

NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS

DAILY HANSARD

THIRD MEETING – EIGHTH SESSION

FRIDAY 23RD FEBRUARY 2007

The Speaker, Sir Peter Kenilorea took the chair at 9.30 am.

Prayers.

ATTENDANCE

At prayers all were present with the exception of the Minister for National Reform and Aid Coordination, Commerce, Industries & Employment, Lands and Survey, Fisheries and Marine Resources, Finance and Treasury, Justice & Legal Affairs, Education & Human Resources & Mines & Energy and the Members for Maringe/Kokota, Temotu Pele, South Vella La Vella, Hograno/Kia/Havulei, North Guadalcanal, North New Georgia, & West Kwaio.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr HAOMAE: Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to make my matter of privilege under Standing Order 25 regarding the motion of no confidence on the Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, today I would like to highlight the fact that this motion of no confidence that I wish to move on the Honorable Prime Minister, the Parliamentary House Committee had allowed it to be debated. Notwithstanding, Mr Speaker, you have ruled otherwise, I hereby wish to express my disappointment on the ruling.

Mr Speaker, the precedence set on this kind of motion shows a very different picture and thus a very different story altogether. I wish to make a comparison of two motions on the matter. The first motion was the motion of no confidence moved by the Honorable Member for

Temotu/Nende. Sir, the Member gave notice of this motion of no confidence on the then Prime Minister on 19th April 2006. This is the notice of the Motion, Mr Speaker, it is not even typed but handwritten (*shows the paper*).

Mr Speaker, there was a date imprinted on the Notice Paper but the Notice did not have a time slot imprinted on it. This is imperative for the purpose of deciding the issue of seven clear days. The notice was given on the 19th April 2006. It was on the Order Paper on 26th April 2006. Strictly counting the days, Mr Speaker, it was exactly the same number of days as my motion today.

Similarly, my motion was noticed on the 16th February 2007, and counting the days to today Friday is exactly the same number of days as was the case of the MP for Temotu/Nende's motion. This is the exhibit of the notice of my motion of no confidence to the Prime Minister Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I see no difference in the number of days as to the requirement of seven clear days. The only difference that I see is that you have ruled in favor of one and you have ruled against the other. I see gross inconsistency on the two cases.

Moreover, on the motion of no confidence by the Member for Temotu/Nende, he was doing it as an elected Member of Parliament for Temotu/Nende. However at that material time, the MP for Temotu/Nende has not been sworn in yet. Section 63 of the Constitution is clear on this requirement, and Sir I quote: "No Member of Parliament shall be permitted to take part in the proceedings of Parliament (other than proceedings necessary for the purpose of this section) until he has made before Parliament an oath of allegiance in the form set out in the in Schedule 1 to this Constitution".

You will recall Mr. Speaker, that when the Member for Temotu/Nende tabled the motion he was, as I have said, a Member for Temotu/Nende but he has not at that point being sworn in as Member of Parliament to fulfill the provisions of section 63 of the National Constitution. That aside, you still allow him to participate in the proceedings of Parliament though he had not taken his oath to fully qualify him to participate in the proceedings of Parliament, notwithstanding he was allowed. There were no questions as the mover of the motion, and his motion of no confidence was allowed.

Today, for this motion, I have followed the Constitution and the Standing Orders to the letters. I have filed my notice of the motion of no confidence on time. I went to the office around 3pm that Friday and there was no one in the office to pick my notice of the motion until later and so the notice of the motion was in time.

As I have said the Clerk's Office failed to verify the time the notice paper was submitted. The Clerk's Office could not possibly verify whether the motion of no confidence was given in time. As I have mentioned this is the same case as the honorable Member for Temotu/Nende's motion. His notice of the motion of no confidence was not questioned. But my motion of no confidence has been responded. This shows a gross inconsistency in terms of how motions by different Members in the House are treated.

Mr Speaker, this calls for your best judgment otherwise it will raise instances of suspicion as to the integrity and independence of the Office. It would even question how the whole parliamentary proceedings are conducted and administered. This is true particularly for important motions as motions of no confidence. I am calling for a fair ruling on this matter, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, this is a very important motion. It carries the highest interest of the nation with it. This is a motion that will question the government on its policies on national unity, security, the presence of RAMSI and law and order in the country, to mention a few of the issues. Therefore, my motion of no confidence should be accorded the highest respect and fairest treatment.

I also question, Mr Speaker the validity of the legal advice/opinion given on the issue of seven clear days. As I have mentioned this case is exactly the same case as the Member for Temotu/Nende's motion. It would be better if there is an impartial ruling, possibly a determination by the Court is made on the issue. But I hope this would not get to that extent. I know, Mr Speaker, that you are able of the highest considerable decisions. I know that the whole country expects no less from you and all of us in this Parliament.

If a positive determination is not made on this issue today from you, Mr Speaker, I, the whole nation and the whole world at large will begin to question how fair, how legal, how balance and how democratic are important institutions of governance and our law making Chamber in this country. They will question this honorable House.

Next to my last point, Mr Speaker, I question the fact that the motion of no confidence was launched before the government decided to end the proceedings of Parliament in terms of the motion of sine die. If my motion is not allowed, it stands to question the integrity of the decision of the Office as to how my motion is not allowed. This ruling, of course, lies on your good self.

Finally, Mr Speaker, this is a stand alone motion despite the cession of the sine die motion, it is upon you to give a ruling on this vote of no confidence. Today, Mr Speaker, I pray to you to give the nation of Solomon Islands, the people of Solomon Islands, the children of Solomon Islands and the future of Solomon Islands, a full and fair hearing for your good, for my good and the good of all our people and the nation of Solomon Islands.

Mr Speaker, let justice be done though the heavens may fall. Mr Speaker, I thank you for your indulgence.

Mr Speaker: Thank you Member for Small Malaita. For purposes of clarification, the motion to which you referred to earlier, I used my discretion to make the decision and there was no complaint following my decision then. This time around I sought legal advice, and the legal advice from three sources as a matter of fact have all confirmed that it would not be

proper, it would not fulfill the constitutional requirements if this present motion is to be moved today. Hence I have noticed both you and the honorable Prime Minister in my acknowledgement letter of the legal advice by the Attorney General and hence no inclusion of the motion of no confidence on the Order Paper today.

The simple difference is that the motion which you referred to earlier, I used my own personal discretion in deciding on the seven days and there was no complaints following that particular decision, and this particular one I felt I had to be sure that we are within the seven clear days hence I sought legal advice and the legal advice I received from three sources including the Attorney General's Office is that it would be improper, hence not qualified to be discussed in today's date. That is for information of the honorable House, and a point of clarification to the honorable Members' point. Thank you.

Motion No. 5

Mr HAOMAE: Mr Speaker I beg to move "that the National Parliament under standing order 73 resolves to appoint a special select committee to inquire into and report on all matters relating to the administrative actions taken by the Government in relation to the Commissioner of Police, Mr Shane Castles.

Notwithstanding anything contrary in the Standing Order for the purpose of this inquiry, the Committee shall:

1. comprise only Members of Parliament appointed by the Speaker,
2. report directly to Parliament according to the provisions of Standing Order 72,
3. have power to summon any person to give evidence or to produce any records or documents which the Committee may require in the performance of its duties,
4. have power to ask for explanations from Ministers or Members of this House; and
5. presents a final report to Parliament by 30th April; 2007."

Mr Speaker, I need to explain matters pertaining to point number one.

Hon SANGA: Point of order. Just before the Member for Small Malaita introduces the motion, this side of the House requires clarification in that in the text of the motion, especially with regards to the phrase "matters relating to the administrative actions taken by the Government".

I think one of the issue that is under public debate is the question of declaration by the Minister responsible for Immigration - the Declaration to the effect that the person concerned was declared undesirable immigrant.

We would like to know whether the motion also requires explanation for the action taken by the Minister for Immigration, whether that is inclusive of the phrase 'administrative action'?

Mr Speaker: May be you can explain that during the process of your presentation. Please continue.

Mr Haomae: Mr Speaker, I have not yet debated the body of the motion. But I respect the views presented by the hardworking Minister for Public Service.

Hon Sanga: Mr Speaker, if that is the case then I think the understanding from this side is that the actions taken by the Minister for Immigration was done in accordance with legal powers conferred on him under the Immigration Act in which case it is not an administrative action, it is a legal action so that any debate in relation to this motion should exclude the action taken by the Minister for Immigration.

Mr Speaker: We will allow him to explain himself. If we allow the honorable Member to debate the motion to tell us what he means by administrative actions, and again even if the motion was to be passed and if is out of order for reason of constitutionality or legal issues, it cannot be proceeded with in terms of implementation.

Mr Haomae: Mr Speaker, as you rightly said, this is only a motion, this is a proposal and it is up to the Government to decide whether to implement it or not.

Mr Speaker, notwithstanding anything contrary to the Standing Order means people from outside can be members of special select committees but in this instance as required by No. 1, only Members of Parliament will be members of this special select committee.

Mr Speaker, on Point No. 5 where the final report will have to be submitted to Parliament, and not the Minister as required by Standing Order and that is why the word 'notwithstanding' is included because if the report is submitted to the Minister the Minister can just hide it. That is the rationale for No.5.

I am not saying he is going to hide it, but we are only human beings, we have shortcomings of human nature. I know that no one is perfect, we are all subject to human shortcomings, and so that is the reason why that provision is stipulated in there.

Mr Speaker, at the outset allow me to state that the motion is not being moved at the behest of any foreign power or powers. The representatives of those powers, be they in their respective governments or are residents in here in Honiara as diplomats, are fully capable as well as qualified to present the views and interests of their Governments.

Mr Speaker, also at the outset and lest it be misunderstood, allow me to state that this motion is being moved, not because I am pro-Australia or any foreign power, let alone to seek favors from them. Furthermore, this motion is not being moved because RAMSI or the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force have asked me to do it for them. They have highly qualified and eloquent personnel of their own to present their own case.

Mr Speaker, the appropriate spokesman in terms of policy is none other than the Minister of Police and National Security. I do not wish to be presumptuous to abrogate on myself a government executive responsibility.

Mr Speaker, since entering this Parliament in 1993 my position remains pro-Small Malaita and pro-Solomon Islands. I do not see any reason why I should revise my views on this score.

Some Members from the Government side who pride themselves for being hot political strategists and intelligence operatives have come up with interesting and amusing theories that this motion is being moved as part of a conspiracy to embarrass the Government. No, Mr Speaker.

The Opposition is only interested in the Rule of Law, not scoring points. Those who come up with such ridiculous stories about conspiracy are talking about themselves and have their own agendas to pursue. As the Holy Book (Bible) says: From your heart the mouth speaks.

Mr Speaker, also at the outset, I wish to state that I am not a spokesman for the Commissioner of Police. The Commissioner is a highly intelligent and capable person and I am sure he will speak for himself, if and when given the opportunity. I would still move this motion even if the Police Commissioner is a citizen of any country. Because, as a National Leader, it is my duty when I took the oath of allegiance to uphold the Constitution and ensure that Government decisions are made and implemented according to the provisions of the Constitution. If the Government does not appear or seem to be doing so, it is the duty of Parliament to bring it to account.

Mr Speaker, the Government, since taking office, has so far dismissed the Attorney General, forced the Solicitor General to leave the country and is applying punitive actions against those who hold different views. As it were, if the Government continues the way it is currently doing, we do not know who will be next in line to be dismissed – whether it would be the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, the Public Solicitor, the Chairman of the Leadership Code Commission, the Legal Draftsman, the Auditor General, the Judges and Justices of the High Court and the Court of Appeal, the Chief Justice or you, Mr Speaker. Sir, as it were, the media has already picked the move by some Government Members to remove you, Mr Speaker, from office for reminding Members of Parliament that constitutionally, backbenchers are not entitled to be allocated with government vehicles.

Sir, also, the appointment of the Ombudsman recommended since November by the lawful committee is being administratively delayed for reasons which only the government knows. We all know that the terms of the current Governor General will expire during the life of this House. The Government, of course, has the number to put its own candidate in that very high office. Mr Speaker, this motion is being moved as part and parcel of the checks and balances as stipulated in the National Constitution. Therefore, Mr Speaker, this motion is in the national interest.

I am moving this motion in my capacity as the Shadow Minister for Justice and Legal Affairs and Police and National Security. And it is in this regard, that I wish to dedicate this motion to the universal principles of good governance, equality, accountability and the rule of law. These principles are among the cardinal tenets of democracy upon which our nation is founded.

Mr Speaker, this motion is being moved for four (4) reasons:

- (1) The Foreign Minister, who is also the Minister for Immigration, has declared the Police Commissioner an undesirable immigrant. The action of that Minister constitutes constructive dismissal or removal of the Police Commissioner in all practical aspects and respects.
- (2) The removal or dismissal of any Commissioner of Police can only be done in accordance with the procedures as laid down in section 129 of the National Constitution.
- (3) The Prime Minister whose job is to advise the Governor General has agreed with his Minister of Immigration to declare the Commissioner an undesirable immigrant. In doing so, the Prime Minister has disqualified himself from impartially advising the Governor General on the matter under sub-section (5) of Section 129 of the Constitution.

In other words, Mr Speaker, any advice on this matter tendered by the Prime Minister to the Governor General

would not be a fair one, as such advice would be influenced in very measured terms by the Prime Minister's foregone conclusion, ie, that the Commissioner is an undesirable immigrant.

- (4) In line with the principles of fairness, accountability, good governance, and the rule of law, it now falls on the shoulders of the National Parliament, the highest depository of the will of the land, to exercise its sovereign responsibility to uphold and defend the Constitution. This motion is asking for no more, nor less. If we do not do it here, no one else will do it for the nation. If we decline to carry out our mandated responsibility, posterity will accuse us of being apathetic. We have not dared to speak out when we have the chance. Mr Speaker, you would agree with me that this Parliament is the highest court in the land.

Mr Speaker, I submit to you that the action of the Minister in declaring the Police Commissioner an undesirable immigrant constitutes in all practical aspects and respects a constructive dismissal or removal.

Mr Speaker, the Oxford Dictionary of English, Second edition, Revised, 2005, defines constructive dismissal as follows: Quote, "the changing of an employee's job or working conditions with the aim of forcing their resignation", unquote. The same Dictionary defines constructive removal in similar terms.

Mr Speaker, allow me to enumerate on the actions of the Government to establish beyond any reasonable doubt whether they have met the test as required by the definition of constructive dismissal or removal.

Mr Speaker, you would recall that the first action against the Commissioner by the Government was taken after he went on the media to say that the Police would continue to investigate the illegal landing of the Papua New Guinea Defense Force aircraft at Munda, Western Province. In this incident, three sovereign laws of Solomon Islands were breached. These are the Immigration Act, the Quarantine Act and the Civil Aviation Act. The

flight also violated the territorial sovereignty and security of Solomon Islands, the same sovereignty that the present Government is so boastful about defending.

Mr Speaker, it is the function of the Police to investigate any breaches of any law passed by this sovereign Parliament. The Commissioner of Police is a constitutional office established by Section 43 of the National Constitution. The Constitution also stipulates that in the exercise of his responsibilities and powers with respect to the use and operational control of the Force, the Commissioner should not be subjected to the direction or control of any person or authority. This means the Prime Minister, or the Minister of Police may only give general directions of policy to the Commissioner. Operational matters such as investigating breaches of the law remain the exclusive province of the Commissioner.

Mr Speaker, the independence of the office of the Commissioner of Police is of paramount importance to the rule of law and order as it shields the operation of the Police from being controlled by the dictates of politics.

Mr Speaker, it is common knowledge that the Government was furious at the Police Commissioner's insistence to continue investigate laws that have been broken with the landing of the PNG Defense Force aircraft on Solomon Islands sovereign territory. Since the Commissioner is merely performing his mandated duties, the Government's behavior in this situation appeared surprising to all normal thinking, caring and law-abiding Solomon Islanders. The first action taken against the Commissioner's employment was when the government diverted the funding of the Commissioner's post to the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

Mr Speaker, this action was not only a breach of contract but was designed to also humiliate the Police Commissioner as well as forcing him to resign. If the Government had had its way, such an action would constitute constructive dismissal or removal in all practical aspects and respects.

However, Mr Speaker, fortunately, or unfortunately, (depends on which side you are on) the Government's first move in this game of "cowboy" manipulation did not succeed. The

result was unacceptable to the Government. Hence, Mr Speaker, someone in the corridors of power was assigned to do brainstorming and to come up with another scheme. The product of this productive mind, Mr Speaker, is undesirable immigrant.

In accordance with the new plan, the Government pretended to lie silent and waited for the unsuspecting Commissioner to take his much needed vacation. Thereafter, the claw of prohibition came down on the Police Commissioner, and check mate.

Mr Speaker, the fact that the Police Commissioner has been declared a prohibited immigrant practically affects the working conditions of the person concerned.

Mr Speaker, because of the declaration, the Commissioner cannot practically do the following:

- (i) The Commissioner of Police who is an able body person cannot practically enter the country to perform duties;
- (ii) The Commissioner is being prevented from practically entering his office to perform his duties;
- (iii) The Commissioner is being prevented from practically entering his Honiara residence;
- (iv) The Commissioner is being prevented from practically driving his car in Solomon Islands;
- (v) The Commissioner is being prevented from practically having his drink and food in Solomon Islands, and
- (vi) The Commissioner is being prevented from practically breathing Solomon Islands fresh air.

Lastly but not the least, Mr Speaker, Ministers of the Government are referring to the Commissioner of Police as the former Commissioner of Police. For instance, in the provisional Hansard for February 9th 2007, Third Meeting, Eight Session, on page 53 the Prime

Minister referred to the person concerned as the former Commissioner of Police.

Mr Speaker, all these affect and change the conditions of service of the Police Commissioner. Whatever angle or way you humanly look at it, the Commissioner of Police is being practically prevented from performing his duties as stipulated in his employment contract. I submit, Mr Speaker, that this falls within the definition of constructive dismissal or removal, and hence section 129 of the Constitution is applicable. The same applies to any allegations of misbehavior in respect to any Commissioner of Police.

Mr Speaker, for the benefit of those who are not familiar with Section 129 of the Constitution, it would be helpful if I could be allowed to read the relevant provisions of the Constitution. It is as follows, and I quote:

- (1) The provisions of this section shall apply in relation to persons holding the offices of the Auditor General, Director of Public Prosecutions, Public Solicitor and Commissioner of Police.
- (2) Subject to the provisions of this section, a person to whom this section applies shall vacate his office when he attains the age of 55 years.

Provided the Governor-General may permit a person to whom this section applies who attains the age of 55 years to continue in office until he has attained such later age as may have been agreed between the Governor General and that person.

- 3) A person to whom this section applies may be removed from office only for inability to discharge the functions of his office (whether arising from infirmity of body or mind or any other cause) or for misbehavior and shall not be so removed except in accordance with the provisions of this section.
- 4) A person to whom this section applies shall be removed from office by the Governor General if the question of his removal from office has been referred to

a tribunal appointed under subsection (5) of this section and the tribunal has recommended to the Governor General that he ought to be removed from office for inability as aforesaid or for misbehavior.

- 5) If the Governor General considers that the question of removing a person to whom this section applies from office for inability as aforesaid or for misbehavior ought to be investigated, or if the Prime Minister represents to the Governor General that question ought to be investigated, then –

the Governor General shall appoint a tribunal, which shall consist of a Chairman who is a person who holds or has held a high judicial office in some parts of the Commonwealth, and not less than two other members; and

- a) The tribunal shall inquire into the matter and report on the facts thereof to the Governor General and recommend to the Governor General whether the person ought to be removed from office for inability as aforesaid or misbehavior.
- 6) On the question of removing a person to whom this section applies has been referred to a tribunal under subsection (5) of this section, the Governor General may suspend the person from performing the functions of his office, and any such suspension may at any time be revoked by the Governor General and shall in any case cease to have effect if the tribunal recommends to the Governor General that the person should not be removed.
- 7) Except as provided in subsection (4) of this section, the functions of the Governor General under this section shall be exercised by him in relation to the office of the Commissioner of the Police in his own deliberate judgment.

- 8) The provisions of this section shall not apply in relation to a person appointed to act in any office referred to in subsection (1) of this section during any period when that office is vacant or the holder thereof is unable to perform the functions of his office; and the appointment of such a person may be revoked by the Governor General at any time before the expiry of that period.
- 9) (b) A person appointed to an office to which this section applies under this subsection shall cease to hold office on the expiration of the term for which he was appointed but shall otherwise be removed from office only in accordance with the provisions of this section” unquote.

Mr Speaker, I have a feeling that the Government may be aware of the requirements of the Constitution. The question therefore arises: Why has the Government made the decision to declare the Commissioner of Police, who incidentally is a government officer an undesirable immigrant?

The collaborative answer may be as follows:

- (i) The Commissioner’s contract will expire in April 2007. The Minister of Immigration has therefore made a calculated gamble that in the remaining short time until April this year, nobody would find out. He would therefore be killing two birds with one stone, namely, setting the Police Commissioner aside, because he did not listen to them, and benefiting from the virtues of the so-called eleventh Commandment – thou shall not be found out!

However, Mr Speaker, this Parliament has the solemn responsibility to ensure that cunning individuals do not gamble away the sovereignty of this nation.

Mr Speaker, I have established beyond any reasonable doubt that the Minister’s declaration constitutes in all practical aspects

and respects a constructive dismissal or removal of the Commissioner of the Police. If that is not so, then God bless Solomon Islands from shore to shore.

Mr Speaker, a number of questions would arise from this construction.

Question Number One: Is the Minister’s action under the Immigration Act unconstitutional? We all know that if an Act of Parliament or part thereof is inconsistent with the Constitution that Act or part thereof is deemed to be null and void.

Question Number Two: In declaring a Government Officer an undesirable immigrant, is he Minister setting a very bad precedent for this Nation?

Question Number Three: In not allowing the Commissioner of Police to re-enter the country and defend himself against allegations, is the Government in breach of the common law which requires the application of the principles of National Justice?

