education because education is a very important social development of this nation. A copy will also be given to my friend, the Minister of Health because we need some clinics and supply of medicine for the constituency.

My people told me to tell the government about the present situation we have with our near neighbour because they are quite concerned. When the Coordinator of RAMSI said that RAMSI will not go, we in small Mala are worried because in a diplomacy a yes can be a no and a no can be a yes or somewhere in between.

Mr Speaker, if I can indulge into aspects I am also a man of diplomacy in Small Malaita. My tribe for the last five to ten thousand years ago until today has been playing diplomacy in a local way between states. They too are the hereditary high chiefs. They are worried about the present state because reading between the lines and considering the subtleties, the decorum and etiquettes of diplomacy, it is a bit of a concern.

I would like to ask the government to look after the affairs of our state properly as it is the life of every one of us in the country, including the 20,000 people of Small Malaita Constituency, which is the largest rural constituency in the country, if not in population then land wise it is really big. If you are not careful we are an island ourselves and a

kingdom and so we can declare independence for ourselves.

So think very carefully about the state of affairs as you have been mandated to run the affairs of our country and please look after it properly. Sometimes to win is to lose and to lose is to win. It is a matter of human nature where human relation comes into being. That is the message I would like to relay to the government at this point in time.

Mr Speaker, as I have already said at the outset that if my comments in contributing to the Speech from the Throne may sound critical, that is not my intention. My intention is to be helpful and to make improvements. If otherwise I will not be telling the truth, Mr Speaker, and I will have a guilty conscience myself. That is why I have to say what I am saying now, Mr Speaker.

With those few comments Mr Speaker, I support the motion.

Mr TOZAKA: Mr Speaker. I would also like to contribute like other honorable colleagues including the Member of Small Malaita who has just spoken to comment on the Speech from the Throne by His Excellency, the Governor General in the motion moved by the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister in this Honourable House.

In doing so, I would like first of all to thank His Excellency for availing himself to deliver the speech to this honourable chamber on behalf of the government of the day.

I also recognise and acknowledge your good self, sir, for your respective presiding role in the address from the Throne. I also thank the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister for moving the motion on the speech.

Mr Speaker, the Speech from the Throne is basically a formal and traditional speech as other colleagues have mentioned, an academic exercise for the purpose basically to introduce the government's policies and programs of actions to the respective office of His Excellency the Governor General.

Mr Speaker, the government of the day through the respective ministries and departments has been able to do this particular traditional task for us, and so I would also like to acknowledge with thanks their good work.

At the same time, sir, on behalf of the people of North Vella, I would like to recognise and acknowledge with appreciation certain policies and program directions of the government of the day in the various sectors of economy.

I will not dwell on them in detail as there are opportunities to do so later, but in principle and in general, they are set policies that successive governments have been talking about for many years in the past.

Mr Speaker, having said this and as far as our people in the rural areas are concerned, unfortunately the mechanism of dissemination of information through the Speech from the Throne does not bear much meaning to them. Simply and obviously they do not have the means to have access to the Speech nor do they understand how the speech itself directly relates to their daily needs and livelihood in the village.

Mr Speaker, as other honourable colleagues have commented, the Speech's overlap situation with the outgoing government has invariably posed some difficulties in the implementation aspect of their policies.

However, awkward this position is, I would thought that an urgent introduction of the national budget 2007, which I commented on yesterday when the Honorable Minister of Finance introduced the Supplementary Appropriation Bill could have been the priority task of the government, but this is now not possible.

Mr Speaker, on one hand the Speech gives us hope and encouragement especially to govern ourselves effectively and efficiently through our respective government machineries, but on the other hand, I find that when we look at the realities, it is sad to note that we continue to fail keeping our words and uplifting the credibility of these policies. Mr Speaker, this dilutes and displaces the credibility and significance attach to this address from the throne at this particular point in time.

Mr Speaker, in pointing out some of these continued weaknesses that I am referring to, I would appreciate the responsible ministries of the crown who have already explained their position and who have taken some positive actions in addressing them.

For example, Mr Speaker, how do we verify the statement from the throne on promoting a highly disciplined Public Service in the face of the recent discovery of the Auditor General of a number of public officers serving themselves with the funding scheme established to assist business operations in the rural areas?

Similarly, the question of how do we expect the public service to be disciplined and efficient and productive, if we continue to have direct interference and manipulate the procedures and the system of proper implementation of government policies.