Mr Speaker, the answers to these questions lie in Parliament passing this motion. The Parliament must not shy away from its sovereign responsibility to enquire into and report on this important legal and constitutional matter.

Mr Speaker, I commend the motion to Parliament and I beg to move

(The motion is open for debate)

Hon TOSIKA: Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Small Malaita for moving this very important motion. As he rightly puts it, if any person misbehaves and neglects his duty he is bound under the Constitution to be questioned by a tribunal. But in this case when the contract was made way back in 2005 it was inconsistent with the Constitution.

Mr Speaker, section 43(2) states any person that takes up the post of the Commissioner of Police must be independent and not subject to any person’s advice except the Prime Minister or a Minister authorized by the Prime Minister to give direction on policy

aspects. In this case, when the contract was made, it was the Minister of Police who has no power to sign any contract during that time that signed the contract. It was the Minister of Police during that time who signed the contract when he has no power to sign any contract in relation to this appointment.

Secondly, the Commissioner of Police, Shane Castles was a seconded Officer from the AFP in Australia. It was spelt out very clear under the contract that he is subject to advice from Canberra and therefore he is not an independent Commissioner of Police as required under the constitution to give advice to the executive government of Solomon Islands. As such, it disqualifies him as a Commissioner of Police in the first place.

Mr Speaker, the other reason is that on April 18 when the riot in China Town happened he did not give operational direction within 48 hours, which resulted in the looting and burning down of the China Town.

Again last year he also gave an operational command for Police Officers to raid the Prime Minister's Office, an office that should be respected. He should go through the normal channel of protocol and advise the Ministry responsible as it is a political issue. In this case, he ordered his policemen to raid and break open the doors of the Prime Minister's Office. If this is done in Canberra, would Canberra be willing to accommodate a Police Commissioner from Solomon Islands if a Solomon Islands Police Commissioner is in Australia, commanding officers from Solomon Islands to go into the Prime Minister's Office in Canberra just to get a fax machine. This is misbehavior and misconduct in office. Because of this simple reason, Mr Speaker, the Government came to the conclusion and therefore made submission to the Governor General, which we waited and waited until we can no longer rely on the Governor General because His Excellency was not delivering the advice that was required of him on this matter.

As I have said, under the contract, he is not subject to appear before any tribunal or any court of law. Therefore, the provisions that exist in the Constitution do not apply to him because his contract says so because you are the ones who signed it. You signed the contract without

realizing that it did not fulfill the requirement of the Constitution. On this basis, it is fitting for the Government to declare this person a prohibited immigrant into Solomon Islands. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr MAGGA: Mr Speaker, I will be very brief in contributing to this motion. First of all, I want to ask the MP for South Malaita to bring to this House a much better motion that would help Solomon Islands. This sort of motion is not fitting for us to discuss in here. My analysis on issues being debated in Parliament, it would seem as though those on the other side would want to gain points on retaining the sacked Commissioner of Police, and most probably are also accusing this side as wanting to gain points on the sacked Attorney General.

Mr Speaker, I have observed how the sacked Commissioner of Police conducted the security affairs of this nation. I can recall at one stage at about 9pm during a caucus meeting, the sacked Commissioner of Police was summoned to come and answer issues on the security of this nation. When the issue of the high crime rate in Burns Creek was brought up he said that it is impossible for him to provide extra security and he cannot guarantee the security of Members of Parliament as well. This is not the sort of Commissioner of Police that we would want to head the Police Force in this country. Areas like this are very important because a Commissioner of Police must work together with the government of the day on matters of security.

When I heard such answers coming from him, I started to question what sort of person is this. It would appear as the Minister has stated that he was not cooperative with the government.

One case the Minister has already stated in his speech is he was the one who allocated the Protection Unit to guide the Prime Minister but in return he told them to break the Prime Minister's Office. What sort of Commissioner of Police is that? This is the main reason why the Government has taken a very strong step to finish him from the job. It is very important as Members of Parliament to bring in motions fitting for us to debate in this Parliament. It does not look right for us to debate this Commissioner of Police when the Prime

Minister of Solomon Islands is ready to hold talks with the Prime Minister of Australia as it will escalate to new issues which will only deteriorate the situation further.

I would like the Opposition to take note of this because we are trying to mend this diplomatic impasse with Australia, and when we bring up this sort of motion it will further aggravate the situation.

Sir, I do not want to talk too much, but to say that I oppose this motion.

Sir KEMAKEZA: Mr Speaker, I too would like to contribute in support of this very important motion, not like the MP for Temotu Pele who does not seem to understand the issue of this very important motion. Although the Government side is going to defeat this motion but let us speak our minds out and give the checks and balances on the government.

Mr Speaker, this is not a useless motion, but it is a motion that requires something to be done or else something different will happen. If the action of the Minister or the government for that matter is straightforward then it should be like this and not the way you have done.

Proper procedures are there for you to get rid of the Commissioner of Police. That is all we want. But the way you did it is a bit suspicious, inhuman, and has no respect of others, and you labeled this person as bad like the MP for Temotu has said. We must do it properly.

Sir, from 1989 to 1992 I was Minister for Police just like the MP for West Honiara. What this government did was exactly what the government then was trying to do to get rid of the Commissioner of Police then in order to put in an expatriate Commissioner.

At that time I came up with a review to review the whole Solomon Islands Police Force under the chairmanship of the late Deputy Commissioner of Police, as you know. The Review Report is supposed to be in the office of the Minister for Police, if not the Police Commissioner's Office or the Prime Minister's Office. It is a good report that should help the Government improve the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force.

Sir, we tried resorting to the way it was done now but it was not possible. And so we

resorted to using section 129, which the Member has already read and so I do not wish to repeat it. We even wanted to form a tribunal that would make recommendations. We also tried but it was not possible and so we just leave the Commissioner of Police then to be at post until he reached his retiring age before he finished. And after this local Commissioner of Police retired an expatriate was appointed, which every one of us knows. The reason is to boost the morale of the Police Force, which had disappeared because of our wantok business. That was what exactly happened in 2000. My goodness, can't we look back and see what has happened yesterday.

This side of the House is not saying not to get rid of the Commissioner of Police, but if he is to be removed, do it properly. You are now in power, so apply the proper provisions and then nobody will question you. You are the government of the day.

When I was the Prime Minister from 2001 to 2006, I replaced the Commissioner of Police in a very neat way with another Commissioner of Police. Doing it properly is all we want and not a cowboy business.

You did the same to the former Attorney General, the Solicitor General, and the way you appointed the suspended Attorney General too is not right. We want the suspended Attorney General to come but you appointed him in the wrong way.

Proper procedures should have been applied here. We did not oppose the suspended Attorney General but his appointment should have been done properly. The way you brought him into the country by a hijacked plane is also not right. Do it neatly and nobody will question you. All the power in this world is in your hands and nobody will question you if you bring in the suspended Attorney General.

In fact you are the one who made him to lose face and you made him to become an issue. If you had done it neatly he would not have become an issue. Do it the proper way and not the way that is suspicious. We are not against you in whatever you are doing for better or for worse. No.

But one point, Mr Speaker, that I would like to challenge the Minister of Police and the MP for Temotu Pele, and this also applies to

those who will be speaking later that the Commissioner of Police is the member of the Security Council, and that is the time the Prime Minister can hire and fire.

The Prime Minister is the Chairman of the Security Council and the Minister of Police is a member of the Security Council. That is the time you two can question the Commissioner of Police on issues that you might have questions on. You should not do it the cowboy way.

Likewise the Commissioner is also subjected to brief the Cabinet every two weeks. Every two weeks the Commissioner of Police is to brief the Cabinet on matters of security, intelligence, and matters that is likely to happen so that the government can decide and put measures in place for good or for bad.

The Minister of Police has said there are too many crimes happening in some places, and the Security Council meeting is where you should discuss such matters. Perhaps the Commissioner might not have enough vehicles or not enough manpower or he might need something. Such issues can be easily discussed and sorted out during your fortnightly meetings. But not deport him like what you have done. That is what we are questioning.

You told him to take his leave and when he was outside of the country you told him not to come back into the country, he is banned. That is inhuman. He is a big man. He has been serving the Federal Police for 30 years but here you are belittling him in Solomon Islands.

There are provisions in the Constitution, in the Police Act and the Public Service Act that you can resort to in dealing with him, which is much more proper and appropriate. But do not say to him he is a bad person and so he should leave. That is not diplomacy.

Even though you might not like the MP for Small Malaita but you should do it nicely. You can say you will vote for him during the election but when election time comes he lost his seat. This applies to all of us in any walks of life. Nobody is perfect. We have failures and weaknesses and so who is the MP for Temotu Pele to judge others when his own voters will question him after four years. Who are you to start questioning the capability of others? That is inhuman. You should withdraw that statement if you want the respect of others.

We cannot say anything about the Prime Minister because he is a capable Prime Minister. But we are only questioning his actions. That is all I am asking. Do it properly and then nobody will question you.

Sometimes the Prime Minister can also make wrong decisions too may be when he is pressure or when two Ministers wanted to resign and he does not have enough sleep and so he can make wrong decisions. But he can learn from his mistakes as he goes along. That is what I want to tell the MP for Temotu Pele so that he does not call other people rubbish.

Finally, I want to say again what I said yesterday. I do not want to talk very much because the MP for Small Malaita has covered everything. Do not ever tamper with politics. Do not try to put your muscle on politics because you will be only there for four years. I was there for the last four years, I am nobody now and now I am under investigation. If you want to prevent these things and therefore you did this unprofessional decision your days are counted and numbered. Your days are countered and numbered.

You cannot take away the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, and so just wait until you are out from that side. That is exactly what is happening to the MP who is now talking to you. Whether you like it or not it will happen. You may want to hide it but you cannot hide it forever. Just like what the MP for West Makira is saying that only one figure points at me but four of them points back at you. Thank you. I take that advice but please have in mind my colleagues on the other side that we are not here to spoil you but we are here to help do the right thing. That is our job. Otherwise remove all these tables and we all just sit down as one group. Remove all these tables, chairs and put mats on the floor and let us all sit down here and discuss issues of the nation. Just like we do at our homes or our customs and we do away with this Westminster system of an opposition and a government.

Sir, even in the Opposition side there are quite a number of shadow ministers that are without remuneration. This is quarter casting the Westminster system. If there is full privilege given to us why would we want to takeover the government? Just do it like the RCDF where

\$1million is given to us, and not \$1.5million like the Prime Minister who should also get \$1million for his constituency. If that is done why should I be worried? What else would I want? What else is there for me to get?

Hon Darcy: Come back to the motion of the MP for Small Malaita.

Sir Kemakeza: I am talking about procedures and your actions. Some good actions like those I have given is what you should be doing. I am questioning the action taken on the sacked Attorney General, the Solicitor General, the Commissioner of Police, the MP for Aoke/Langa Langa, the Leader of the National Party, the former Prime Minister, the suspended Attorney General, and the list goes on. Are we in our right minds, Mr Speaker? Or are we like the former MP for West Makira, the late former Prime Minister who said, 'I am in power and so this is my time'. No, no, no, Mr Speaker, this could be our time but it will go away.

As I have said yesterday, history remains, it will not change. Where were the great leaders who once stood and talked in here just like you and me today? They have all gone, so why personalize politics. If you personalize politics I will not able to talk with the Prime Minister. No, because when I go out, I smoke, chew betel nut, I joke with you on the government side because you are not my enemies. When I want something I can come and see you. Is this country only belongs to you? No, it belongs to the half a million people of Solomon Islands.

This country does not only belong to the 30 members on the government side so that you can do anything you want, like doing away with the constitution, doing away with the provisions of the law. Is that what you are going to do? No. We are here to represent these half a million people, to make friends with our partners, to make a friendly environment for our investors, and to preach Solomon Islands as good place that anybody can come and live with us in peace and harmony so that they can help us in return. And not like what the Prime Minister said, 'to live on dependency'.

Mr Speaker, we need investors to come into the country. We need our other friends.

Mr Speaker, even when you go back home and you do not have sago palm, you will go and ask another old man that you do not even think about in the past for his sago palm because you do not have any. This is practical in life. Or I might not have betel nut and so I will ask another old woman to bring me betel nut in the evening.

A word which you wrote, Mr Speaker, has not gone away from my memory, which I kept thinking about, and this is the word 'interdependence'. What a great wisdom from you. Remember that we need each other - you like me and I like you.

Solomon Islands is not indispensable as somebody said this week, because it is part and partial of the global village. Why so fussy about it? It is high time that many of you in the government support the MP for Small Malaita. He has been moving a couple of motions during this Meeting, and so we should have some sympathy for him. Malaitan Members of Parliament, he is your wantok and not mine, but I support him even though he is far away in Small Malaita from me in Savo.

With that, Mr Speaker, I support the motion.

Hon KAUA: Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing me to contribute to this very important motion.

Mr Speaker, I am surprised we are discussing a motion that has nothing for us. I would have thought that the right motion for us to talk about is to speed up the establishment of the committee to investigate the Black Tuesday of April last year. Nevertheless, Mr Speaker, since the Opposition opted for this motion by revealing certain things may be that is what they want.

Before the MP for Savo walks out, because he talked about the procedure of doing the right thing, I would like to tell him that he was the one who did the wrong thing and that is why this thing is wrong. I would have thought that this government is doing the right thing by following our laws and using the constitution to make these things happen.

The recruitment of this person we are talking about today, can I ask you, Mr Speaker, why did you refuse in the first place to be the

chairperson of the committee that appointed this Commissioner of Police? Why did the Chief Justice and the Chairman of the Public Service Commission refuse to be the chairperson of the Committee that appointed this Commissioner of Police? Why did they refuse in the first place to be chairmen of the committee that recruited this person we are talking about today, may I ask, Mr Speaker? Is that doing things according to procedure? You did not follow procedures because if procedures are followed anyone who is a constitutional post-holder must be interviewed by none other but people holding constitutional posts too. But in this case, it is not because the Speaker of Parliament refused. I do not know his reasons for refusing to be the chairperson of this Committee. Similarly, the Chief Justice and the Chairman of Public Service Commission refused, and so it is left with a person who should not have been in the committee was the chairperson - the Chairman of the Leadership Code Commission and two of us Permanent Secretaries, at that time the Secretary to Cabinet and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Police were in the committee.

But to further surprise you any committee that appoints any person in Solomon Islands cannot have someone from outside as its member. But included in the committee is none other than the High Commissioner of Australia. Is that procedure, which you are talking about? Not, at all. So it was not done rightly in the first place.

Sir, three people chose him but because they want someone from Canberra that was why they appointed him. They stopped us getting funds from the EU so that we could have the option of choosing someone who is not an Australian. Because we have no choice therefore we have to choose someone where money can go to. As I said beggars have no choice. Is that procedural? This Government is trying to follow the process by applying the Immigration Act to make things happen. This is why the MP for Temotu Pele said that we should not talk about these things because they are sensitive. Why, because the Prime Minister will talk these things over with his counterpart and so it is not proper for us to talk about things in here. This information should not be revealed in here

but since you asked for it we are revealing it to you. It is now all wrong. The procedure you are talking about has not been followed.

The Minister of Police also signed the agreement he is not responsible for. Any agreement signed by an outside person with Solomon Islands has to be done by none other than the Secretary to Cabinet. It should be signed by none other but the Secretary to Cabinet did not sign it but it was the Minister of Police who signed it, because it was designed, printed and made in another place. Everything was already prepared and only the signature that is required. Is that what you want to hear?

Mr Speaker, why are we debating this person when he has already retired? If you want us to debate motions you should be moving a commission of inquiry into matters affecting Solomon Islands so that the people of Solomon Islands could benefit. Why do you have to move a motion on somebody from a different place? Why? Is this in the interest of our people so that we are talking about now? Whose interest is this?

Sir, I am asking this question because the one who is moving this motion is better off not in this Parliament. You go over to Australia and talk about issues like this. This Parliament is to talk about issues affecting our people and for the betterment of our people. We should not be talking about people of other countries. What good are we going to get out of this motion? You have already heard that the procedure was already wrong in the first place.

The Government is reluctant to support this motion because it feels that some of the things we are talking about here will hit back at us. When you point at somebody how many figures come back to you? I hope the learned MP for Small Malaita thinks about something good for the people of Malaita rather than talk about someone who has already retired last month. What benefit are we going to get from this motion?

I thought what this government is doing now is following legal procedures and processes but yet you still bring in this motion. What are you bringing this motion for? Why don't we talk about issues that will make this country grow? Whose interest are you trying to promote here, may I ask?

That small group over there is always asking the same thing, which I thought we have already told you these issues. Are there not any good questions for you to ask? Are you going to ask the same questions every time?

The Prime Minister said that we are grown ups and we should now start to look further and not to look at things that will not benefit us.

With those few remarks, I do not support the motion.

Hon WAIPORA: Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing me to talk on this motion. First of all I want to ask a question to the MP moving this motion. What is worrying the MP for Small Malaita to move this motion? Why is he worrying about this person to move this motion?

Mr Speaker, we are living in our country and if we find someone not doing things in a proper manner in governing this country we must get rid of him. No more no less. What you should be worrying about is the fresh air of Solomon Islands?

I am one who has been appointed as chairman of a special select committee in 2004 that investigated a very serious matter on the 10 Kwaio men who died at the Weather Coast, and we completed our job in four months. This special select committee was passed by Parliament and I was appointed as chairman of that committee. I completed the report but the Commissioner of Police we are talking about now and the Minister of Police at that time, the MP for Shortlands put the report somewhere. Where is the report? We are going to produce another report which we will again question its whereabouts.

Sir, I find it very difficult to believe this motion. We must be concerned about issues affecting us. We must defend our country. We must grow up. We must get out of our nappies. There are many more important things to discuss in this Parliament than talking about a person from Australia.

Sir, we say that we are going to repair the rift between Canberra and Honiara, but why did the Business Committee allow this motion to be debated in here? Why did you approve this motion to be debated because we will go on criticizing Australia and we would not be able to

repair our relationship? This is Parliament and we have the privilege to talk about anything. Do you want us to talk on sensitive issues like this? I think the Committee that is responsible of approving the business of Parliament must screen the businesses properly. Why did you allow this sensitive issue to be debated in here? This is a personal thing? Why?

Mr Speaker, when this Government recruited the Attorney General we thought his sins have been forgiven already but Australia said no, his sins are still there. When this government recruited another lawyer, Australia said the lawyer you are employing has cases against him and is going through the court in his country. Are you telling me that Australia is employing corrupt lawyers? When this government picks someone from Australia, Australia is saying his/her sins are still here. My goodness, so who are we going to employ?

The MP for Small Malaita who is very concerned about this person, is there anyone from Small Malaita that can break the Office of Howard or Downer?

Mr Haomae: Point of order, do not mention names.

Hon Waipora: Point of order he sits down. Do not allow him to talk because this is my time.

Mr Speaker: Point of Order honorable Minister.

Mr Haomae: When the MP for West Makira is in West Makira he can mention the names of people but here in Parliament that is not allowed under Standing Orders.

Hon Waipora: I am talking on the floor of parliament.

Mr Speaker: Please refrain from using names. I think that is what the honorable Member is saying.

Hon Waipora: I withdraw any names that I mentioned. But I am just saying that we should not waste time on issues like this. We are following the law. If you think we are wrong then take us to the High Court. Why bring this

motion to Parliament? If it was already wrong under the Constitution why not take it to the High Court rather than come wasting our time in here talking about personal issues.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to come into Parliament this morning because I am preparing my things to go away and that is why I was absent yesterday. I want to tell the MP for South Malaita that you are trying to defend this person but Australia is trying to stop your RCDF. Australia is saying that the Republic of China is using the RCDF to encourage Solomon Islands to be corrupt and so it wants the ROC to stop giving the RCDF to Members of Parliament.

Mr Gukuna: Point of Order! Mr Speaker, I think the Minister is going out of the issue here. We are not discussing Australia but we are discussing the Commissioner of Police. You are wrong because you are extending this motion to Australia when we are talking about the Commissioner of Police.

If you are a man of principle and you know what you are doing, we are discussing the Commissioner of Police. Leave Australia out of this issue. You might as well remove Australia's \$1.7 billion in the budget if that is your attitude.

Hon Waipora: That is what you want for bringing this motion to the floor of Parliament. That is what you want. You know very well that bringing this motion for us to debate in here can make us go all over the world. Why did you bring this motion in the first place?

Sir, I humbly ask the MP for South Malaita to withdraw this motion rather vote for it. We must act sensibly. As I said already we must get out of our nappies and grow up, and let us play the right politics in this country. We must be concern about the development of this country and not this rubbish motion here.

Mr Speaker: Could you withdraw the word 'rubbish' honorable Minister?

Hon Waipora: Oh sorry, I withdraw the word 'rubbish'. Mr Speaker, I am expressing my concern because the people of West Makira are not interested in this motion. We are interested in different things because we are living in the

backward and that is why we are trying our best to do things right rather than come and talk about people from Australia.

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

Mr DAUSABEA: Mr Speaker, thanking you for giving me time to contribute to the debate on this motion. I will be very brief and short in my debate. First of all, if the person concern is here in Solomon Islands he would not want us to debate this motion in here because it is exposing some personal things about him which would be of concern to him and his family. I also do not want to dwell on the personality of the person concerned but I would like to point out a few things which I believe are worth informing this House about so that we can have a balance view on the motion and then decide rightly on where to make our votes.

Mr Speaker, this person's appointment was controversial right from the beginning. As alluded to by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture, the way he was appointed was on record and nobody can deny it. However, there are few things the Minister missed out, which I would like to bring to the attention of Members of Parliament and the mover of this motion.

Mr Speaker, I said earlier that the appointment of this person concern has been very controversial as rightly alluded to by the Minister for Agriculture and Deputy Prime Minister. There were several candidates that applied for the post and interviewed by the panel.

From information I got from the panel, the undesirable Commissioner was not the one that topped the interview session. That is why I said that from the beginning he was already a controversial candidate.

The former Minister of Police has to be removed from his post for reluctantly accepting this person's appointment as the Commissioner of Police for Solomon Islands, the former Member for Temotu Pele who is now replaced by my colleague here on my right. He shared his concern with me after his removal as the Minister of Police and National Security.

Mr Speaker, why are we so concern about the removal of this foreigner and not

concern about the removal of a fellow Member of Parliament and Minister for Police, an indigenous Solomon Islands. We don't care when it comes to deciding between a foreigner and an indigenous Solomon Islander, we chop the Solomon Islander. I feel sorry for him and I sympathize with him when he shared this with me the evening he was removed as Minister for Police and National Security.

Sir, you can see from those two points that this person's appointment is controversial. If we care to check his affiliation with the AFP, I think we would find a lot of questions to answer too.

Mr Speaker, I can only go back to the riot in April. I feel sorry for the Solomon Islands Police officers who were used as human shields in front of this honorable House. The foreign police officers of the PPF were armored with shields and batons.

I have been involved in riots before as a former police officer and I have also given orders before as a police officer in a riot such as the one that occurred in April last year. The riot in front of this honorable House was a small thing that can be easily handled. Yes, it is small for me because I have handled bigger ones before, and you and your expatriates could not handle the small one here. That is why I said it is small. A much bigger riot was in 1990 and the one that followed after.

This only shows the capability of our officers that once given the right support needed they can do it rather than looking outside.

Sir, I would like to question, why did the former commissioner not top the list of the interview panel and yet was selected? That is my question. Why? Why was the former Minister for Police, before the MP for Shortlands became minister, removed from his post as minister? This is because of the involvement of this person.

I am surprised that the Member for Small Malaita has to raise this in Parliament. If you disagree with the actions taken by the government on the commissioner, then I believe the proper avenue to raise your concerns would be the courts.

I heard in the media he has appointed his lawyer to represent him. Mr Speaker, we are so concerned about laws and all these, and we

make laws, but it is the job of our attorney general and lawyers to interpret the laws rightly for us. Some of us never bother to read our laws, but we want to become lawyers in this House.

Mr Speaker, there are many other things that this House should raise and be concerned about that involves the indigenous people of this country, which we turned blind eyes to. Things like what, you may ask me, Mr Speaker? Why was the Prerogative of Mercy Committee dismantled in the last three years? Are we not concerned about that but only concerned about this person? It is a requirement in the Constitution that there shall be a Prerogative of Mercy Committee.

Mr Speaker, I start to wonder where our priorities are. I am still disappointed that when we went to Auki for the signing ceremony of the Auluta Basin development, the four Malaitan Members of Parliament did not attend the ceremony with us. I heard the Member for East Are Are saying in the media that he should ask his constituents first before going because it is a multi-cultural constituency. I went there because ...

Mr Huniehu: Point of order. I just wish to correct the MP for East Honiara that not at anytime did I make any press statement to that effect.

Mr Dausabea: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I think it is time that he should listen to the media. He was the one who has been giving news on their behalf to the media, which came out in the SIBC, on the broadcast media. He also informed Radio Australia that four Ministers and two backbenchers are prepared to go there. I am a keen listener to the media because I have interest on issues and matters concerning my country. So I am surprised the MP said that he did not do it.

Mr Speaker, I can just go and ring the SIBC to fax me the copy of the news item the MP for East Are Are made and I can give it to him straightaway. I am concern because the problem in my constituency is a Malaita problem, and nobody can deny this.

Had the much talked about developments in Malaita were there, I believe

there would not be any problem in East Honiara, Central Honiara and in West Honiara. That is why I am saying, Mr Speaker, that these four MPs are putting us down. The Member for East Honiara has to go because these four Malaitan MPs did not go. I went to give confidence to the Malaita Provincial Executive and the landowners to see there is support even from a Member of Honiara so that the people can quickly allow their lands and development can go ahead. We should not just sit down in Honiara and talk. We must work.

Mr Speaker, as I said earlier if the MP for East Are Are had been listening to the radio he would have turned it off because I sympathize with him. I do not want to say these things but since it has been brought into this honorable chamber I have to debate it as a national leader of this country.

Mr Speaker, it took 48 hours for the Police to respond to the riot. On the third day there was a curfew. Are there no police officers and no orders? Several days after the MP for East Honiara was arrested and taken down to Rove. This is why I said incapability. I have been commanding riots in the past. Let us only talk about things that would benefit us.

This person has already retired and so we should just leave him in peace with some respect to his family. But here we are still raising it as an issue, whilst to his family this is not an issue, they want to forget it, they want to get on with life. This is not an honorable thing to do in this honorable Parliament.

Mr Speaker, there are certain things that we as leaders of this country need to look at and bring to this chamber to discuss. Like a question that was raised yesterday that we have 92 remandees, and I am not afraid to mention in this House that some of them have been in there for three to four years without being tried. These are the things we should look at, our very own people still in custody. You only have to go through what I went through to know what is really happening in this country.

To me, Mr Speaker, this is apartheid in its modern form by the use of the Police and the Judiciary to suppress people. I am not afraid to say this because I have gone through it. These are issues that we should be looking at, and not about this person who has been sacked and gone

already. What good is he going to do? He has retired and he does not want any more issues with us.

Mr Speaker, I call on the Member for Small Malaita to withdraw the motion if he wants the support of the Member for East Honiara.

Mr Speaker, before I sit down I would like to make a comment on the terms of reference of the commission of inquiry. When the terms of reference were drawn up everybody was jumping on the streets of Honiara saying the two terms of reference will cut across the justice of this country.

Mr Speaker, I thought the law draws up those terms of references, but everybody was jumping up. It was even challenged in the High Court, but the judgment of the High Court is that the two terms of references are okay and are within the bounds of the commission and within the bounds of law and they do not interfere with investigation into the Member for Central Honiara and the Member for East Honiara.

Sir, why are we not concern when it comes to issues about our own people and leaders of this country, but when something concerns another person we jump up in this House? No wonder we cannot work together as the Member for East Are Are alluded to in the policies.

Mr Speaker, I call on us to set our priorities right if this country is to move any further. Mr Speaker, in concluding I would like to say, if I have said anything that is harmful to the person concern, I apologize as it is not my intention, but because it was brought into this honorable Chamber and as a duly elected Member of Parliament for East Honiara, I have to debate this motion the way I am doing. However, if anything that I said does not go down well with him and his family, I apologize.

With that Mr Speaker, I call on the Member for Small Malaita again to withdraw the motion, because I oppose the motion.

(applause)

Mr TANEKO: Thank you, Mr Speaker, I think this motion, as we have heard the other speakers said is a bit sensitive but it is a good motion to enable us learn how we can man our country.

Mr Speaker, all of us have an experience of the country and where we are heading to. We have seen a lot of problems, pains and sufferings experienced by our people. Here we are 50 Members of Parliament sitting in this House, the legislature, to make the laws, change laws, add on to laws or reduce laws.

When it comes to the very important task of appointing the commissioner of police, I was Minister of Police and Justice too, like the Minister of Police sitting down there. The Ministry has the Permanent Secretary and the Attorney General's Chamber to guide it in its selection and also the criteria are set by the Police and Prison Services Commission on the procedure of appointing the Commissioner of Police.

The Minister sitting down in the office is covered by the PS, the TAs, the executive and administrative officers just like the Minister of Agriculture there, my good friend the Deputy Prime Minister who was the Special Secretary to the Prime Minister, and he knows all the laws. He was also within the government as well.

Mr Speaker, on 17th December 2006 when I came back from Samoa I met the Commissioner of Police at the Departure Lounge leaving for his Christmas holidays. As a matter of courtesy I said goodbye to him and he left. A few days later I heard on the media he was an undesirable immigrant, and it saddens me.

Mr Speaker, the experiences this country has gone through led to the selection of such people so that they can support this country. That is history for us to remember so that it is not repeated anymore in order for us to live in peace and harmony.

Here we are talking and personalizing this issue and trying to be vocal and argue that it is not procedural, it is not done according to protocol and so on. We can say such things but the law and power is in our hands, it is in this House.

Mr Speaker, we know exactly how this country went down with our police officers from the beginning up until we selected them. The first police commissioner, I can remember Mr Speaker, as the Minister of Police and Justice at that time said in Cabinet that if the police or militants shoot me and I die, \$100,000 will be

paid to my family but that money will be of no value to my children and my good wife. It will be of no value because they need their father much more than the money.

Mr Speaker, I was suffering in that office sitting down as the Minister for Police and Justice at that time. It was a pain to all Members of Parliament at that time. Right now we are now relaxing and enjoying the environment being brought by all the good decisions made by the government of the day to bring back peace and harmony. I thank the Almighty God for the good decisions that we made.

I said in Cabinet, Mr Speaker, if anyone is strong enough they should come and change me because the chair is hot. There are broken louvers all over my office. It was painful to me. I put my head under the table, I am repeating it again, I put my head under the table and I lost my finger.

We brought in the Commissioner of Police from the U.K. In pain, the U.K. Government supported us through the British High Commissioner by paying for the Commissioner of Police at that time. He completed his term and has left. We thank him for what he has done and what he has planted for bringing peace and justice, law enforcement, and stability in the country. There was capability planning capacity or whatever. We strengthened law enforcement. Right now, Mr Speaker, we have a good disciplined Force with the highest code of ethics with good police officers for the future.

This motion reminds us that every decision we make in this House must be fair and just for the nation and for the betterment of beneficiaries who are the citizens of this nation who voted us and gave us the power to make best decisions on their behalf. This is where we are. That is why we have been elected to this legislature.

Mr Speaker, would it be possible that things are not properly done in here. I do not know. After this Commissioner of Police has put his input into the Police Force by bringing in new police officers into the Force so that there is law enforcement in this country, we declared him undesirable. I think there should be some sort of appreciation made to him and a decision

made as to how we are going to discipline this police officer we are debating in this House.

Mr Speaker, if I were the Minister for Police now I would have summoned the Prime Minister and the Prison Commissioner that if the Police Commissioner is breaking the laws of the nation, ask him politely because of the seeds he has planted to resign rather than declaring him as an undesirable immigrant. That is the wise thing the Minister of Police should have done and there would not have been any complaints.

Why, Mr Speaker? He should be asked politely to resign because he has done something great for this nation. He has planted the seeds we are harvesting now. We are harvesting somebody who has negotiated for peace, and for bringing back law and order to this country so that peace and harmony can reign in Solomon Islands as a whole. That is what I would have done. I would have done it in a much more polite way. May be we are not happy with some decisions he has made but bear in mind that there is somebody who has done something for this nation. We should have asked him politely to resign rather than resorting to the action taken against him.

It is a hard thing, Mr Speaker, but I am sure the Ministry concern knows the criteria on the selection of this Police Commissioner.

Mr Speaker, I was strong enough at that time to keep this person and another one as well. We did not have money at that time and so UN helped us through the British Commission. This person and the other one who has gone back were not paid by us. They were not paid by the Solomon Islands basket. He is paid by his own country. They look after him when he is here. What a wonderful blessing! Those are big things.

Mr Speaker, I will be very short and just to say that there should be appreciation from us to people who helped bring us to the situation we are now enjoying the stability of our country. Mothers, children and everyone are now enjoying because of these people's hard work. All of us experienced it.

Mr Speaker, we come in here and argue. We can go to such and such a level, we criticize, personalize and politicize or whatever terminology we might want to use but at least we should appreciate what this Commissioner of

Police has done for this nation and should not be declared undesirable. We should revoke that declaration and give him his freedom. Because of what he has done he can come to the nation for holidays as he is no longer the Commissioner of Police of this country.

With that, Mr Speaker, I resume my seat.

Mr HUNIEHU: Mr Speaker, I just want to briefly comment on this very important motion. I think it is not the person holding the position of the Commissioner of Police that is the issue here. It is the constitutionality of the office that is the issue.

The national constitution clearly stipulates the importance of the appointments of the Commissioner of Police, the Accountant General, the Director of Public Prosecution and the Public Solicitor. Where the dismissal of any of these persons is queried or is in doubt, the public and Members of Parliament have the right to question as to why the important and key positions these people are holding have been dismissed.

Mr Speaker, I think that is the issue that is misunderstood by Ministers of the Government and backbenchers of the Government who have spoken.

Mr Speaker, I am not here to defend Shane Castles but to argue the legal point about the constitutionality of the office. Even I myself could not really understand as to why he was issued the marching order to leave the position, to leave Solomon Islands and go to his homeland. And If I do not understand the reasons as to why he was given the undesirable status to leave Solomon Islands, then how much more would many Solomon Islanders who have no access to intelligent information and have no access to the radio can know. They have the right to know what happened, the grounds relating to the dismissal of a key person holding a constitutional post.

Sir, do we not realize that the post of the Commissioner of Police is enshrined in the Constitution of Solomon Islands? If anyone doubts the appropriateness of his dismissal then anyone has the right to question whether his exit is constitutional.

The Minister for Agriculture and Livestock, the Deputy Prime Minister lectured this Parliament about procedural issues that the entrance of the former Commissioner of Police into the Solomon Islands was questionable. He was asking us on this side of the House why not take him to court. I think he is kidding himself. It is not for us on this side of the House to take him to court because we have no dispute with procedural issues. If it was him who is questioning the procedural issues then why didn't he apply to the High Court to make judgment on those procedural issues? Instead the government deliberately decided to appoint the Minister for Foreign Affairs responsible for Immigration to be the judge of the case.

Is this good governance? It must be the court that should decide so that there are no doubts in the minds of Solomon Islanders and in the minds of Members of Parliament on who to accuse. You have taken the law and judgment into your own hands, and that is why this motion finds its way to the floor of this Parliament. I do not see that as good governance.

Why didn't you take the case on the selection of the Commissioner of Police to court that those who were in the committee that selected him were un-procedural and an illegal committee? Why didn't you take that to court? Instead you jumped to the conclusion.

We must govern Solomon Islands by allowing the court to make the ruling. The court must make the judgment. Do not ask this side of the House to take the former Commissioner of Police to court because of procedural issues. We have no issue with that. In fact I myself want to know the truth.

I am surprised, Mr Speaker, that backbenchers and Ministers who have spoken did not fully comprehend the reasons for moving this motion. This motion is very clear and very precise. It is asking the Parliament, the powers of Parliament to appoint a special select committee under section 73 of the Standing Orders to appoint a committee and provide such information to this floor of Parliament. Information about his recruitment, information about procedures, information as to whether he is qualified to be the Commissioner of Police, information about his education, his curriculum vitae, information about his handling of the job

as the Commissioner of Police, information about whether he took the job which was supposed to be somebody else's are what we require by moving this motion.

This Parliament in exercising its oversight role ought to know. That is our duty. It is our duty. No, I disagree with you, Mr Speaker. The Member for East Honiara had it all wrong and the Member for East Are Are had it all right. I do not have to reread this again.

This motion is asking Parliament that since there is an argument about this constitutional office, can we appoint a select committee as the former motion moved by the MP for Small Malaita to invoke section 129 of the Constitution failed on technical ground on the floor of Parliament, and this motion was drafted by none other than the acting Attorney General or she helped to briefly look at the wordings of this motion.

Mr Fono: No, that is not her motion.

Mr Huniehu: Mr Speaker, the MP for East Are Are has no difficulty with this motion as it is a straightforward motion and it is part of accountability, part of Parliament transparency and part of good governance and it is our job, our duty to do that, Mr Speaker. *(hits the table)*

(hear, hear)

We know you have a mindset. We know you have the numbers. We know you can oppose this motion and throw it in the dustbin but you do not have the power to remove the mountains.

The five points in this motion, what section in these five points are unconstitutional. What points in these five points here are anti-government? No. This motion is calling for information. I am surprised the MP or West Makira who is just coming in now,

(hear, hear)

a senior Minister, Minister for Provincial Government did not seem to understand the importance of appointing a special select committee to investigate a controversial issue in the law of Solomon Islands. He informed this Parliament that he was a chairperson of one of

those committees. I read his report, Mr Speaker, and I appreciated everything he wrote because that is transparency and yet he opposed this one.

I am surprised that the Minister for Provincial Government and the Minister for Agriculture are opposing a simple motion just asking Parliament to do what we are elected to. Those are my points, Mr Speaker.

The MP for East Honiara talked about putting our priorities right. My what! We are the lawmakers. Anything to do with the law is the prime obligation of this Parliament to resolve anything to do with the law. What sort of sort of priorities did he mean? Did he sleep well last night? I withdraw that statement Mr Speaker.

(laughter)

I want to make it absolutely clear that this is our priority. This is our number one priority because we are legislators. I want to be called a legislator. I do not want to be called a politician. I was very disappointed that you should have taken the former Commissioner of Police to court for breaching the procedural rules of this country but he didn't. Instead your government decided to go ahead and deport him. He is not a court. It is the court that is supposed to do it.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, although this side of the House does not have the number, our duty as an Opposition is to address issues confusing our public, and this issue is one of them. I want all the issues, all the points relating to this person to be revealed by appointing a special select committee to look into it.

It is a healthy thing to do in democracy. This is what democracy is all about. We must stop employing practices, which our people judge us as trying to hide something. Action has been taken and we need to inform the public. That is what this motion is asking for. I do not understand why we see this as very technical.

This is not an anti government motion, Mr Speaker. In fact it will help to clear a lot of doubts from both sides of the House, and this is where I am coming from. I do not want to be accused unnecessarily. It could be the Opposition appointed someone who was not qualified to be a Commissioner of Police. If that was the case, let it be so.

Mr Speaker, why should we be debating this motion? I think it should just get approval so that a report can be tabled here headed by may be one of the Ministers of the Crown so that we can see whether the government is right or the Opposition is wrong. This report will be publicized and the public will be able to see it. It will be going to the public domain.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I just want to remind us that it is not for our interest that we are here, but it is for the interest of the nation. Any positions governed by the national constitution, Mr Speaker, and where the public expresses concern about dismissals or whatever, it is the primary objective of Parliament to ensure that the correct information is passed on to the people.

Mr Speaker, the MP for East Honiara accused me of not working together with the Malaita MPs, and that I have also issued a press statement to that effect. I think the press statement signed by the four MPs was very precise. We have our principles. There are many issues that we differ in development and politics. You cannot force a Member of Parliament to work with you when you cannot reconcile those differences. I mean we have barriers in our policies and in our leadership style. The people of Malaita must respect our decision.

Mr Dausabea: Point of order, Mr Speaker. He was the one Mr Speaker, who raised that in the media without consulting me, and that is why I respond to him. Thank you.

Mr Huniehu: Mr Speaker, I accept that I have raised some issues but as I have said today in my point of order that it was not to the extent that was made.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I want all of us to work together on this point and on this very issue. True indeed now!

(laughter)

This is the issue I want us to work together on it. Yes, wherever there are differences, Mr Speaker, we must find the common issues that we work together on. And this is one of the common issues that we have to work together on because

as I said we need to know the truth and nothing but the truth. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr SITAI: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me to contribute very briefly to the debate on this motion, more-so after the storm has calmed down. I will be cool, I will short and I will not engage in the style of debate demonstrated recently by my colleague, the MP for West Makira.

Let me begin by saying, that I take heed of the call made by our learned colleague, the MP for Savo/Russells when he said, “mi sore lelebet lo colleague blong iumi for Small Malaita lo this motion’. Sir, I have sympathy for him too. I feel sorry for him too in that context because one fishing canoe from his area ended up in the eastern side of Makira, which may be has created a generation and our relationship with his good people of Small Malaita up until today. With those bonds I give him all my sympathy. But unfortunately on this motion I will not support him because of the following reasons. Before I dwell on the reasons I would like to thank my learned colleague the MP for East Are Are for the clarifications he made so that our minds are clear on this motion. But let me just begin by saying this.

First the subject of the debate here in this motion, according to the news we have heard is that he has now retired and so let us give him some respect. He has gone through some hard times and so we must respect him, and also thank him for his service to our country.

Secondly, which is my biggest concern about this motion is the possibility of the motion getting through. My assessment is that it might not get through. The government probably has the number or if it does go through, what obligation does the government have in effecting this motion?

This is the issue of contend as far as I am concerned because all the good intentions in this motion cannot be achieved if the government does not take up this motion. That is a decision for the government to make.

Experience has shown that hundreds of motions that have gone through this Parliament is not obligatory on the government to effect. That is one of my big concerns. I am concerned

about the effectiveness despite the debate, the clearance of issues that will come about during the debate. Its effectiveness is what I am worried about. How are we going to achieve the objectives of this motion if those sorts of things happen and they might happen? I think the government has the numbers not to allow this motion to go through.

We must think about fall back situations like this if our interest is to go on pursuing these issues, which to me have now become legal issues. Despite the clearances made by the MP for East Are Are on the floor in terms of the court in talking about the parties concerned that it is the government that should effect the court proceedings to clear this issues, I think otherwise. I think if anyone is aggrieved by the actions of the Government, they are the ones who should seek High Court clarification or High Court declarations on the matters, and not necessarily the Government.

Mr Speaker, this is the area I want the honorable mover of this motion to look at. If the good intentions of this motion are going to be achieved at the end of the day, if it fails through the parliamentary procedure and oversight, and those other areas have got to be pursued, if indeed we are very serious about what has happened in relation to this issue.

That is my small contribution, Mr Speaker. Thank you for allowing me to take the floor. With those few comments I resume my seat.

Mr NUIASI: Mr Speaker, I too would like to contribute to the motion moved by the MP for Small Malaita for Parliament to debate.

Mr Speaker, having observed the last eight months and may be two or three Parliament Meetings, I learned lot a quite a lot when it comes to debating issues on the floor of this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, if one looks back at records since day one of taking up our parliamentary seats on the 5th of April, the records will reveal that the issues covered are the same issues we have been talking about since day one. That is the Attorney General, Shane Castles, Patrick Cole, and the stand off relationship between Australia and Solomon Islands. Although, Mr Speaker, I see them as very important, I think

that since they have a time period that has already lapsed, these issues are in the hands of those responsible in solving these issues for us.