On the same token, on our legal and judiciary service, I would like to question as how do we reconcile our policy on capacity building, localisation program in the light of the independence of the service on the case of the removal of the outgoing Attorney General, a highly qualified and respected Solomon Islander replacing him with someone from outside the country who at this point of speaking, is reported sheltering in our High Commission in Port Moresby, the outcome of which led to the honorable House left without a substantive Attorney General to attend its meeting.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, the bottom-up approach as the government's rural development policy drive, to take our nation forward, which I support in principle, how do we justify this policy when we have already seen the end of the beginning of this bottom-up approach in the recent reported abuse of funds to the small business association and to other schemes which the Minister of Finance, and I commend the Finance for his swift action in intervening to suspend these schemes.

On the same token, how do we justify the recent proposed women's bank which is supposed to be welcomed by our women folks, instead they raised stiff objection in terms of its contradictory approach, and the defense of the proposer, he has broken a fundamental policy of the government promoting women in participation, let alone the custom of the land by telling our women folks to be silent.

Mr Speaker, the Speech highlights the Government's policy directive on regional partnership to grow from strength to strength. How could we say this with our shoulders and heads high given our current diplomatic row

with Australia as one of our important neighbor and biggest donor in the country? Australia has invested millions of dollars in our country through both bilateral and multilateral programs. Yes, it does, besides RAMSI in the building the various community infrastructure such as schools, clinics and roads throughout the country.

Australia has been a long time friend of Solomon Islands going back to the Second World War, when we stood side by side with other Allied friends to protect and defend of shores and our people. Hence, it is outrageous that we forgot about these facts when we expel the Head of Mission from our country.

Mr Speaker, in defending his action, the Honorable Minister says that he is doing this in the name of sovereignty. Mr Speaker, who in this mighty world has questioned us on this status? Everybody knows that Solomon Islands is an independent nation and that is why we continue represent ourselves in great meetings such as the United Nations General Assembly.

What everybody is questioning us, Mr Speaker, is when are we are going to govern ourselves properly so that what we preach all over the world about our sovereignty is real and meaningful to our people?

Sir, I consider it hypocritical that here is a country protecting its own sovereignty by requesting its citizen to face justice in its country and here we are emphasizing sovereignty rights and hiding their citizen in our embassy.

Mr Speaker, I wonder if the Honorable Prime Minister has been properly advised about the big picture of the potential repercussion of the events that we are going through.

My leading question, Mr Speaker to this, is what kind of professional management of our country's diplomatic affair is this? Is this the diplomatic management style this country prefers in developing our principle policy of "to be a friend to all and enemy to none".

We have failed, Mr Speaker, to run a full marathon race of patience, consultation, dialogue, and endurance which are fundamental values in diplomacy, instead our diplomatic marriage with Australia has been affected of the short sprinting action we have opted today.

Two of our good neighbors have put their hands up to help us mediate in this stand

off. Are we going to ask our friends to come and help us every time? When are we going to learn to govern our selves? What time or when, may I ask?

Mr Speaker, having said all these, I personally feel that we have to go back to the basics and answer, as we know others have reminded us already in this Honorable House, is in you and myself in relation to the one who put us on this position in the first place.

Mr Speaker, I humbly urge us honorable colleagues, honorable Members to let us change our attitudes and behaviors and come down from our highest level of thoughts in our respective positions and humble ourselves to know the will of the one who put us in our respective positions in the first place. I believe we will then be able to see and lead and rebuild this nation according to his will and for his people in this nation.

Before our country sways to get anywhere following the assistance of RAMSI which returns our sovereignty, this is the time to make a drastic change by addressing the real issues affecting our people in the rural areas.

Sir, our people and country have suffered enough, they suffer enough and they do not want go back again to the darkest days of the past. They want to change and to move on and to be governed sensibly and be governed properly by us leaders.

Sir, with these comments and observations on the Speech from the throne, I thank you for giving me the floor and I resume my seat.

Mr Speaker: I notice that the debate on this particular motion is not to be concluded today on our Order Paper, and so we may continue again next week if anyone wants to continue the debate.

Hon Sogavare: Mr Speaker, there are others who would want to speak to the motion and so in accordance with Standing Order 35(1) I beg to move that the debate on the speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor General be adjourned.

The motion for adjournment on the debate of the Speech from the Throne is adjourned

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

The House adjourned at 4:00 pm.