With due respect to all of us, if my honorable colleague for Small Malaita had moved this motion on day one of this issue, I would have been one of those supporting this motion because it would then be a fresh issue that needs addressing, a fresh issue that needs looking into because of the nature of the decision made or the action made for that matter. However, Mr Speaker, it has taken almost one or two months for this case and other cases too.

I believe as a responsible government there are avenues the government has made contacts with authorities responsible for these issues to iron out our differences and explain ourselves to whoever is responsible.

Mr Speaker, as I have already said, the issues we have spent most of our time debating in this honorable Chambers since we came in is on our foreign relations, and the actions the government has taken. As I have already said the government is not ignorant and I believe it has already addressed these through avenues available to it.

Sir, since these issues are in the hands of rightful authorities or in the hands of those who are trying to solve the problems and will come up with reports on them, why should we bother very much about those issues, after all, decisions have been already made by relevant authorities that think they have powers to apply them.

Mr Speaker, when I heard our discussions I thought it is like a man lost in the jungle following the same road, and does not know where he is going, only going back and seeing his own footprints thinks someone is also following the same road as he followed. That is how I see it.

Mr Speaker, we are asking ourselves whose footprints are these. But it is our own footprints. We are the legislators. We always say that we have the power. I think it is not good for ourselves to step on the ground and we say who is coming behind us. That is an example I want to put across.

For myself, I do not want us to talk about issues, which are important but are not urgent. The urgent issue for our country this time is to make economic growth. We have just

passed the budget which we are going to use to work and to concentrate on the growth of our country. I think those things should be considered seriously when trying to address issues.

Sir, how many of us MPs have gone to see the authorities that deal with these issues and ask them how far they have dealt with the issues before we bring these issues to the floor of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, questions from individuals, motions from individuals and even this motion of no confidence last time all have the same contents. I see no difference. Why do we keep on repeating these things and at whose benefit?

We may say it is something to do with foreign aid. Yes, you could be right. But this is how we see we should operate and this is how we see we should behave so that we can also have respect from others. After all, this government is a responsible government. It does not make a decision and leave it just like a ball being kicked to the side of the field and goes away from it. I think the decisions made by this government are decisions for the government to take on board and make sure that they are there. The government is responsible that problems are solved to the end.

That is how I see this issue. We have been talking a lot about the stand off issue. Did we have any concern when we cannot get a visitor's permit to Australia? That is just a similar action but nobody is concerned about that. We seem to be quite about that and instead talk about another man's issue. We should talk about why we cannot get a visitor's permit to Australia because this motion only concerns one man from Australia. We should be concern about ourselves too before we try to defend others. I think this is always the attitude of people of Solomon Islands that we can talk about others but not for ourselves.

Mr Speaker, with these very few comments I think this motion came in too late. As I said if the honorable Member for Small Malaita had brought in this issue on day one, I would have support him to establish a select committee.

With these brief remarks, Mr Speaker, I resume my seat.

Mr FONO: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me to contribute very briefly to this motion. At the outset, I would like to thank the mover of the motion, the Member for Small Malaita for seeing it fit in bringing such a motion to Parliament.

Mr Speaker, much has been said by Members of Parliament on both sides of the House on this motion. Mr Speaker, this motion is a very simple motion to mandate a standing select committee to look into the reasons, and even the decisions made by the government.

Mr Speaker, the Member for West Are Are said that this issue is out of date. But the decision taken by the Government was only in December. (I want the MP to come back in and hear this, and not go outside). This is the first Parliament Meeting after December when the decision was taken. It is very important that Parliament's oversight role is exercised. The Parliament's oversight role is very important and that is why this motion came in. It is just to ascertain whether decisions taken by the Government are legal and according to the constitution whether there were any motives behind the decision. Even his appointment, which some Ministers have raised, if not done correctly will become part of the report so that in future we do not make the same mistakes again when making important decisions.

This is all this motion is trying to get here, Mr Speaker. It is just to mandate a standing select committee to look at the decision made in the declaration of the former Commissioner of Police as undesirable.

It is good that he has retired or has resigned as some have alluded to. But the fact still remains whether or not the decision made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to declare the former Commissioner of Police an undesirable immigrant falls squarely within his powers under the Immigration Act or under the section referred to, section 129 of the Constitution. Therefore, this is an oversight role of Parliament we have been mandated to represent our people and our nation to look at important issues.

Sir, when the decision was made in December, I, as the Leader of the Opposition Group raised a statement too in the press because there was no Parliament Meeting in December. If we had parliament meetings every

month, I believe we would not be using the media very much because this is the floor where we can raise issues of national importance in our country.

Mr Speaker, some of us see the decisions that have been taken as sabotaging the justice and the criminal system of our nation. It is public knowledge that the Commissioner has instigated investigations into how the suspended Attorney General was flown into the country. The Commissioner, also as head of the Police Force that enforces law and order investigated the decisions made that implicated one of our Ministers, to an extent there was a court order to find out the facts or the truth about that and that is why the Prime Minister's Office was raided. These investigations could have led to the decision the Government has taken to sabotage the police investigation that was carried out. This is common knowledge. Investigations are being carried out and that is why the Commissioner was removed because he is the head of the Police Force who gave directives to raid the PM's Office. Is that so, Mr Speaker? That is what is now floating in the minds of the public.

This proposed standing committee will wash out that allegation so that it proves the government is right and the Minister was right in declaring him as an undesirable immigrant. That is the second point.

Quite a lot of senior statesmen have already commented that the Government is sabotaging the investigations that police was doing. Are you not aware of that? Where is our conscience, Mr Speaker?

Thirdly, Mr Speaker, where is natural justice? Why didn't we give him an opportunity to defend himself while he was here? We allowed him to go out of the country before he was declared undesirable. If certain sections of the Constitution or our laws or not complied with why can't we do it while he was here in the country so that he is given an opportunity to defend himself?

Those considerations should be taken onboard by the Government, the good Government of our nation that is in power now to allow this standing select committee to investigate and come up with a report that this Parliament too can know the truth about all these

things. So this is a straightforward motion, Mr Speaker.

This new House, after last year's election, has had no standing committee to look into issues, so this is an important issue that such a committee must look into. May be if we have time we should move another motion for another standing select committee to look into how the suspended Attorney General was flown into the country, breaking our sovereign laws.

If we cannot allow the Papua New Guinea Defense Board of Inquiry to come, we might as well do it here to determine whether our laws were upheld, whether laws were broken but there was no criminality in those laws, then we need to bring those laws to Parliament.

I heard, Mr Speaker, that there are no provisions in the Aviation Act that can charge anybody intruding into our nation's airspace. Precedence is now being set and so anyone with a valid travel document can land in Lata, breaking our laws. Is there punishment for that?

I side track a bit because it is important that this Parliament is mandated through a select committee to look into important areas of national interest. I heard that the Papua New Guinea Defense aircraft that intruded into our airspace broke the civil aviation law but there is no punishment for that. Why? I think the law does not provide for this, and so we need to amend that law to protect the sovereignty that we talked so much about. Otherwise precedence is set where anyone can land at any airport, break our laws but he/she is not going to be penalized because there is no provision under the appropriate law.

Mr Speaker, this is the basic reason why the Opposition Parliamentary Group decided to take this motion to the House so that a select committee looks into the actions of the government. As I have said, it is an oversight role of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, finally if the Government decides otherwise to throw this motion away by not supporting it, it will only confirm the very fact that there is something to hide. There are some hidden agendas or there is something to hide and that is why it does not want a parliamentary standing select committee to look into decisions the Minister responsible has taken. And that would be very bad precedence

whereby any decisions that Ministers or government makes cannot be questioned here in Parliament. I think that is a very bad precedence.

I humbly call on my good government, the Prime Minister, as a responsible government to allow this standing select committee to look into this issue so that a report is produced to be brought into the next Parliament meeting for us to deliberate on, somebody moves it under the relevant standing orders and we debate it and then put it to rest. If there are laws that need to be amended, the responsible Minister brings that law here and we amend it as that is a task we have been mandated to do. That is our role as parliamentarians or is it not, Mr Speaker?

With these few comments, I once again call on this good, responsible government, a government that my people in Malaita really support, to allow this parliamentary oversight role to be exercised by this standing select committee so that we find the truth on this matter.

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

Hon SOALAOI: Mr Speaker, I will be very brief. I have three points I want to raise. First of all I would like to thank the Member for Small Malaita for introducing this motion in Parliament today.

Mr Speaker, the first point I want to raise is concerning the motion itself. I guess the way the motion is worded, to me, the action taken is still not properly questioned by the motion. There was no administrative action taken by the Government in relation to the former Commissioner of Police. I think we are all aware that the action taken was a legal statutory power vested on the responsible Minister by the Constitution, and it was not an administrative action.

Mr Speaker, I think this makes the content of the motion illegal. It is an illegal motion because it questions the power vested by the Constitution on the responsible Minister.

My second point, Mr Speaker, is that there are many things affecting Solomon Islanders that are not of concern to us Members of Parliament. I wish to bring one example to Parliament on what I mean. There is this

question on the delay into the enquiry or investigation on the death of a former late Commissioner of Police.

The former late Commissioner was killed in 2000 whilst carrying out his duty as ambassador for peace. I guess he was one of our own indigenous Solomon Islanders performing his duty very satisfactorily. Former Commissioners of Police who came after him did not see it fit to speed up investigations surrounding his death.

Mr Speaker, I am raising this because when one of the RAMSI officers was shot and killed, investigations into his death which involved a lot of resources was carried out very speedily. And this is an officer from another country. I can see inconsistencies in our concern as leaders of this country. Why are leaders of this country not concerned about an indigenous Solomon Islander who was killed in the course of his duty?

Mr Speaker, the third point I wish to raise is that according to records the former Commissioner of Police was interviewed by a panel, a panel that includes the former High Commissioner of Australia to Solomon Islands. I believe this is a constitutional post in Solomon Islands and the interview panel should only be made up of Solomon Islanders. This is not interviewing someone to go and work in Australia. I believe a different company cannot interview somebody who will be working for another company. This is a matter that we need to seriously look into.

These are inconsistencies that existed from the beginning when the person in question was appointed. It is not my intention to mention some of these, Mr Speaker, like some colleagues have said because we do not want to fuel yet again the so called impasse between Canberra and Honiara. There are initiatives already taken by the government to normalize the relations, and this motion is contributing to fueling that impasse again. We can deny it, Mr Speaker, but that is a simple fact that even the people on the streets will agree with.

I guess what I have said, in my attempt to help my colleague of South Malaita, the mover of the motion is that whilst there are some good intentions in the motion it is an illegal motion as far as I am concerned because I

believe it is the statutory power vested on the Minister by our constitution that is under question here, Mr Speaker.

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

Hon SANGA: Mr Speaker, before I contribute to the debate on this motion, I would like to raise a point of order. The point of order is from me requesting the mover of the motion to withdraw the motion because some of the information that I am going to reveal has to do with this particular person. The information contains information which really points to past government on how it handled this officer. I think it will not be in the interest of us moving forward if I raise this information.

Mr Speaker, I feel obliged to reveal this information merely because of the nature of the debate that was coming from the other side, so that at least the public can balance their views on the person we are debating in terms of his status in Solomon Islands.

My request is that he withdraws the motion so that I do not have to say what I am going to say. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: I think in order to balance the debate it would be good for you to raise whatever you want to raise in the general debate because there are lots of comments being raised and so may be you have points to balance the discussion.

Hon Sanga: Thank you, Mr Speaker, I am obliged by your ruling.

Mr Speaker, I will be very brief. In fact I will raise just one of the points. But before doing so, I feel for this person who is the subject of this debate. He has since retired from the Australian Federal Police and I am sure the fact that he has retired merely perhaps of the pain that he as a person has got as a result of the actions taken here in the country.

I would also like to register my concern for his family because I am sure he is a family man and perhaps those who are very close to him may have also been affected by the decision made by the Foreign Minister. At the same time, Mr Speaker, I would like to acknowledge his contribution and his work in the country. In

the little time he was here, I think he has done his best in trying to continue with the good work of restoring law and order. So I wish to also register on record my appreciation for the work the former Commissioner of Police has done in terms of improving the law and order situation in the country.

Mr Speaker, the person concerned was recruited in 2005 under the previous administration led by none other than the honorable Member for Savo/Russells when he was then our Prime Minister. He was one of the three candidates who were interviewed by a panel that was set up. When he submitted his curriculum vitae to support his bid for the position of a commissioner of police in Solomon Islands, he was referred to in his curriculum vitae as the Federal Agent, Shane Castles, APM. That was the designation made about this person. He is actually the Federal Agent of the Australian Federal Police.

When he was interviewed by the panel that was established to assess all the applicants for the position of the Commissioner of Police, amongst the members of the panel was the former High Commissioner of Australia. This arrangement is unusual in that all the positions within the Solomon Islands establishment are supposed to be positions of the Solomon Islands Government, and under normal circumstances, the candidates should have been interviewed by those who are employed by the Government of Solomon Islands. This is an unusual arrangement where there is a foreign diplomat being named in the panel that interviewed this person.

Mr Speaker, in the report submitted by the panel, this is how they introduced the officer concerned. The panel interviewed Federal Agent Shane Castles first. Mr Speaker, this report was submitted by the then Prime Minister to the Police and Prison Services Commission. In fact the submission that was sent by the then Prime Minister included the curriculum vitae that named the officer concerned as the Federal Agent of the AFP.

Mr Speaker, when the Commission received the submission, its decision was based on the recommendation by the panel submitted by the then Prime Minister. This is the wording of that decision. *“Based on the*

recommendation, the Commission endorsed the appointment of Federal Agent, Shane Castles, APM, as Commissioner of Police and advice His Excellency the Governor General to formally make the appointment.”

Mr Speaker, to formalize the arrangement between Australia and Solomon Islands, there was an exchange note made by the then High Commissioner and the then Minister for Police who happens to be my friend, the Member for Shortlands.

Mr Speaker, I refer to clause 6 of that note which reads as follows and I quote: *“While on secondment and responsible solely and completely to the Solomon Islands Authority for the diligent and faithful performance of his duties pursuant to the laws of the Solomon Islands, Mr Castle will also remain subject to the disciplinary provisions of the AFP Act.”*

Mr Speaker, I wish to refer to the relevant provisions of the AFP Act, section 40(f) deals with secondment of officers of the Australian Federal Police, and I quote from subsection 1 of that section. *“The Commissioner (and that is referring to the Commissioner of Police of the AFP) may arrange for an AFP employee to be seconded for a specified period to the police force of a state or territory or of a foreign country.”*

Mr Speaker, I wish to come back again to clause 6 of the note that was exchanged between our then Police Minister and the then High Commissioner of Australia, and especially to the provision that *“Mr Castles will also remain subject to the disciplinary provisions of the AFP Act.”*

Mr Speaker, if you look at the disciplinary provisions of the AFP Act, section 40(g) reads and I quote: *“The secondment under section 40(f) of a person who is an AFP employee does not affect the person’s status as an AFP employee and if the person’s status as a member and the application of any provision of this act in relation to the person during the period of the secondment.”*

When you look at the subsection that deals with disciplinary obligations it reads as follows: *“During a period secondment of an AFP employee under section 40(f), the employee remains subject to the same obligations and liabilities in relation to discipline as those to*

which the employee would but for the secondment have been subject as such an employee.”

When you read subsection 3(b) it says: *“Nothing in this section affects the extent to which the employee is subject to obligations or liabilities in relation to discipline by virtue of holding the office or position to which the employee has been seconded.”*

Mr Speaker, my concern is that this person who is the subject of this motion really is an agent of a foreign power. The concern is, this person, an agent of a foreign power is responsible for intelligence, is responsible for the security of this country. The question is, is this the kind of person that we would like to retain to look after the security of this nation and intelligence information that has to do with the security of this nation? Mr Speaker, it is the issue of loyalty that is being questioned.

I was not in the country at the time when the Minister responsible for Immigration made the declaration regarding the status of this person. But I think if there is any concern that we as a government or we as a nation need to express regarding this person, I think it is the issue of loyalty, it is the issue of commitment. We cannot afford to have someone who is an agent of a foreign power to look after the security interest and the intelligence interest of our country.

Mr Speaker, with those few remarks, I oppose the motion.

Sir Kemakeza: Point of order. Mr Speaker, since the Minister of Public Service mentioned the then Prime Minister, I would like to say that it was the Chief Justice of Solomon Islands who headed the panel. What the Minister for Public Service is saying is an operation. The Prime Minister then was following the recommendation of the panel to the Police and Prison Services Commission. I want to put the records right.

Hon Kaua: Point of order, Mr Speaker. The Chairman of that panel was not the Chief Justice, but it was the Chairman of the Leadership Code Commission and two of us were part of the panel - the PS of the Public

Service and my self and the High Commissioner of Australia.

I rule that the Chairman was not the Chief Justice because I question that already this morning. Thank you.

Hon Sanga: Mr Speaker, can I just clarify one point here. My concern is really on the issue of loyalty. We have a situation here that we appoint someone who happens to be an agent of a foreign power.

Mr Speaker: I think the clarifications and points of order are well received.

Mr Haomae: Mr Speaker, first of all, I wish to thank all honorable colleagues, both from the Government side and the Opposition for contributing to this important motion of national interest.

Sir, I have taken the time to listen very attentively to contributions made by my honorable colleagues from the government side. I have been amused by the contributions because they missed the whole point altogether.

The contributions from the Minister of Public Service, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Police would seem to be as though they are making submissions to the select committee. It appears to me and I am becoming very amused with the fact that their contribution is like those who are making submissions to the select committee that this motion is asking for.

Sir, this motion is merely asking for a select committee. The information you are telling us are what you should be telling the select committee.

Hon Sanga: Point of order, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, that side of the House keeps telling us about accountability and transparency. I think a lot of criticisms that were coming from that side of the House is really attacking the government, and we know there are people out there who are listening to the debates in this Parliament. We need to balance the debate and that is why we are telling information, which actually are factual. Let the public be the judge. The public will not be able to listen to the inquiry, but it is right now that they are listening to the debate. I think it is unfair for the mover of the motion to

keep criticizing this side of the House about how we present ourselves. Thank you.

Mr Haomae: Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank my friend, who is also half Small Malaita, his genealogy comes from Small Malaita for his point of order, but that does not exonerate from the fact that he makes submission to the proposed committee. That is my point. They were not debating the motion per se. I do not want to be drawn into those matters.

It is true, Mr Speaker, that this motion is sensitive but how you are debating it makes it to become sensitive.

This motion is merely asking for a select committee, a parliamentary select committee to enquire into those matters. That is why I am surprised at why the government wanted to oppose this motion.

This motion should clear every question the public may have. In diplomacy, Mr Speaker, I cannot see why it will affect the relations between Solomon Islands and Australia. No, in fact it would be helpful for us to clear the air.

Mr Speaker, even if my colleague, the Minister for Public Service made that explanation, that is my impression. And I am amused by the fact that the Deputy Prime Minister intended to make submission to the select committee rather than debating the motion and also the MP for East Honiara, my friend, who only talked about self praise. But I want to remind him that self praise is no recommendation.

Mr Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister & Minister for Agriculture and Lands and the Minister for Provincial Government are asking a pertinent question but in different ways.

The Deputy Prime Minister was asking in whose interest is the motion. The MP for West Makira who replaced one of the statesmen of this country was asking what the MP for Small Malaita is worried about. It is one and the same question come from different angles.

I find those questions narrow minded, shortsighted, and you two must grow up.

(laughter)

This motion is not to defend the Commissioner of Police. It is a constitutional issue to defend anyone in that post. Who knows,

may be a person from Mbaegu/Asifola will be the Commissioner of Police later on. Or who knows a person from West Makira will be the Commissioner of Police in year 2020. Or who knows may be one generation from Small Malaita will become the Commissioner of Police in year 2030. And so this motion is in the interest of Small Malaita and the nation. It is in the interest of Mbaegu/Asifola, and it is in the interest of West Makira. So I am worried about their people but they are not worried about their people.

The MP for West Makira is not worried about the people of West Makira. He is very narrow minded, does not have foresight and no vision. I ask him to resign and go back to West Makira. He should not stay in the step of the late Honorable Solomon Mamaloni who did not do such a thing. The MP for Mbaegu/Asifola, the Deputy Prime Minister should resign too and just go home because he is not worrying about his people.

This motion is in the interest of who will be the Commissioner of Police at this time, tomorrow, next tomorrow, next month or in the future.

The Government is proposing to bring an overseas personnel to be the next Commissioner of Police. If the Government is changed after four years and the next government does the same thing to that person, can't you see the point, Mr Speaker?

As the Minister of Public Service has said, if anyone is an agent of another country through his government, he can be changed. There is no difference whether he comes from Melanesian countries like Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu or Fiji. Mark my words.

This motion is in the interest of the country to defend the constitutionality of the post of the Commissioner of Police so that politicians do not play round with it. Or a man from Rendova can become the Commissioner of Police too in the future. So why are you opposing the motion, Mr Speaker? Are you giving your best thought to this motion or are you just like Abarai?

Sir, to answer the question posed by the Deputy Prime Minister and my colleague for West Makira, the Minister for Provincial

Government, this motion is in the interest of our people of Solomon Islands.

I am not dealing with the commissioner you have deported. That is not my interest. I have already said that I am not the spokesman for the Commissioner, but I am the spokesman for the Constitution of Solomon Islands, and the legal enabling legislations passed by this Parliament in accordance with the provisions of the national constitution.

If we breach those constitutional provisions or the enabling legislation, and I am a Member of Parliament for Small Malaita in here, and I will still raise this come what may.

So in whose interest? It is in the interest of the people of Malaita, Mbaegu/Asifola, West Makira and in the interest of the whole country including Small Malaita, and so I must talk about it because it is in the interest of my people who elected me to speak on their behalf in this honorable Chamber. If you say it is not in the interest of our nation then I am very surprised and I just cannot understand.

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Police and National Security was saying that the appointment is inconsistent with the constitution and some of our laws. If the appointment has some irregularities in it, why can't you use existing procedures and laws to correct it? Or can't you use them? Are there no laws and procedures available? Or are there laws and provisions available? The mechanisms and the modus operandi are there but why did you not use them, the constitutionality under section 139. Why? Why did you just use the Immigration Act?

Mr Speaker, I know for sure that the mechanisms are in there in the Public Service and the Judicial and Legal Services Commission and the Ministry of Police. I was once a Minister for National Security and Police before too but I did not recruit any Commissioner like this nor did I dismiss anyone like that under my friend, the Honorable Prime Minister now. I did not have any personal problem with him, there is nothing personal.

I would like to state the point that the existing mechanisms are what you should be using but because you did not use it, and as the shadow spokesman for Police and National

Security and Justice, it is my duty to question it and to bring this important motion to Parliament.

The question on disqualification, which the Minister for Police said, is not the intention of this motion to enquire into it at this point in time. If the government agrees to a select committee then they will formulate their own rules and listen to what you are saying. We are going to make submissions, and so what are you afraid of. Are you afraid of your own shadows like the fish in the sea that we in Small Malaita call 'Iohio' which is afraid of its own shadow? Are you afraid of what your own shadows? Is that true, may I question? If you are not afraid or have nothing to hide then you should support my motion as it is a good motion because it is in the interest of good governance, accountability, transparency and responsibility.

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Police and National Security said that the Police Commissioner ordered the raid at the Prime Minister's Office. I am not too sure about the terminology applied, but he used the word 'raid'.

According to the terminology they are not saying 'raid' but they are saying 'search' because they have a search warrant from the Magistrate. I am not defending what they are doing, but we must use the right terminology because a raid is different from a search. A search can be carried out if there is a search warrant. A raid is doing something that is not proper, like those shooting my house when I was the Deputy Prime Minister of the now Prime Minister. They do not have a search warrant but they just shoot my house. That is raid in its real sense.

What they did as far as I know is search because they have been authorized by the law of this country to do the search.

Mr Speaker, we are so concerned about this search. The Police in Israel too have a search warrant and searched the palace of their President who was alleged to have committed something. The Police in Israel searched the residence and office of their president. So what are we trying to say here? The former President of the United States, Bill Clinton was also searched when he has gone haywire a bit.

We are living in a world, in a democratic system where no man is above the law. So even though you are a president, a

prime minister, a minister or even a man down there cutting copra, the same law applies to everyone. So I do not see any point to the fact that they raided the office of the Prime Minister.

The way those men did it, I do not defend it because I am not a defender of those actions. That is a bureaucratic matter of the Minister of Police and National Security in terms of policy and is not the responsibility of the MP who represents the hereditary high chiefs of the chiefly island of Small Malaita.

Mr Speaker, my friend, the Honorable Member for Temotu/Pele has said ‘some fala good motion lelebet’ to bring to this Parliament. In this he insinuated that this motion is just to score points. Mr Speaker, no! I have already explained at the very beginning that the Opposition is bringing this motion because our main objective is law and order and not scoring political points.

I would like to ask my friend, the Member for Temotu Pele what is his definition of ‘good’. I have already established that this motion is a good one because it is in the national interest, and that is to defend constitutional offices in this country.

As I said in this Parliament last time, it is like a story of a camel and his master where if things continue in this trend the camel will get inside the tent and you will go and eat grass outside. It is a systematic undermining of constitutional offices in this country. So as a responsible national leader we must use this Parliament, this legislature to put a stop to those things, those bad habits. If it is in the interest of people of Small Malaita then I need to do so because they are part of this nation. In that connection Mr Speaker I wish to ask the Member for Temotu/Pele to revise his views.

The Deputy Prime Minister also talked about committees and he has just mentioned that he too interviewed this person. Why then did you not support me? I know that he did it as an official at that time, in his advisory capacity but his recommendation is also a very heavy one. If you put weights on it, it would have been very heavy because he was the secretary to the Prime Minister at that time, the head of the Public service. We all know these things, and so why he is going against it this time, surprises me, Mr Speaker. He is fully aware of these things

because he has been in that post for quite a long time. He has served four prime ministers already. I served in two Cabinets which he also served too and so I know he is a capable person, perhaps it is because he joined the wrong group. If he comes over to this side he would have sorted out everything.

Mr Speaker, my friend, the MP for East Honiara also made some points. But as I have already said at the outset his points should formulate his submission to the select committee, because out of the select committee the report will come and the public will know and will exonerate the government and the government should be clear of any allegations. But as it stands, Mr Speaker, a lot of questions still needs asking. We must make use of this Parliament in the name of democracy, accountability and responsibility to deal with matters of public interest.

I do not want to deal with situations my colleague for East Honiara mentioned as they are sensitive matters, and they are not the subject of this debate. I cannot be thrown into all those issues because I am straightforward and I do not confuse the debates, and I only use commonsense, and not go haywire.

Mr Speaker, I am very surprised with my colleague, the Member for West Are Are who asked, “Is this issue fresh”? Goodness me, all constitutional issues are fresh. Is the April riot also fresh? I support the inquiry but if you want to score points with me, is that riot also fresh? I can see grasses almost cover most of the houses in Chinatown, as it is already one ago. So what is your definition of fresh, Member for West Are Are? You tell me.

The issue of this motion regarding constitutional offices of this country is still fresh yesterday, today, tomorrow, next month and it goes ahead. I want to clear the mind of my colleague from Are Are so that he can support the motion because he said that that is his only problem. He agrees in principle but if you agree in principle you must also agree in detail.

The Minister for Provincial Government & Rural Development talked about other issues not related to this motion. He talked about the RCDF and also wanted to criticize Small Malaita, but that is beside the point. This Parliament is exercising its oversight

responsibility by making all these interlocking issues that deal with our near neighbor to be much more in an environment and atmosphere that is conducive to the diplomacy that can work.

Sir, as I already said at the outset that a select committee to look into this issue will help in those efforts. It will not be a hindrance to the efforts that have been embarked on by the government for purposes of trying to smooth the troubled waters that exist between our country and our near neighbor.

The Minister for Health and Member for Temotu VATTU raised points of administrative matters. When the Minister for Foreign Affairs signed the order, is that not an administrative matter under the Act? When you send the order by fax, is that not an administrative matter? When the Personal Secretary typed the order, is that not an administrative matter? What is your definition of administrative matter? My friend, the Minister for Health is a young Member who has just come into Parliament, but that is fine as he is learning fast but I think he still needs a bit of catching up before making those inferences on the floor of Parliament in understanding the administrative mechanics of how the government works within the parliamentary democracy.

The Member for West Honiara wanted me to sit down but there is no time limit under the Standing Orders in winding up the motion.

The Minister for Health has raised a very sensitive issue, which I think should not be raised in this Parliament on the late Commissioner of Police. Raising this issue can chase investors away from Malaita.

I agree with the Member for East Honiara that we should develop infrastructure and the development projects on Malaita so that they absorb the increasing number of population in that particular Province. I have full support for those initiatives.

The Member for East Honiara should know because he was in government when the initial stages of the implementation of the Townsville Peace Agreement took place that started the ball rolling on the Auluta Basin Oil Palm Development Project. Sitting down in this Chamber are two people who signed on behalf of the government at that time. The Deputy

Prime Minister at that time was the Member for Savo/Russells and a deputy leader of a government delegation. When we are doing this work on Malaita we must not use the kind of politics where you throw down the fishing line and then you a stone after it because it will surely make the fish to run away. That is exactly what the Minister for Health is telling us in this House as it will scare way foreign investment from Malaita.

My honorable colleague is a young man and a new Member of Parliament but we must think very carefully and be thoughtful about we say on this floor of Parliament because the implications or the repercussions could flow wider throughout the four corners of this county. That is why when the MP for Small Malaita speaks on this floor, he weighs every word he is saying.

Somebody was saying that this motion will not be helpful toward the government's efforts in trying to bridge the gap that seems to be developing between our country and our bigger near neighbor. I have already stated at the outset that this motion will contribute positively towards the bridging of the gap, and it will not be a hindrance because all of us are living in a parliamentary democracy that advocates the principles of democracy – transparency, good governance, accountability, etc. If we are transparent and apply good governance in here, they will see us and will therefore bridge the gap and not widen it.

Sir, I wish to join my colleague, the Minister for Public Service for giving recognition to the service the Commissioner of Police has rendered to the country. I endorse what the Minister for Public Service has said. But I am a bit surprised that he recognizes it and then puts it away. He is putting it on this side and takes it away on the other side. Taking it away on the other side is not endorsed by me. It is no the habit of chiefs and people of Small Malaita to give appreciation on one side and take out on the other side because we only have four doors – the front door, the side door, the back door and the window. Which one do you go through? If you go through the window you are a robber and through the backdoor is creeping.

Nonetheless I commend this motion to the government side. If it does not agree with it, then I cannot get the rationality of the government's position on that score. None at all! But anyway, the government side knows it does not support this motion, and it is entitled to that position with all the encumbrances, and with all the surroundings, and with all atmospheres and with all the environments.

Mr Speaker, I thank you and I beg to move.

Hon Darcy: Mr Speaker, I am just looking at this motion and I want your ruling on the motion in terms of Standing Order 73(4).

Let me explain that Standing Order 73(4) requires that a motion should also specify a minister to whom the committee shall deliver its report to. I fail to see this motion specifying which Minister this committee will deliver its report to. In that sense, I thought we are debating a motion that is not complete as required under Standing Order 73. A minister must be specified, but if a minister is not specified then to whom is the report of the committee going to be given to.

This is my time to correct this motion. If it is not consistent with the Standing Order then this motion is out of order and there is no need for us to vote on it. It is out of order and we have wasted Parliament's time, the Member for Small Malaita had to preach to us about something that is totally unrelated to this motion and in the end here we are wasting everybody's time.

Mr Speaker, I believe that a motion of this nature must fully satisfy all the requirements of the Standing Orders before it becomes a motion that is credible for Parliament to debate on. This is a motion that lacks a fundamental requirement of the Standing Orders, and so how could we accept it.

I am debating a point of order in relation to Standing Order, and one has to present it in a way that the Speaker has to be convinced, and that is what I am trying to do.

Standing Order 73(4), in my view, and I submit has not been satisfied. This motion therefore is out of order and should not be voted on.

Mr Speaker: Before the mover moved the motion, he clarified the very point you have raised.

Mr Fono: Yes, where were you?

Mr Speaker: The clarification is that notwithstanding anything contrary in the Standing Order for the purposes of this inquiry – (that particular sentence) clarifies the situation to which the Minister of Finance referred to. So the motion is in order and I shall now put the question.

The motion was put to the vote and defeated on voice vote

Sitting suspended for lunch break

(Parliament resumes)

Mr TORA: Mr Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this motion of sine die. I would firstly like to congratulate you for your tireless efforts in ensuring the smooth proceedings of this Meeting of Parliament. Furthermore, Mr Speaker, I would like to also thank the Clerk to Parliament, and all the parliamentary staff for their hard work in facilitating this Parliament Meeting.

Sir, I would also like to take this time to thank the hardworking Minister of Finance, and all his staff from the Ministry of Finance and Treasury and also the budget committees for their invaluable work in preparing the very important 2007 national budget that we have passed on Tuesday. Mr Speaker, the National Budget 2007, not only exemplified our eagerness to deliver the much needed services to our people, but also the 2007 budget was historical in a sense that it is the first time that a government budget is close to a billion Solomon Islands dollars. However, Mr Speaker, high as it is, this reflects the commitment of the government to seriously look into financing its bottom-up policy for rural development.

Mr Speaker, I believe we are all aware that 84% of our natural resources are held by our people, those very people who mainly live in our rural areas. When we talk about resource owners, we should understand that we are

resource owners ourselves. This is because each of us Solomon Islanders here in this Honorable House, together with those ordinary people in the streets are members or are affiliated to or are part of a tribal clan, and as we all know it is tribal clans that own the majority of our resources.

I would like to acknowledge the recent Government's decision to re-direct the perpetual ownership of land to the landowners. I strongly believe that it is a move in the right direction as it will definitely build a sense of willingness and confidence for our resource owners to allow their resources for development.

Mr Speaker, the same confidence should also be placed on the government of the day in order for it to fully implement its policies because our people in the rural areas are looking forward to seeing the fruits of this bottom-up rural development policy of the government. Mr Speaker, my good people of Ulawa/Ugi Constituency are looking forward to the government's planned bottom-up approach, and also I believe the same is also with the people of the other constituencies.

Mr Speaker, as much as we can trust ourselves as champions of good will, let us not forget that our people are tired of politically motivated, and self-interested way that some of us are seem to be caught up in. Mr Speaker, Let us remember that we are here as servants of the people by virtue of the Constitution and the electoral process. Even the Bible says, "Whoever is greatest among you, let him be the servant of all". I believe this is a very important message for us.

Mr Speaker, in this sine die motion, I also would like to take this opportunity to make my contribution about RAMSI and Australia debate that has long been a contested issue, not only on the floor of Parliament but in our local media as well.

The point I would like to stress here is that the RAMSI package and Australia are two different things altogether. RAMSI is a regional initiative born out of the Biketawa Declaration in Kiribati in 2000 and the diplomatic standoff between Solomon Islands and Australia is a bilateral matter. I think most of our people are still confused with this difference, and that is why when we have the diplomatic row with

Australia, RAMSI issue seems to be crawling into the scene, when it is supposed not to be.

Mr Speaker, since RAMSI is a regional initiative, any decision with regards to RAMSI should be left entirely to the Forum to facilitate. However, Solomon Islands as the prime receiving country can make recommendations about what it feels should be changed or included in the RAMSI package.

Mr Speaker, we are all aware that RAMSI has done a really good job so far, in resolving the Law and Order situation in the country, institutional strengthening, and of course bringing back public confidence in security.

Mr Speaker, there are lot of news and writings in our local media that the majority of our people want RAMSI to stay, as if the government is chasing them out of the country soon. Mr Speaker, I believe what the government wants from RAMSI is its timeframe and exit strategy, so that when it eventually leaves, at least we should equally have qualified and expert Solomon Islanders to take over responsibility. It is not a wrong thing, because even the Facilitation Act clearly states that RAMSI should be reviewed annually.

Mr Speaker, according to the 2007 development estimates, the RAMSI had funded SI\$1.3billion to the country in 2006, and a projected \$1.2 billion for this year. I think we should be grateful for this generous assistance. However, as a receiving country, our government and people have the right to know how this money is being spent and utilized in the country. For instance, in 2006, out of the \$1.3 billion RAMSI funding in the country, approximately \$890million alone is spent on technical assistance to support the Participating Police Force. Mr Speaker, the large bulk of RAMSI funding allocation goes to supporting its Participating Police Force.

Mr Speaker, is this a prospect for long-term economic development for the country, may I ask Mr Speaker? Can it be possible to divert some of the huge allocated funds to the RAMSI Participating Police Force to go towards funding other productive sectors of the country?

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, the RAMSI officers are among the super paid employees in the country. Needless to say as that is their

money at the end of the day, but what concerns me is that the money is portrayed as for rebuilding, institutional strengthening, development and so on, whereas in reality almost 75 percent of its funding allocation is only going towards RAMSI technical assistance for remunerations and salaries, traveling allowances, rents, consultation fees and so on.

Mr Speaker, for instance, on record, the RAMSI advisers in our country are getting an average of SI\$18,000-\$30,000 per fortnight or even more for some. This is basic salary alone, and does not include other entitlements such as traveling allowance, per diems, rental accommodation, consultation fees and so on. Mr Speaker, would it be a good idea to have more of our skilled Solomon Islanders employed in the advisory role of RAMSI as well, so that they are paid the same salary?

Mr Speaker, much as we all want RAMSI to continue with the good work that it has been doing in this country, these are some of the issues the Government is trying to settle. The Government wants to know whether Solomon Islands gets maximum benefit from the RAMSI aid money or whether it is just a boomerang aid.

Mr Speaker, on the other hand, the diplomatic standoff between Solomon Islands and Australia is a bilateral matter, which in itself is a government-to-government matter, and that any differences between the two countries can and should only be resolved through a government-to-government dialogue.

Mr Speaker, I therefore would like to congratulate the government for taking a bold move to request that the two Prime Ministers should meet to discuss their issues of differences. I believe the true Melanesian way to resolve problem is to have a face-to-face dialogue. I think the main message here is that our Government and the Australian Government should work in partnership with mutual understanding and respect for each country's sovereignty.

Mr Speaker, the Australia's White Paper on Foreign Affairs and Trade stated really clearly in 2003, and I quote;

“In the South Pacific, Australia has a particular responsibility to help the

small fragile island countries deal with deep-seated problems. However, Australia cannot presume to fix the problems of South Pacific countries. Australia is not a neo-colonial power. The Island countries are independent sovereign states. They need and want to tackle their problems in their own ways, developing systems of government which their government accepts as fair, equitable, effective and true to themselves, and which delivers basic services. When problems are tight bound to complex cultural traditions and ethnic loyalties, only local communities can find workable solutions. end of quote

Mr Speaker, what the Australian 2003 White Paper states is that Australia is not a neo-colonial power, and that it cannot impose solutions, but it is up to our Government to find workable solutions to our economical and social problems. I only hope that it stands committed to what they say, because the wave of events during the diplomatic standoff, and the Australian Foreign Affairs Minister's recent letter to the Solomon Islands public as appeared in the Solomon Star is not convincing enough for a country that claims it is not a neo-colonial power. Regardless of this, Mr Speaker, I hope that this diplomatic rift with Australia will ease down when the two Prime Ministers meet.

Mr Speaker, I also would like to highlight to this Honorable House, the Office of the Governor General. I came to realize that the Transparency Solomon Islands, has been questioning the Governor General about the delay of the appointment of the new Ombudsman. Mr Speaker, much as we respect the freedom of speech as one fundamental principle of democracy, I think there are certain laws and protocols that also need to be observed. What I am saying here is that, as much as possible, do not throw the office of the Governor General into public debate.

Mr Speaker, I am not saying this because His Excellency is my predecessor or wantok from my constituency, but what I am saying is that the Office of the Governor General is a very respected and high office of the country

and the Governor General is the Head of State, and so he is the Queen's representative in our country like other Commonwealth countries.

The Governor General has never been publicly challenged, and therefore I find it unusual for the anti-corruption watchdog organization like the Transparency Solomon Islands to do what it just did. I would just like to remind everyone including other NGOs not to do it, because there are other procedures and avenues that you can take to get what you want, but not directly with the Office of the Governor General.

Also Mr Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the work of the Minister for Provincial Government. His move in sacking quite a number of members of the Makira Ulawa Provincial Assembly should be a warning to other provinces that you should not take your position lightly, but to show professionalism and enthusiasm to develop your respective provinces according to your own political and economical capacity.

Mr Speaker, I also would like to take this chance to thank my colleagues from the government bench, for seeing the importance of government solidarity. This is because, even though we have been faced with numerous allegations, we still show to our people and the outside world that we stand with a solid government and a government that is not made – up of self-interested politicians, but a government that sees the need and urgency to help its people through development, and a government that is concerned about the sovereignty of Solomon Islands, free from outside manipulation or remote control.

Mr Speaker, government solidarity is a good sign. It is a good signal to our people that the government has a mandate to fulfill. I strongly believe that a strong government will provide confidence and hope for the people. I hope the government will deliver services to the people. The government should fulfill the hopes and dreams of our people. I do not think that our people would like to see a weak and unstable government.

Mr Speaker, I also like to thank the National Opposition for its constructive criticisms, and acting as a check-and-balance to the government. Furthermore, Mr Speaker, I am

happy that despite our differences, we still manage to reach some healthy consensus on some of the issues. Let us not forget that the opposition is the shadow government, and it is entitled to its opinions.

The only thing that worries me, Mr Speaker, is that it is supposed to move another motion of no confidence, the second time against the government of a very hard working Prime Minister in just less than four months from its first motion of no confidence in October last year. Mr Speaker, such move by the National Opposition, to me, is not according to what the majority of our voters want to happen, especially to a new energetic government that has just passed a budget to refocus development directly down to the village people.

Mr Speaker, we might not realize, but our people out there see such motion of no confidence in a different perception. I have been talking a lot with ordinary Solomon Islanders, and almost all the people that I talked with in the streets, have given me suggestions that this motion of no confidence business is a quest for power in disguise.

However, Mr Speaker, I welcome the opposition for pursuing and moving a motion of no confidence, as a way of pushing its agenda across, because as a shadow government, it has the right to do so under our Parliamentary Standing Orders. However, with due respect to my colleagues of the National Opposition, I think our people are fed up of hearing this motion of no confidence politics.

Mr Speaker, at the end of the day, we are all collective representatives of the whole Solomon Islands. Therefore Mr Speaker, our performance and attitudes and what we say will be assessed by the very person who queued under the hot sun during the National Election day to cast his or her ballot paper for you and me to have this privilege to be sitting here in this Honorable House. Mr Speaker, now that we have the chance to be in this honorable House, let us work together, show and prove to our people what we as collective legislators are capable of achieving for our people.

Mr Speaker, four years is not long. It has been our political history that our politics have a habit of changing government every now and then. It is this past continuous change of

governments that has affected our country's ability to advance and progress economically and politically in the past. We should learn from our historical mistakes and improve on them, then only we can see our country advancing forward.

Mr Speaker, lastly but not the least, I like to thank my good chiefs, village elders and ordinary people of Ulawa/Ugi Constituency for having the confidence in me to represent them in this honorable House. I like to reiterate to my good people of Ulawa/Ugi Constituency that the passing of the Government's National Budget marks the first stage of the proposed bottom-up-approach of the Grand Coalition for Change Government. Mr Speaker, all I ask for is your humble understanding and cooperation in order for us to develop our constituency together, for our children, our grandchildren and for our future generation.

Finally Mr Speaker, I would like to take this chance to remind my colleagues here in this Honorable House that we should stand committed with determination and stand as a strong and capable government that is not seen by other countries or even our own people as a weak and unstable government. Because, I agree and I believe that you will all agree that an unstable government is a hindrance to development.

Mr Speaker, as national leaders, one of our important obligations is to be prepared to defend our country's sovereignty as our sense of national pride. The political and diplomatic events we have experienced so far, should be embraced as an ultimate test on our endurance to withstand the pressure and influences of international politics and the politics of the media. And not to forget that our ultimate mandate as national leaders is to work together with mutual understanding in order to favorably serve our people.

With these few remarks, Mr Speaker, I support the motion.

Mr FONO: Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing me to contribute very briefly to this traditional motion of sine die moved by the honorable Prime Minister. In so doing, I would like to thank the honorable Prime Minister for moving the motion to enable us talk on the motion

making reflections or observations on how we conduct the business of parliament throughout this Meeting.

Sir, I also thank the Prime Minister calling on us to work together cooperatively when moving the sine die motion so that we can address development needs and issues confronting our nation. I thank him for that and I look forward to not only talks but actions because over the past 10 months I fail to see actions reflected in this working together.

Mr Speaker, the Parliamentary Opposition made submission to strengthen the staffing of its office, but it was not reflected in the budget and not even approved under the establishment. We wanted to strengthen the Parliamentary Opposition Staffing to make it compatible with the Private Office of the Prime Minister. In a way, this does not reflect the spirit the Prime Minister is calling for us to work together.

Similarly, we have also requested office equipments. At the moment even to do photocopying we have to come down to the Parliament Office. This does not reflect the support the Government is supposed to be giving to the Office of the Opposition so that we work together as national leaders.

We have been handicapped since taking up that office. We were only fortunate that we have a bit of funds just to repair the Office. Otherwise since taking over, the Office would have been in a worst state. I am also surprised that previous opposition groups did not ask money from the government to repair the office building.

Sir, I believe in order to strengthen the working together relationship, staffing must be strengthened, office equipments must be strengthened and we should even be called to discuss issues. In fact I have written several letters to the Prime Minister but there were no response to those letters. I did not receive any response to my communication, not only to the Prime Minister but also Ministers as well, when I wrote to them on issues of national interest that we as national leaders need to address consultatively.

Sir, I agree very much on the call by the honorable Prime Minister in his sine die motion for cooperation. I can assure the government

that the opposition side is willing to cooperate and work together with the government on issues of national interest affecting our nation.

Mr Speaker, my observations of this Parliament Meeting. Firstly, I must thank the Prime Minister and the Ministers for their hard work in preparing the budget that we have already passed and also for answering questions. Although we may make joke at times, but questions should be answered in a polite manner as prescribed under the Standing Order. Whenever we answer questions in Parliament we must not be rude but answer politely. Give answers that reflect the work that the ministries or the Government is doing.

The questions that we are asking are not personal and they are not directed at only the two of us or it is our family issue. No, the questions are on national issues that may be not only the Parliament needs to hear it but the nation as a whole that voted us to come into this House. They too would like to hear the government's position on certain policies.

I am calling on my good government especially the Ministers that in future they must answer questions according to the answers they are provided with and not to be very defensive. Defensive attitude should not be entertained because questions are not asked to personalize the issues but they are issues of national interest. Not only the Chamber but the nation needs to know the answers. My observation of this current meeting is that a lot of answers given by Ministers are very defensive as though their personal characters have been attacked. No, they are national issues that we need information on and so Ministers should answer in a way that is polite and respectable to the House.

Mr Speaker, the bottom up approach, in my view, means that even the planning process needs to be done by our people in the rural areas, and not just the top people. May be there was consultation by the Government when formulating its policies which I may not be aware of. I am not sure whether there was consultation with the provinces, with the rural people so that they are the ones that put in policies we need to embrace into our policy statement.

Even at the constituency level, I wonder how many of us have constituency plans. Have

we formulated constituency plans so that we address things based on different sectors in the constituency? That is my view on the bottom up approach. For example, I have here with me the third edition of my Constituency Development Plan of 2006 to 2010. This plan was formulated after a week of deliberation in 1997 by community leaders, Church leaders, women leaders and so on.

I want to raise it here because that is how I look at the bottom up approach. It should not be just us that decide on community priorities. No, it should be our people that voted us into this House. For instance, in the education sector, there is need to identify how many number of schools will meet the population growth in a particular area. For example, in my constituency plan I have 12 primary schools – six of which are community high Schools. I thank the current Minister of Education for seeing it fit to upgrade two of my primary schools to community high schools last year. That is a total of six community high schools in my constituency because of the population growth there.

The plan also outlines which schools need permanent classrooms, staff houses and so forth so that it is put on target and built. That is as far as the education sector is concern. Or the plan should also indicate which areas need rural training sector so that it absorbs the secondary school drop outs. That is how I look at the bottom up approach and which I would like to encourage MPs to follow and not just to work blindly.

The biggest challenge to us is planning, and I hope the National Planning Division embraces this by assisting constituencies that do not have any constituency plans as yet. That is why I see the previous SIDDAP program under the MP for Aoke/Langa Langa of 1997 - 2000 as very important. There must be constituency profiles so that projects are identified and put on target.

That is how I look at the bottom up approach. We do not just design things at the top. Our people must have a say in how they identify projects so that they can be put on target and help their welfare in terms of delivery of services.

I will come to the mechanisms that the MP for Aoke/Langa Langa raised in his budget debate that the policy is good but the mechanism needs change so that people can see service delivery at their doorsteps in the rural areas.

Mr Speaker, that is how I look at the bottom up approach talked so much about by Members of Parliament who may have a different meaning on what the bottom up approach means, but that is how I share my view and my experience on the bottom up approach that we talked so much about.

Sir, rural development focus is not a new concept. You know very well, Mr Speaker, being the father of this nation, since independence successive governments have tried to reach our people through infrastructure, building of certain roads in the bigger islands, and because this country is not of one landmass it is very difficult to build roads at the same time. But I congratulate the government for emphasizing rural development. All of us come from the rural areas and we need to emphasize rural development and strategize our programs so that we fulfill government policy in terms of rural development.

Mr Speaker, I said rural development is not a new concept, for instance, in Malaita, roads have been built since independence, although the roads do not link the whole island but roads are there. The same is for Guadalcanal where the roads were built since independence. That is rural development focus that the government has taken on board and has tried as much as possible to implement in other islands or other provinces that have no roads, for example, Isabel. There was a question raised about road infrastructure in Isabel.

Infrastructure is very important as it is the lifeline of any economic development in a nation. Without infrastructure people will not have access to markets. Without infrastructure people will not have access to hospitals or medical services that are always centred in provincial centres.

Mr Speaker, going back to the point made by the MP for Aoke/Langa Langa on the policy and strategies as good, but the mechanisms in implementing these policies that must be looked into. I did a paper last year which I presented to some of the students at the

USP entitled: "The Perspective of Constituency Development in Solomon Islands".

Sir, my findings over the 18 years since the RCDF or CDF was introduced since 1989 up until the end of last year revealed that each constituency should have received \$5million. The nation, you listen in to this. Each constituency should by now have received \$5.2million when the RCDF was introduced in 1989 until today, almost 18 years. Whether there has been any development over the 18 years from this \$5million, only individual constituencies will be able to say yes we have seen tangible developments or no we have not seen any tangible development at all. And if there are no developments at all, why, may I ask, Mr Speaker. It is because the mechanisms that should be in place to implement the projects that is not right.

Although we politicians would say it is good that we get this funding because people will vote for us when we give money to a certain group or we give money to voters when they come to Honiara and we pay for their sea fares to go home. But the actual tangible benefits that our people should be seeing in terms of social services or in terms of income generation to improve their welfare, I think if we look at the constituencies, most of us were not Members over the 18 years, successive MPs during those times. But \$5million is quite a lot of money to be channeled through Members of Parliament since 1989 up until last year.

Sir, I therefore would like to suggest to the government to carefully look at the mechanism of implementation now that this funding has increased to \$1million a year. In the absence of any proper mechanisms, I am even tempted not to implement my constituency plan because my people are pressurizing me to give them free handouts. Why? It is because there is no proper mechanism. The mechanism I meant is how we use this funding to benefit our people in the rural areas. May be apart from micro funding or our entitlements now that they are being improved, the rural constituency needs to be taken away from our authority or from our handling. For example, Mr Speaker, the budget that we passed in Parliament each year identifies \$1million for Mbaegu/Asifola, \$1million for East Choiseul and \$1million for West Makira.

The allocation is good but how it is implemented needs to be revised so that the funds are not given directly to the hands of Members of Parliament.

Sir, I am not saying that this is not having trust in ourselves, but without any proper policy we are tempted to just give out money to our people who come to Honiara asking for sea fares to go home or asking to send dead bodies back home or people seeking assistance for bride price.

Are these activities development, Mr Speaker? These activities would not have any impact in our rural constituencies. I think a mechanism must be put in place to guide the way we use this money.

Mr Speaker, over the years the government has been focusing on rural development on areas where some projects have been built. I think the way money is being disbursed should be re-looked into. It is good that this funding is now catered for in the national budget but how can we target social services, the education sector, health and medical services sector or infrastructure, or allocation to pay roofing irons as the Deputy Prime Minister has done for Mbaegu/Asifola, as examples. It has to be in the budget and payment made to suppliers for supplying the materials. There must be some clear guideline policies on the disbursement of this fund.

Just think of the millennium fund, which I also raised concern about in this House last year that there are no clear guidelines on the disbursement of this fund. When I received this funding, I have no choice but to disburse it just like the RCDF. I just give it to people who ask for it because there are no clear guidelines.

Can the government look into the mechanism of implementing constituency development plans so that at the end of our terms there are tangible projects seen that benefit our people. For example, water supplies, hydro projects, as done by the MP for East Are Are.

Sir, we should be making changes. This is a government of change, but why can't we change the system we have been following for the last 28 years, which Members always referred to as, 'successive governments have not been doing anything'.

Sir, when I heard comments like that I feel very sorry because you were part of a government that started since independence, and given the situation in those days where there was no allocation given to MPs and yet we see things happening in our rural areas. There are water supplies, schools, clinics and so forth being built in the rural areas. Mr Speaker, I want to recommend to the Government to look into a mechanism that must be put in place.

The past government has removed funding that goes through individual MPs and channeled it through departments according to the projects. For example, if a project is an agriculture project a proforma invoice is made to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Agriculture through the Treasury made the payments. In a way it distanced us MPs from the money. Although MPs identify the priority, the government mechanism was in place for the implementation of projects.

Sir, this is just food for thought to my good Government to look into making changes because this is a government for change and so it should change the mechanism in which funds for constituency development is targeted so that tangible benefits are realized. For example, if my colleague MP for Renbel would like to establish an infrastructure, the Ministry of Works should provide machines to build the infrastructure the MP needs around his island.

There must be tangible projects and not just giving money for bus fares or sea fares for those coming to Honiara, which at the end of our term when we go to constituency there is nothing there that you and your people can be proud of because there is improvement to their livelihood because water supplies are there.

Those are my comments on rural development and the bottom up approach which I am giving as an example that this policy or this strategy is not new because I have been doing that. I want to encourage us leaders to look at adapting that. The Government should try and consult with the UNDP to revive the SIDDAP program, whereby constituencies with no constituency profiles need to do it, before funding can go through in order to target identified sectors once implemented.

Mr Speaker, my third point is misconception of the parliamentary opposition.

Sir, it hurts me as a national leader when Ministers including the Prime Minister categorize the Opposition as being Australian puppets or talking on the voices of Australia. We are national leaders mandated by our people who raised issues of national interest that will also affect our people or affecting the nation as a whole. We are not being influenced by any foreign influence, not at all, Mr Speaker, not at all. I want my good Prime Minister to stop saying that because this issue is already an agenda from outside. There was a public meeting at the Arts Gallery yesterday trying to influence the vote of no confidence if it is going to be moved, targeting the MPs from Malaita on this side of the House. It was claimed that if this side of the House wins the government, RAMSI and Australia will control us, which means they will take over all our land. These are misconceptions.

I have an informant, Mr Speaker, who informed me yesterday on all the decisions and ideas raised at the public meeting yesterday. These are misconceptions by some of the Ministers including the Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, we are not puppets of Australia neither RAMSI. We are national leaders. We know that the security of this nation is very important and that is why this side of the House moved the rearmament motion.

Sir, it is the constitutional role of the Parliamentary Opposition in any democracy to raise issues of national interest. Let us not brainwash our people and do not mislead our people.

Australia is not interested on our lands in Solomon Islands because they have land much bigger than us. Is it because they would take all our minerals from our country? Sir, misinformation is a threat to the unity of this nation.

Sir, now as I can see it, any votes of confidence will always have related threats and intimidation. Mr Speaker, where are we heading to? Where? People of this nation must realize and know that this is the House that decides on national issues. Your role is to vote us into Parliament. Any vote of no confidence is the prerogative of this House to decide on, and not those of you on the outside.

Intimidation was there. There were others who were with us backing this vote of no confidence were issued with threats such as, 'Be careful' written on papers and put inside their vehicles. Whoever is doing that must have been somebody mandated to do that to intimidate Members of Parliament on this side. This is very dangerous. Where is this nation heading to?

In the past, votes of no confidence did not have the same weight as it is now whereby people take it and blow it out of context by issuing threatening statements like threats that reached me. My goodness, I am a national leader and I am not being influenced by any foreign force, not at all, Mr Speaker, not at all.

We are national leaders and we should grow up like the Prime Minister has said. We should grow up. Let us not use our ignorant people as our power base. My people from Malaita have been used very often because they are ignorant.

I am calling on Malaitan people, as a national leader not to allow ourselves to be used as power base because of our ignorance on issues. Where are we heading too, Mr Speaker? If this is the trend then we might as well forget the Opposition, so that all of us join the government and there will be no votes of no confidence. Just allow whichever government to go ahead without an Opposition because whenever the Opposition wants to conduct a check and balance conducted on the government or the Prime Minister they are under threat. So where is democracy?

Mr Speaker, you know very well being a former Prime Minister that in the past a vote of no confidence is not something new, as it is a constitutional check and balance. Even if it is defeated, the issues are raised in this House so that the whole nation hears the point of view of the Opposition. That is what we have achieved during the last motion of no confidence. And if we are seeing events that are happening now it will confirm the concern that we as Members of Parliament have for the unity of this nation.

Mr Speaker, I was very surprised when information had it that the Member for Central Kwara'ae is under threat; they will burn his house and burn his pig fence. I am a farmer, as I

have said, and my goodness what have these things spoilt?

Mr Speaker, if whenever a vote of no confidence is noticed and there are threats like these then it shows there is no democracy in this nation but dictatorial leadership. We know very well that people are behind these threats.

Mr Speaker, on national issues that have been debated during this meeting, there are two very important motions the parliamentary opposition raised so that our viewpoints are understood by the government, and the first one is on rearmament.

Sir, I feel sorry for a number of my colleague Ministers because they voted against their conscience – conscience or commonsense which the Deputy Prime Minister always said in this House. I think it is important that we do not take decisions on issues that are against our conscience but vote on what our people wanted us to do. I know very well that the people of the Minister for Education do not want arms but he voted for arms, including the Minister for Fisheries who is not here and the Minister for Commerce - all the Guadalcanal MPs. Their people have made their stand and yet these Ministers voted against it. That is voting against our conscience, and that is what I am saying.

It would be good, Mr Speaker, if national leaders vote wisely on issues of national interest based on what our people told us. Otherwise comes 2010 we will lose and will not be re-elected to this House.

Mr Speaker, on the undermining of RAMSI, a lot of credit must go to the government that invited RAMSI and now RAMSI is in the country helping us for the last three years. It is important that whatever changes that need to be brought under an amendment to the Facilitation Act, which I hope the Government would certainly do after the review, must be brought to this House during the June/July meeting so that we can look at the areas that need change in RAMSI's operations. Doing that certainly has my support. But for us to continue undermining them is not good. For instance, it has come to my knowledge that the Minister of Foreign Affairs is now empowered to approve visas. I start to question that move because what I know is that only the Director of Immigration can approve visas. If there is any

appeal before it goes to the Minister. What we are hearing, Mr Speaker, is that some family members of the RAMSI officers are not allowed to come into the country. Is that not undermining RAMSI who is here to help us?

Mr Speaker, there are very specific examples that I do not want to dwell on, but I call on my good Government not to undermine RAMSI in terms of facilitating their officers coming to work in our nation. There might be differences but there are avenues to solve the differences.

As I mentioned, I am in full support of the Government's stand to review RAMSI so that part of this big technical assistance it is providing can be reduced and reallocate funds to other sectors that RAMSI is involved in. You have the support of this side of the House so that there are some cost savings in RAMSI that can be used for other sectors under their governance program.

But for my good Minister for Foreign Affairs to hold up the visas of RAMSI officers that are coming into the country under the technical assistance program is more or less undermining the operations of RAMSI in our country. I think there are avenues that can be resorted to rather than the Minister performing the authority that is only vested on the Director.

Mr Speaker, without RAMSI this nation would not be where it is now. We all know this. Some of you may not have known this because maybe you were out of the country during the ethnic tension. Or some of you may have lived in faraway provinces like Temotu and so you did not know what has been happening here on Guadalcanal. Those of us who were here on Guadalcanal and Malaita are the ones who were greatly affected. So let us not undermine RAMSI. Allow them to do capacity training for our police force so that in the event they leave our Police Force is capable of looking after the country's law and order situation.

Mr Speaker, let alone, a lot of new recruits are now in the Police Force at this time and so they need to undergo capacity building. They need to undergo training so that they are fully equipped to take over the enforcement of law and order in the country.

Mr Speaker, these are my views and observations on issues we have discussed during this Parliament meeting.

Mr Speaker, since traditionally sine die motion is also to give vote of thanks, on behalf of my constituency and my family, I would like to thank you, Mr Speaker, for your tolerance and the professional way you have conducted the business of the House. I also thank the Clerk to Parliament and your hard working staff. I would like to thank you very much for every effort put into these three weeks meeting.

Mr Speaker, my personal thanks also goes to the Prime Minister and his family, Ministers of the Crown and their families, Permanent Secretaries including public officers who are at the helm of the government, continue to pursue your policies so that our people can benefit from the government's service delivery.

As I said in my budget speech, Mr Speaker, there is currently a big expectation that after this budget is passed people will reap the benefits. It may be or may be not but let us continue to support the government in its endeavour. Thank you very much Mr Prime Minister and your hard working Ministers, continue to perform your good work for our nation.

Mr Speaker, I also would like to thank the development partners for their understanding of the situation that we are going through and they are continuing to support the government. I must also make mention here, the Republic of China for its unfailing support to our development aspirations, as well as NZAID and AusAID for providing support to improve roads in Central Kwara'ae.

(hear, hear)

Even though those of you on the other side do not want aid or do not want to depend on aid, leave me to depend on aid. During this reconstruction period, Mr Speaker, I think we still need assistance from aid donors. Without aid there will be no infrastructures being built.

Do you agree with me Minister of Infrastructure? If we are seeing improvements on roads, it is donor funding. I think reconstruction phase of countries that have gone through civil unrests get support from

development partners. The same should apply to us. We do not depend on aid but whilst our country is under reconstruction and economic recovery they can help us in infrastructure. We cannot totally neglect or say we do not want aid. Aid is not given so that we eat from it. No, we have to work hard, sweat it out for our own families to survive. But aid can help our infrastructures. It is not money that we are going to repay, in some cases it is grant funding. And if they are prepared to assist us why not accept them to improve our social services.

On the same token, I would like to thank our development partners for their assistance in supporting successive governments including this government because I can see that development partners will help this government with almost over \$1 billion. So stop saying that we do not want to depend on aid, otherwise totally remove the donor assistance component in the budget to justify what we are saying.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to congratulate the premiers who have been recently elected. I congratulate the Premier of Malaita and his new provincial assembly executive for being elected. I look forward to working together with him and his executive. I would like to inform the Premier not to preach saying that the four Members of Malaita on this side of the House do not want to work with the Province. No, not at all.

I am only surprised because they never invited us to any of the meetings that they have held when they come here in Honiara. What is wrong? Why were the four Members of Malaita on this side of the House not invited? Why? That is the only question the Deputy Prime Minister has not given his answer to me yet or the Minister for Public Service, Infrastructure and the others. I discount those in Honiara because they are national seats and I do not want them to claim that they are Members of Malaita.

Mr Speaker, I congratulate the other provincial premiers that have been mandated by their people to serve the province. Let us not forget that provinces are very important in the delivery of government services as they are agents of the national government.

Mr Speaker, the private sector must also be thanked. Without them the engine of growth cannot continue to function and our economy

cannot grow. I would like to thank them for whatever role they played.

I would also like to thank the management of the ANZ Bank for seeing it fit to install the state of art in Malaita, Auki which is now providing services for the private sector in Auki. I would like to request them if they can also pursue the rural banking services that is currently available on Guadalcanal. I think the roads in Malaita have been improved and so I call on ANZ to look at rural banking to open up banking services to our rural people in Malaita.

Mr Speaker, also a vote of thanks to RAMSI and PPF officers, the regional assistance mission from other countries that are serving here. I would like to thank them for their unfailing support in enforcing law and order in our nation.

Mr Speaker, at times some of the comments we make in here are anti-RAMSI, anti-Australia and even anti-white too. We are national leaders. There was one statement made by the Deputy Prime Minister which is kind of racist when he said we do things not like the Whiteman. When I heard this sort of statement coming from a leader does not in anyway help our nation. Let us be neutral and as national leaders we should talk some sense and not being racist in this House.

Mr Speaker, I thank the churches and leaders of our churches for their moral support and prayers. Everyday they are praying for us leaders so that we have wisdom. Only God can give wisdom, and wisdom is to discern wrong from right, telling the difference. They have been praying for us, colleagues, so that we have wisdom to discern what is right for this nation, and so that we support what is right, and not support what is wrong.

Sir, I thank the churches, and we look forward to the government's policy of giving you tithes as promised but which I failed to see in the budget as I alluded to in my budget speech. But since this government is a responsible government it will live up to its statement of giving tithes to the churches and not just grants to churches as tithes. No, Mr Speaker, tithe is different and I hope the responsible current government will keep up to its promise of helping our churches so that churches can spread the Good News because

that is their sole responsibility. Spread the Good News and win others to Christ too so that the crime rate is reduced not only here in Honiara but in the rural areas too.

Mr Speaker, I also wish to thank all our rural farmers that without your sweats copra would not have been produced in Temotu, Isabel, Shortlands and Choiseul. That is what we should be doing and not just doing nothing in Honiara, meeting every day at the Arts Gallery. I have always said this. The generation now is quite different. I have seen this in Auki too, people come everyday to Auki, sitting down nothing in front of the shops.

Mr Speaker, when I was small this was not so, people work hard to earn their living. Our rural farmers play a very important role in our economic system and so they should be thanked including the fishermen and producers as well as the various sectors in our economy.

Finally, Mr Speaker, to my good people of Central Kwara'ae, I look forward to visiting you at the end of this meeting to explain to you the policies of the government on rearmament. I challenge the other Members of Parliament to go back to your constituencies too and get your people's views.

I am worried, Mr Speaker, that sometimes we talk in here without getting the views of our people in the constituencies but we blow it out in here, as though we have the mandate from our people. It is very important that we get the mandate of our people.

My good people of Central Kwara'ae, I will come and see you after this Parliament Meeting to hold public meetings at centres to explain to you what is inside the budget for you and what is not provided for and to also inform you issues of national interest the government adopts as its policy and will continue to implement because the future of this nation depends on decisions the current government is making now.

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

Hon BOSETO: Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to participate in sharing my contribution to my honourable colleagues who have spoken in this Chamber.

Mr Speaker, first I wish to thank the Honorable Prime Minister, the mover and the presenter of this conventional motion of sine die in this Chamber.

Mr Speaker, I would be brief by sharing the following points, which I believe the 2007 Grand Coalition for Change Government Budget is directing our half a million people in this country to take a new turn to follow.

Mr Speaker, let me re-emphasize what I have been saying in my previous speeches in the chamber. And that is development is people because we do exist from people, with people and for people. This is the very basis of our democratic principle of the government of the people by the people and for the people.

My first point is that the 2007 Budget has turned the Solomon Islands Government's hearts and minds to our people, donor partners toward the rural majority of our indigenous people reside.

Mr Speaker, it is the right turn of our hearts and minds towards a long road of breaking the wall between the haves and the have-nots. Breaking the barriers of wall between the superiority and the inferiority. Breaking the walls between oppressors and the oppressed. Breaking the walls between globalization and contextualization. Breaking the barriers or walls between the world's pyramid structure of classification and simple family structure of hospitality and celebration. Breaking the barriers of walls between blacks and whites. Breaking the barriers of distances between scattered islands by providing transport and communication, and so forth.

Mr Speaker, St Paul's affirmation on breaking the walls between Jews and Gentiles are as follows:-

- For Christ Himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people.
- With His own body He broke down the walls that separated them and kept them enemies.
- He abolished the Jews law with His Commandments and rules in order to create out of the two races, one new people in union with Himself, and in this way making peace.

Mr Speaker, man himself has no spirit to do that. Only our hearts and minds together turning towards people centred can we be able to break down walls and barriers that separate people from people, race from race, males from females, and so on.

Mr Speaker, my second point is sustained community living and driving economic growth. Mr Speaker, the term sustained community living is the base root of our bottom up approach and rural development, in my view, because world and global economies and small national economies depend on the fluctuating world market prices for its cash foundation. Our sustained community living will continue to be sustained and survived on sisters and brothers, uncles and aunties. Our sustained community living is motivated by the feeling of compassion as we celebrate our births and our deaths, our joys and our sorrows, our full and empty.

Mr Speaker, on pages 6 to 8, under budget review, our honorable Minister of Finance Budget Speech raised some obstacles to our long term vision to development, and the challenges facing our national economy. Page 9 identified three barriers to our economy growth, and pages 10 to 13 outlines government reform agenda to overcome these barriers for our rural development and the bottom up methodology.

Mr Speaker, the base foundation and the living roots of the bottom up participatory approach had already been in place for the spiritual and social development of our village communities throughout Solomon Islands for many years.

The village sustained community living had already allocated lands for church buildings for glorifying God, school classrooms for education, clinics and aid posts for healing ministry, rest houses for welcoming guests, community halls for social functions, hosting workshops, conferences, consultations and so forth, and for making pastors, teachers, nurses gardens. The sustained community living of our village communities is already the sustainable back bone of our Solomon Islands economy household.

Mr Speaker, the root foundation of our diverse sustained community living as

cornerstones of our homegrown constitution for our state government and our reconciled diversity under the guiding hand of God for our one sovereign democratic head of the one community creative God would provide long term peace with justice and long term security based on people's relationship, and not just on business relationship.

Mr Speaker, what I have been saying is the reflection of the preamble of the Constitution of Solomon Islands. As you yourself know, Mr Speaker, the leader of the special delegation of our politicians who went to London in the eve of our political independence participated in the formulation of the preamble of the national constitution.

Mr Speaker, I have no doubt in my heart and my mind that the preamble of our Solomon Islands constitution was God given revelation at the moment His Holy Spirit wrote in your hearts for Solomon Islands and guided your hands to put on paper the words of the preamble of our constitution.

I acknowledge with gratitude to God what He had revealed to you and our former politicians in London in the eve of our political independence on 7th July 1978.

Mr Speaker, may I read in reminding us in this Chamber and this nation these revealed words of God to our political fathers under your leadership in the even of our political independence. The preamble reads – **The constitution of Solomon Islands:**

We, the people of Solomon Islands, proud of the wisdom of the worthy customs of ancestors, mindful of our common and diverse heritage and conscious of our common destiny, do now, under the guiding hand of God, establish the sovereign democratic state of Solomon Islands. As a basis of our united nation, we declare that all power in Solomon Islands belong to its people and is exercised on their behalf by the legislature, the executive and the judiciary established by this Constitution. The natural resources of our country are vested in the people and the government of Solomon Islands. We agree and pledge that our government shall be based on

democratic principles of universal suffrage and the responsibility of executive authorities to elected assemblies. We shall uphold the principles of equality, social justice and the equitable distribution of incomes. We shall respect and enhance human dignity and strengthen and build on our communal solidarity. We shall cherish and promote the different cultural traditions within Solomon Islands. We shall ensure the participation of our people in the governance of their affairs and provide within the framework of our national unity for the decentralization of power, and for these purposes we now give ourselves this Constitution.

Mr Speaker, when Jesus outlined His program of action in Luke 4: 18-19, He accommodated what is in the preamble of our Constitution and He determined to lead us further to announce His presence and His Lordship. He said, *'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind and to set free the oppressed and to announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people.'*

Mr Speaker, Jesus Christ was both the servant of all servants and King of all Kings and publicly witnessed and demonstrated the interrelationship to lead is to serve and to serve is to lead.

Mr Speaker, as Minister responsible of the Ministry of Lands and Survey, the Ministry will take as its guiding directive the preamble of the constitution of Solomon Islands.

Mr Speaker, as land is the only living capital for the security and the survival of our sustained community living, the Ministry will bring to the next Parliament a principal legislation on tribes and customary land and titles act, 2007.

Mr Speaker, the preamble of constitution declares and I quote, *'All power in Solomon Islands belongs to its people and is exercised on their behalf by the legislature,*

executive and the judiciary established by this constitution'. Therefore, Mr Speaker, the three areas of responsibility of the government referred to above must be prepared to responsibly and responsively exercise their interrelated areas of responsibility to recognize and affirm that the landlords of Solomon Islands are the indigenous people of Solomon Islands whether they be Polynesian, Micronesian or Melanesian in their origins.

Mr Speaker, the long term security of this nation is primarily its people, and not money. Money is the servant for our nation building. The landowners who are also resource owners are the landlords. They represent men and women, children and old people who will welcome and provide hospitality to our guest settlers, developers, or investors into our country. Therefore, Mr Speaker, the issue of social justice, equality, equitable distribution of income, communal solidarity, participation of our people in governance etc., which are enshrined in the preamble of our Constitution are issues that cannot be responsibly addressed without respecting and recognizing the landowners of Solomon Islands.

Before I resume my seat, Mr Speaker, I want to just thank my people of South Choiseul Constituency. I want them to know that I have taken some actions to follow up the bottom up approach and rural development. Some of these are as follows:-

Feasibility studies for three villages' hydro projects have been carried out in the first week of this month, February 2007. These villages are Katurasele, Papara and Boe. The next village hydro project which has been surveyed and passed and awaiting feasibility study is Panarui village. The other three villages which I am asking their Ward Members to identify water sources to be surveyed soon are Sasamugga, Gorebara/Sene including Pujivae SDA Community High School.

Mr Speaker, apart from the hydro project, Luti plantation and Vurulata Association is now being opened up for cattle project, for communication, for coconut crushing mill, proper zoning for a mini economic centre and a township, for an airstrip, and for a tourist gateway to travel to North East etc. I encourage members of the community from Kinoso to

Kakaza to participate and support this development.

Sir, a crushing coconut mill is already installed at Sasamunga Village for the Babatana section to sell their coconuts. I have formed a tourist committee here in Honiara to follow up those have already shown interest from overseas in establishing tourism base and centres for our village communities to participate by providing home inns or holiday inns etc. This tourist scheme should start from Kaghau as the gateway to Katupika area and Kirugela.

Mr Speaker, I invite our Avasö communities in Katupika and Kirugela to give their hearts and minds, their lands and islands to fully participate and be involved in this challenging and potential project for our farmers, agriculture, and fishermen to earn money from tourists everyday in the days to come and to fill up their pockets always with money so that they are able to afford the necessities they need every day.

Mr Speaker, there are many unfinished church buildings, halls, school rooms etc., which has been already funded by RCDF during my last term. May I also acknowledge with thanks, the General Manager and the Management of MV Lauru 1 including the captains, engineers and crews for all their assistance. They have been serving our people of Lauru, North New Georgia and other ports of call between Honiara and Lauru. Thank you very much for your good work.

Mr Speaker, I want to remind those villages which already received water tanks and roofing irons and have not used them to put them up within the next six months. But if I come and find these things still not being used then I will transfer them to another village that mostly need them now.

Mr Speaker, my final message to my constituency is that my consultant, with a technical committee, here in Honiara are looking at your applications from your ward committees. Ward committees that have not sent their applications yet must immediately do so.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, may I take this opportunity to thank you and your team leadership with your Clerk, assistant officers and staff of Parliament House.

My words of thanks to the honorable Prime Minister and honorable Leader of Opposition, honorable Minister of Finance and Treasury and to you all my colleague Ministers and all honorable Members of Parliament. I pray and hope that by the guidance of the One who is Gracious, our Heavenly Father who is greater than our problems would continue to reveal His purposes from the midst of our differences and our conflicting situation so that we together decide what is best for the future of our people and our land.

With those few remarks as my contribution to this motion of sine die, I beg to support the motion.

Hon IDURI: Mr Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to contribute in support to this motion of sine die moved by the Prime Minister.

Sir, at the outset, I wish to thank you and your good office, the Clerk to Parliament for your able guidance and hard work in ensuring that the deliberations of this Parliament Meeting reached such a successful conclusion.

Furthermore, I, on behalf of my constituency of West Kwara'ae join other contributors to this motion of sine die, in thanking the government side for the strong solidarity shown in deliberations during this Parliament Meeting on bills, the many sensitive Private Members' motions and questions, making this a very fiery but event parliament meeting indeed. Beyond mere political scoring between this side and that side of the House, democracy prevailed and people have the right to be informed.

Sir, in particular, the passage of the 2007 budget, as a government we can now implement our bold policies, new programs, ongoing programs and deliver services based on our promises to our people, particularly those far majority in our many villages scattered throughout our many islands that make up this country.

Sir, much critical analysis and debate was made on the 2007 Budget. Skepticisms were raised about whether this government would deliver on its promises, particularly its "bottom up approach", which was criticized as 'not new', 'mere rhetoric', 'unrealistic bordering on overly ambitious', but I thank Members of

the Opposition, for your genuine and constructive comments and questions, particularly those relating to my Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace. This, I believe, has consolidated the Government's determination and resolve, to deliver public goods effectively and efficiently.

Mr Speaker, other contributors to this sine die motion have referred to the importance of learning from lessons of the last 28 years. I support that as important. As national leaders, we need to ask and find answers to the questions of what were the underlying causes of the ethnic tension, the recent Honiara riot, and even before those sad events. Where did our beloved Solomon Islands go wrong to reach that all low in 1998? Sir, furthermore, how do we address the underlying root causes and the symptomatic causes through the implementation of our respective ministerial and sectoral budget provisions to advance, promote and ensure sustainable peace and national unity?

These are questions, I believe, demands analysis, hold important relevance and calls for answers across all sectors and all ministries because in the final analysis we have set ourselves on an ultimate mission to rebuilding a 'united, peaceful and prosperous' Solomon Islands.

Sir, I also agree with other speakers on the importance of economic development and creating an increasing opportunities for our people, particularly in our rural areas and amongst our young people. Yes, we need to be cautious that while, we allude to positive economic growth, let us not be too obsessed about macroeconomic indicators that do not translate into meaningful developments in the rural areas. Because what is economic growth, and economic development for what and for who, if the fisheries centres and copra buying centers since time before have closed, the roads are still bush tracks, if not now totally closed due to lack of maintenance and life in the villages are worse than before. While on the other hand, the forest and sea resources have been depleted and destroyed in the name of development.

Sir, as we rebuild this beautiful country, we must not forget that peace and security and development are interrelated. Let us not pursue

development at the expense of quality of life and sustainable benefits to our rural people. Let us ensure there is equal development across all provinces that foster peace and unity. This is our challenge, and our goal is to rise up to these challenges.

In this regard, the 2007 Budget appropriately addresses these concerns through key areas of provincial and rural development access to essential services, stabilizing law and order, enhancing national institutions and services, and encouraging a vibrant and private sector economy.

Mr Speaker, as an educationist by profession, I support accessibility to quality education for all our children and the creation of opportunity for our young, because altogether they make up three-quarter of our population. A literate society will go a long way in ensuring national unity, peace and security.

Mr Speaker, much debate was raised on the risk of being overly dependent on donor funding that it creates a handout mentality or worse still a cargo cult mentality that undermines our industriousness, replaces sheer hard work, and creates sheer complacency by Solomon Islanders. Sir, I believe that while we need our donor partners, there is the need to be cautious in that aid money had failed us as a nation too.

Sir, as a nation we have also had 28 years experiences of donor dependency. This Government is addressing some of the lessons learnt by looking internally at our own revenues and resources in taking the lead and responsibility in trying to manage our finances carefully.

Sir, we must remind ourselves that rebuilding of our shattered human relationship, healing past hurts and pains and addressing the grievances and injustices of our recent past, are just as equally important as rebuilding of our economy and the productive sector of our infrastructure. Addressing outstanding issues and at the same time being proactive and responsive to emerging issues that have implications on peace and stability, is critical.

Mr Speaker, as we all know resources are finite and can never be enough. Nevertheless for 2007, my Ministry is counting on a recurrent budget of \$4.7million, which is a

100% increase from 2006. Out of this figure, approximately half is allocated for the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Steering Committee, an important undertaking through my Ministry, the Prime Minister's Office and Legal and Justice Ministry.

Sir, while successive governments have talked about the idea of a truth and reconciliation committee in the past, this Government is taking concrete actions to establish a Solomon Islands Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As a nation we need to deal with our past to move on. The Steering Committees work will include a draft framework bill on truth and reconciliation. Based on the outcome of the first phase, the TR Commission will be established.

Sir, there are also provisions of approximately half a million dollars for national dialogue as part of my Ministry's inter-provincial and national reconciliation program. This covers the work of a high level government committee to look at the SIG/GPG reconciliation and rehabilitation reports, and in particular the proposed SIG/GPG reconciliation talks planned for June 2007. Provisions in the budget also include talks with the Malaita Provincial Government and a proposed premiers' consultations talk.

Sir, the outcome of these talks will definitely call for more resources. Sir, what is agreed to will be sought by way of supplementary appropriation in 2007 and will be appropriately looked into in 2008. Furthermore, provisions for rehabilitation programs, whilst not reflected in my Ministry's 2007 budget, whatever is agreed to will be considered where appropriate to be absorbed by other programs of relevant ministries.

Finally, unlike previous years, where the Ministry had very weak links, if not lack of mechanisms through which to implement government policies to our rural areas in reconciliation and peace, this Government in line with its bottom up approach has established the Peace and Integrity Council, which will provide mechanisms through which government can reach the rural communities.

Furthermore, in turn this would enable the participation and active involvement of our traditional leaders into our reconciliation and

peace building programs. Strengthening partnerships with our many peace building stakeholders will also be achieved through the above mechanisms.

Mr Speaker, in this regard, I would like to also thank our traditional leaders, the churches, the NGOs and the women's group who have been major stakeholders in peace building throughout the nation and have practically held the country together. Thank you for the continuing hard work. Sir, in connection, may I also specially thank the former councilors and peace monitors of the former NPC, which is now being replaced by the PIC.

Sir, let me conclude my support on this sine die motion by thanking my people of West Kwara'ae constituency for their support, understanding and trust in me as their national Member of Parliament. Thank you Mr Speaker, and I beg to support the motion.

Mr TOM: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me to contribute to this motion of sine die.

First of all, allow me to thank you, Mr Speaker, and wish you and your family a happy and prosperous New Year 2007 and happy Easter. Mr Speaker, may I also take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister, Ministers of the Crown, Backbenchers, the Leader of the Opposition and Independent Members and all Members of Parliament and their families and wish them all a prosperous and happy New Year 2007 and also a happy Easter.

Mr Speaker, let me also thank all Church leaders, community leaders, chiefs and people of West Kwaio constituency whom I represent in this honorable House. I have been a church leader in that constituency before being elected as their Member of Parliament, and I am happy to say that our relationship continues to be beneficial and some visible improvements are taking shape in the constituency.

Mr Speaker, I know the budget debate is over, but let me beg your indulgence in allowing me to thank the Hon Minister of Finance and Treasury, the MP for Gizo/Kolombangara for ably moving the 2007 Appropriation Bill 2007, presented to this honorable House as the main business of this Parliament meeting.

Mr Speaker, as a Christian leader, I am delighted to be part of a government that recognizes and acknowledges the lordship and sovereignty of the Almighty God upon our nation in allocating and using of resources God has given us. In setting aside ten percent (10%) of the national budget we desire to honour the Lord with our substance as stated in Proverbs 3:9 and God has promised us that He will open the windows of heaven as in Malachi 3:10, and pour out blessings that there shall not be room enough to receive it. If we do it with commitment and real heart, God will honour those who honour Him.

Mr Speaker, in tithing we bring upon our nation blessings and avoid curse which is the punishment for robbing God. When individuals, companies and governments neglect to pay a tenth of their proceeds to God, the Bible tells us that this is robbing God. The total amount does not matter but it is the principle that matters here. Our budget may look small and it may seem insufficient to meet our nation's needs, but if we honour God and be good stewards of the resources He has given us then we allow blessings to flow. This is the promise of God to us and as we humbly obey the Word of God, we can be assured that this pleases God, and when God is pleased, blessings flow.

Mr Speaker, may I appeal to all honourable Members of this House to realize the important step we are taking here. I sincerely hope that we would all appreciate the importance of this policy and do all our best to ensure that our churches throughout the country, especially in the rural areas are reached with this money.

Mr Speaker, may I also appeal to all church leaders, (if church leaders in the nation are listening in), ensure that this money is used for the purpose for which it was budgeted for and be properly accounted for. Otherwise church leaders misuse this money when it reaches us. It is very, very important that this money is distributed and reaches our churches. Make sure it is used according to what the Scripture says. Time does not allow me to further explain what is tithing.

Mr Speaker, I believe the Government is taking the right direction in honoring God in tithes and taking up the responsibility to ensure

the engagement of our people in national development.

The people of my constituency of West Kwaio, Mr Speaker, are looking forward to being involved in the implementation of government policy through its plans of action and believe that as leaders work together we will meet the needs of our people. In this regard, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank all Members of Parliament, the Executive Government and the Judiciary for working together in serving our people.

Mr Speaker, we do have differences in opinions often expressed in this honourable chamber, but I do hope and believe that we will not lose sight of our responsibilities towards the people of our beloved nation whom we represent here.

May I take this opportunity, Mr Speaker, to remind all honourable colleagues in this honourable House, of the great responsibility we have for the people of this country. Mr Speaker, as leaders we need a lot of humility to accept criticism and not to focus on the failures of others. It saddens me to see so much arrogance and pride displayed in defiance of the spirit of leadership and servant-hood in this honourable Parliament. This is a very, very important thing that we leaders should think seriously about. There are those, Mr Speaker, who use this honourable Parliament to boast their egos, putting others down and act so arrogantly that we fail in our duty towards our people.

Mr Speaker, we need to be aware that this nation prays for us on a daily basis. As leaders, we need to be conscious of our own spiritual needs, be compassionate and be willing to sacrifice some of our rights and privileges for the sake of our people. There is no need to be self-righteous, look down on others or be quick to blame others or defensive when criticized. Good leadership, Mr Speaker, is godly leadership and walking in the light with the realization that we need a continual heart of repentance and a sense of our need for a fresh encounter with God and for a fresh filling of His Holy Spirit.

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the fact that we are all eager to get on with the development of our people and our nation as soon as

Parliament is over. But without fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit, we can never achieve anything good for our beloved country. I hope, Mr Speaker, that honourable representatives will recognize their need to put God first in their lives and commit themselves to helping their people through the “bottom-up” approach strategy being implemented by the government.

The “bottom-up” approach, Mr Speaker, is not just about creating another 150 jobs or defying any existing structures of government. It is about reaching, engaging, involving and encouraging the villager to, not only actively participate in national development but to benefit from it as well.

Mr Speaker, I would like conclude by thanking you and your deputy’s able leadership. I thank the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, all Ministers of the Crown, backbenchers, the Leader of the Opposition and Independent and all Members of Parliament, and wish you all a happy Easter.

To the people of Solomon Islands Mr Speaker, I would like to thank them for their prayers and support for the leaders and government of this nation. I believe God has a special purpose for our nation which can be fulfilled through the institutions of government, the churches and communities that make up this beautiful country.

Mr Speaker, my special thanks go to the people of my constituency, West Kwaio and wish all the church leaders, chiefs, community leaders and people of West Kwaio God’s continued blessings as we strive to do God’s will in our lives. I thank you all for your prayers and support and believe that God will direct all paths of development so that what we will bring honor and glory to our God, through whom we derive our lives and our livelihoods.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I wish to give all the honour and glory to God for his love, protection and mercy in all of our lives, both in this honourable Chamber and throughout this country.

With these few remarks, Mr Speaker, I thank you for allowing me to speak and I now take my seat and support the motion. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Hon SIKUA: Thank you very much indeed, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to make a few brief comments on the motion of sine die.

Firstly I would like to thank you very much indeed for the very able manner in which you have been conducting the affairs of Parliament during this meeting, and also the Clerk of the National Parliament and all the staff of the National Parliament Office.

I also sincerely thank the Honourable Prime Minister, Mr Speaker, for moving this motion, and all colleague Ministers for their contributions in this meeting. Particularly, I would like to say my sincere thanks to the Minister for Finance and Treasury, his Permanent Secretary and staff, all Permanent Secretaries and public officers. Also Mr Speaker, I would like to say thank you so much to my own Permanent Secretary, all heads of divisions within my Ministry, advisors and staff for the very hard work they have put into the 2007 Budget, especially for those who work in the Teaching Service division or the work they have done to producing the teacher establishment and manpower, which has been absent in our office for some years. I would also like to thank so much, Mr Speaker, all Members of Parliament on both sides of the House for their support to the 2007 Budget.

Mr Speaker, the 2007 Budget has again allocated the largest share to the education sector, and I am very thankful for the trust in allocating such a substantial amount of money to my Ministry. My staff and I are very encouraged by the very positive comments coming from Members of Parliament, especially from the Opposition bench regarding the impact education is making throughout the country. I can only promise on behalf of my staff that we will continue to try our best in making further improvements in the education sector.

Mr Speaker, last week my staff and other stakeholders in education have finalized the National Education Action Plan 2007 to 2009 as well as the Education Strategic Framework for 2007 to 2015. These are the tools by which we are benchmarking our actions and the implementation of our goals up to year 2015 as we strive to achieve the millennium development goals.

These plans, Mr Speaker, cover ongoing and future developments in early childhood education, primary, secondary, tertiary, and technical/vocational education and training.

In early childhood, Mr Speaker, the focus will be on community support, participation and partnership with the Government through my Ministry. In primary education, Mr Speaker, focus will be on further improvement of infrastructure and provision of text books and equipment. Similar focus, Mr Speaker, will be undertaken in secondary education, and I am happy to inform this honourable House that our distribution for materials to all secondary schools will be launched next week and will commence from thereon.

We note, Mr Speaker, the sentiment that has been mentioned in this honourable House for the need of my Ministry to harmonize and try to standardize the level of school fees charged in all secondary schools throughout the country.

Mr Speaker, teacher training continues to be a priority.

Hon Sogavare: Mr Speaker, I beg to move Standing Order 10 be suspended in accordance with Standing Order 81 to allow the proceedings of this current motion to continue and complete.

Hon Sikua: Teacher training, as I have said, continues to be a priority for my Ministry to ensure quality education for all. And very recently Mr Speaker, the concern about teacher travel has come up as a very public issue and I would like to assure the House that the matter has been pursued and my Ministry will ensure that this problem does not occur again in the future.

Focus on tertiary education is to continue with ongoing awards on scholarships, but furthermore the establishment of the USP Campus in Solomon Islands is also a priority of the government.

I am very pleased to inform this honourable House Mr Speaker, that I have signed the letter of intent with the Pro Vice Chancellor Regional from the University of the South Pacific this morning. The letter of intent is like the USP and the Government agreeing to marry. It is like we have been engaged already.

That gives us the opportunity to come up with resources to continue with the work so that we can be able to come to a position where the memorandum of understanding can be firmed up once we know exactly the amount of money we are talking about in the establishment of the fourth campus.

I am happy to say here, Mr Speaker, that after more than twenty years of talking about the establishment of this campus we have made history today.

(hear, hear)

I thank the government and especially the Minister for Finance for all his support in this very important initiative.

Mr Speaker, the transformation of SICHE to a university is an equally important priority for the government, but it is important for us to see how that complements with the USP Campus happens because we cannot afford these two bodies competing with each other and duplicating.

Mr Speaker, as you may have been aware the 2007 Scholarship Awards have been released this week. As such Mr Speaker, I am sorry if I have not pleased some people, but it is very difficult to please everybody all the time. I will try my best to look applications that have come in whilst the other applications have been considered.

The other very important sector, Mr Speaker, in education is that of technical vocational education and training. The policy has been approved for this particular important sub-sector and we are beginning to implement parts of it, but it will take some time for the policy to be fully realized.

Overall, Mr Speaker, I share with my colleague, the Minister for Health on its concern about the country's high population growth rate. As it stands at the moment, Mr Speaker, my Ministry has had to be building one classroom every day because as I understand from statistics about 35 children are being born every day in Solomon Islands, which translates to my Ministry needing to build one classroom every day.

Here, Mr Speaker, I wish to thank all the donor partners that are assisting in the

development of the education sector. The government does appreciate your support, and in particular I would like to mention donors in the education sector which are the European Union, NZAid, Republic of China, Japan, AusAID and of course Papua New Guinea,.

I would also like to thank very much all education authorities - the church education authorities, the provincial education authorities and private education authorities for assisting the government in development of the education sector in the country. Very clearly, Mr Speaker, the Government alone cannot afford to provide the educational needs of all our people, and I am very thankful to all our education authorities for being partners and participating in the development of the education sector with the government.

I would also like to thank all school principals Mr Speaker, headmasters and teachers for their smooth start to the 2007 school year. I would also like to thank all school boards and committees. I believe that the school year will go smoothly as set out in the school calendar, and I just want to inform all stakeholders in education that the future of this nation is in our hands.

Mr Speaker, I just want to saw a few things about my constituency of North East Guadalcanal. When the Leader of the Opposition spoke earlier on, he mentioned something on rearming and RAMSI.

Mr Speaker: Order. Is anyone operating anything?

Hon Sikua: Mr Speaker, I just wanted to clear the stand that I have on these issues when there was particular mention of North East Guadalcanal people here on the position that we as members of government have, that is all Ministers from Guadalcanal and backbenchers of Guadalcanal have on this issue and the position taken by the Guadalcanal Provincial Coordinating Committee, which is made up of all Members of Parliament of Guadalcanal and all Executive members of the Guadalcanal Provincial Assembly.

The body itself, Mr Speaker, is a legally constituted body under the Provincial Government Act 1987. In the interest of

speaking with one voice, we the members on the government side with the Guadalcanal Provincial Coordinating Committee have decided to speak with one voice on this issue, so that what is done in the motion that was mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, is a stand we have decided to make as members of Cabinet in this government so that nobody should be having any thoughts as to where our position is in terms of RAMSI and that of the rearmament.

My people of North East Guadalcanal, Mr Speaker, are very reasonable people in that they have given me the trust and I am sure they will understand where we are coming from.

The interest of my constituency here, Mr Speaker, my people are very keen to provide more land for oil palm development. I think we are very happy with the model that is being undertaken by the GPPOL which has given encouragement to my people to give more land for oil palm development. We are happy to see in the budget allocation for water supply and sanitation and we are very interested to participate in the cattle project that is under the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

Since being elected as a Member of Parliament, Mr Speaker, I have been rebuilding quite a number of roads. I hope the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Department of Infrastructure and Development can consider some kind of refund because I have been using a lot of my RCDF for this work, which is not intended for that purpose.

Mr Speaker, on the bona fide demands of the people of Guadalcanal, I would like to thank the government for building these issues in its policy framework document, and that having passed the budget this will be implemented. But I would like to warn my people of Guadalcanal not to expect too much because this is just the beginning of a long process to be followed, and so give the government some more time on this. And of course the issue of federal state system Mr Speaker, is something that has the support of the government as well.

I therefore would like to warn our young people, Mr Speaker, to refrain from planning or wanting to engage in disrupting or causing any further disturbances to major developments that

are happening on Guadalcanal, especially the Oil Palm Development as well as the Gold Ridge Mining.

Mr Speaker, I would like to plead with our young people that we stand to lose a lot by disturbing these major developments. Whilst law and order has now come back we work with the government in ensuring that we get on with our lives and not go back to the situations of the past.

In conclusion Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you once again as well as the Clerk to the National Parliament and staff. I would like to thank the Prime Minister, Ministers, Government Backbenchers and all Permanent Secretaries and public officers. I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition and all members of Her Majesty's Opposition. To all people of North East Guadalcanal, I am hoping to visit you before the end of the year, and on behalf of my wife and children, I would like to thank them, all the people of North East Guadalcanal, for their understanding and trust in me.

With these, Mr Speaker, I support the motion.

Mr MAGGA: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to contribute briefly to the sine die motion.

Mr Speaker, at the outset let me first of all touch on the terminology that had often been raised in this honourable house, which is 'sovereign or sovereign rights'.

Mr Speaker, the word 'sovereign' normally refers to the legal right of an independent state or country, and under normal circumstances this sovereign right cannot be interfered with by any other sovereign state.

Mr Speaker, under international law in order for a country to become a sovereign and independent state, it must first of all acquire three qualifications. And these qualifications are first, there must be an island or a land mass. The second qualification is there must be a population or people living on the land, and the third qualification, which is normally hard to achieve is recognition. These are the three qualifications that a country must acquire in order to qualify as a sovereign and independent country.

Mr Speaker, this is the problem the Republic of China or Taiwan is now faced with. There was no recognition accorded to the Republic of China by the entire members of the United Nations. Had Taiwan received recognition by the International Community, it could have one seat and one vote in the United Nations General Assembly?

But Mr Speaker, I am optimistic that this Government through our permanent representative to the United Nations will continue to pursue the rights of the people of Taiwan to be recognized and respected by the international community to have a permanent seat in the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr Speaker, Solomon Islands has achieved its independence on 7th July 1978 because it has acquired these three qualifications. And being independent we have all the sovereign rights to enact our own laws, conduct our foreign relations and establish our national police force and of course arm them. It is the legitimate right of the Solomon Islands Government as a sovereign nation to arm its police force.

Canberra has no right whatsoever to dictate to the Solomon Islands Government on matters of policy. It is the prerogative right of this Government to conduct the affairs of this country as it sees fit and fair and in line with international norms and practices.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of the current diplomatic impasse with the Government of Australia, as the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Select Committee on Foreign Relations, I am calling on the government of which I am a great supporter to fully respect and adhere to the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic relations, which Solomon Islands is a signatory to.

Mr Speaker, Article 4 of the Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations stated clearly that once an agreement is granted by the receiving state to the serving state, the proposed head of mission designate must as soon as practicable present his credentials or letters of commission to the government of the receiving state. Mr Speaker, the conduct of diplomatic relations as is the practice since the Vienna Convention came into force, is based on reciprocation.

Mr Speaker, the fact that His Excellency, Mr Victor Ngele, Solomon Islands High Commissioner to Australia has already presented his letters of commission to the Prime Minister of Australia, Solomon Islands is also duty bound to reciprocate under normal diplomatic practices. Hence, Mr Speaker, I see no reason as to why the Government has to delay the presentation of the letters of commission by the Australian High Commissioner designate to Solomon Islands to the Honourable Prime Minister of Solomon Islands.

Mr Speaker, I am demanding my esteemed Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, the man I have always accorded great respect and honour, to please accept His Excellency, Mr Hooton to present his letters of commission to your good self before you leave for Australia to meet your counterpart. Mr Speaker, I believe this will contribute a lot to the normalization of our diplomatic impasse with Australia.

Mr Speaker, as I said I will be very brief, in conclusion I would like to thank you for the manner in which you have conducted the proceedings of this Parliament Meeting. You have done professionally as a true statesman of this country. I would also like to thank the Clerk to the Parliament, and all the staff serving under her for the work they have contributed in making this Parliament session a true success. Lest I forget, I would further like to thank the Honourable Deputy Speaker of Parliament for the same manner in which he has professionally conducted the proceedings of this Parliament.

In this connection, many thanks is also rendered to the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, to all the Permanent Secretaries, and all officers of the government ministries for their work in contributing to the drafting of the 2007 budget estimates. Thank you all for your hard work.

Finally Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the people of my constituency for the moral support they have continued to render to me as their Member of Parliament. I wish all the people of Temotu Pele constituency, God's blessings and prosperity.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I beg to support.

Mr LONAMEI: Mr Speaker, I wish to thank you for giving the Member for Maringe/Kokota the floor of this honourable House to briefly contribute to the debate of the motion to wind up the business, especially an important business of the government, the 2007 budget.

Mr Speaker, firstly let me congratulate the government, namely the learned Honourable Minister of Finance for successfully delivering the budget through the House. It is the hope of the nation that the budget when implemented, will go along way to help the ailing nation's economy to keep government services alive for 2007.

Mr Speaker, as a new comer to this Honourable House, since the new government was formed and took the leadership, I have observed and noted some things that in my view, the government had poorly handled which caused great concern for me and my people of Maringe/Kokota and the people of Solomon Islands as a whole. I believe the government must take note and seriously address them for the benefit of the whole nation, Solomon Islands.

In making such remarks, at the outset, just allow me to touch on some of the issues I wish to highlight here for the government to take note, if it cares enough to be able to listen and adjust your position, it may go well with our government and we as a nation, in relation to international donor partners.

Mr Speaker, the first issue I wish to highlight here is the international standing relationship by Solomon Islands Government with our donor partner, our long and traditional neighbor, Australia. Mr Speaker, I have never seen or come across since this country obtained its political independence from Great Britain in 1978, such a low display of political and diplomatic relation on matters of crucial importance which touches the lives of the people of this country. Whether we like it or not, Mr Speaker, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Vanuatu and the small Polynesian Islands, and Micronesian States are our neighbors and they will be our neighbours forever.

Mr Speaker, the current impasse between Australia and this Government has tarnished the good image of this country

internationally, regionally as well as locally. Mr Speaker, the impasse existing between the two countries must be ironed out or cleared by this government as soon as possible. That is the cry of the opposition and the people of Solomon Islands as a whole.

Mr Speaker, the nation, Solomon Islands and all our people have put their ballots and trust on us leaders to restore credibility and respectability to our nation's social, economic and political dignity. My people of Maringe/Kokota would like to see normalization of the two countries' relationship as soon as possible.

Mr Speaker, Australia as a leading and genuine partner in the development of this country must not be treated as what it is by the present government. It must be given a well deserved, cordial and respectable relationship in appreciation to the major economic and social contributions it has given in the past and continued to do so now.

Australia has given much to this nation in terms of our greatest needs, not only during hard times but also in good times since the nation's independence. It would be high mindedness to overlook and continue to close our eyes and say nothing to Australia's assistance to the people of this country. We, the people of Maringe and Kokota continue to applaud Australia for its continual assistance to our nation's education, economic and social development.

Mr Speaker, I now wish to comment on the withdrawal of the RAMSI Police Protection Unit from the Prime Minister and other dignitaries. Mr Speaker, the Prime Minister might have reasons why he has seen it fit to withdraw the special trained unit, the close protection unit of the Prime Minister to cease from guarding him in his residence, office and escorting him in his official duties.

Mr Speaker, I believe the professional training given to the RSIP by RAMSI in their special duty to protect dignitaries, especially the Prime Minister is very good and professionally done. The training may have equipped the close personal protection unit to deal with any threats that are of immediate nature and those that perhaps may have been planned from long distance reach. From I gathered the PPF training

program for the CPP Unit provided by the PPF in the past, was a comprehensive training program that includes everything necessary from driving a motorcade, drills, operational planning, protocol, and threats, searching techniques and so on. These specialized trainings and techniques were given to the close personal protection group of the Solomon Islands Police.

If the training given by RAMSI is not adequate, we would like to know the deficiencies so that they can improve on them or include in their terms of our long standing training in defense and security with our traditional partners – Australia and New Zealand.

Mr Speaker, one thing I wish also to highlight in this speech although I am not Malaitan nor a representative of their constituencies but I feel it is a national obligation to mention something in respect of that project.

It is quite encouraging to see that this government once again put money in the budget for this project. It is not a joke when the cheque of \$150,000 was photographed in the Star with a great big smile by the former Honiara City Mayor, and the headline carries the East Fataleka Landowners' Association. Sir, Malaita Province has provided this nation with skilled and able laborers in enhancing economic development in this country. And because they are now no longer engaged in economic activities such as working in the Guadalcanal Plains Oil Palm, I hope and trust that this government will be able to make that very vital project work for the bulk of this country's labor force which remains with the people of Malaita to move this country's economic activities and create employment for the unemployed.

I raised this, Mr Speaker, because past governments had spent millions of dollars for this project including Bina Harbor but nothing seems to happen for the densely populated island. I am saying this, not as the Member for Maringe/Kokota but as a national leader that this country's prosperity including Isabel depends on this huge national project. Therefore, the government must not politicize these projects but make them happen.

Mr Speaker I would also like to thank the Ministry of Agriculture for giving Isabel

Province, on copra and cocoa rehabilitation project \$750,000 under the development budget, honey development project \$32,936, exotic and indigenous projects or vegetables \$136,791, and coffee project \$500,000, project development - FFA \$131,923 On fisheries, support to rural tuna fish - \$800,000, forestry - \$700,000 for reforestation. On infrastructure the Buala/Gozururu road - \$1million, provincial health housing - \$300,000, Public Service 75,000.00. I would like to thank the Ministries for allocating these funds to Isabel Province and I hope that all these funds will be dished out so that it can help Isabel Province to boost its rural development bottom-up-approach that we have been preaching.

With these few observations and remarks, Mr Speaker, I wish to thank you for your time and your able leadership in conducting the proceedings of debates in this Honorable House until it finally ends today.

I also wish to thank you very much, Mr Speaker for choosing me as your tenth member of your delegation to Taiwan. You would agree with me that the trip was a very successful and enjoyable one.

I wish also to thank the Taiwanese Embassy, especially His Excellency, Uncle George, for financing the whole trip and also for the many assistance such as the RCDF, Micro and the Millennium fund enjoyed by our people especially my people of Maringe/Kokota.

With these, may I also wish the government our Prime Minister, the Ministers and backbenchers good luck in their governing until we meet again for the next Meeting.

To the Honorable Leader of Opposition, thank you very much for your high quality debates rendered to national issues of importance debated in this House especially for the scrutiny and strong debate on the 2007 budget.

I also thank my people of Maringe/Kokota for the achievements we have achieved last year. Let us all work together again this year with the bottom-up-approach policy of this government to achieve more good things.

Lastly, I wish to thank my wife and children for putting up with my long absence from home. I wish you well and God's blessing

as you return home to be with your families. With this I support the motion.

Mr RIUMANA: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this chance to contribute on behalf of my people of Hograno/Katova/Kia/Havulei constituency who mandated me to discharge constitutional responsibility on their behalf. I shall be very short and brief.

At the outset, Mr Speaker, I thank your office on behalf of my people for adhering neutrality in Parliament proceedings and above all upholding principles of democracy governing our nation for the justice of all.

Mr Speaker, I also wish to thank and congratulate the Minister of Finance and officials of respective government ministries for their efforts in getting the 2007 Appropriation Bill 2007 to the floor of Parliament. The budget itself was believed to be the baseline for the bottom up approach policy of the government.

Mr Speaker, the bottom up policy of the government is sharing and equitable distribution of resources and economical activities for the rural dwellers to equally participate in economical activities.

The 90% population of the country is common knowledge that they are the rural dwellers, whom are to date, the liabilities of the government in the absence of economical activities for them to participate in nation building. For so long, Mr Speaker, our rural people have been spectators in front of their own resources. They have been sitting with their resources for ages. This policy could be the answer.

Mr Speaker, whilst the bottom up policy may sound good and exciting, it is the implementation part of the policy that matters most. There must be a development structure assisting applicable methodology and appropriate rural development concept and vision put in place to make the bottom up policy a workable policy.

Mr Speaker, as it is, the same government machineries, the same routine activities and the same format of approach will address this bottom up policy. This is the same development approach and format we have adopted for ages but to date there have been no tangible changes to our rural people.

Mr Speaker, we cannot expect our people to change, we cannot expect our rural people to improve their living standards and we cannot expect actual tangible rural development by our people if we cannot change or visualize appropriate systems, methodology, approaches and implementation strategies. The bottom up policy is a call for total reform and restructure in the way we address rural development.

Mr Speaker, Solomon Islands is a nation comprised of many Islands geographically located apart by Mother Nature. This has made service delivery become very expensive and difficult. However, each respective island has different geographical potentials, culture different attitude towards development and consisting of many diverse cultural practices.

On geographical potentials, Mr Speaker, we have not fully exploited to realize maximum benefits. The Arabica a coffee, for example, is known for good taste and flavor if grown at high altitude. This made it an advantage over Robusta coffee. However, Mr Speaker, most of the highlands in our islands especially in Isabel Province have no road infrastructures. My people have been growing coffee over the years. In fact my people were amongst the pioneers in this country to grow coffee and even kava. We have been very instrumental in growing and processing of coffee and kava. To date the coffee factory was left abandoned half complete. The once renowned coffee plantations are now fully covered in the jungles leaving them to die their natural death.

Mr Speaker we are to realize our geographical potentials if we are to embark on serious coffee and kava development as stipulated in the budget then it will be logical and sensible to enable the adequate access. Proper road infrastructure must be in place otherwise we are committing public funds on projects that would eventually fail.

We cannot expect human beings to walk six hours to the project site and carry heavy loads of coffee or other agriculture product for another six hours back to the village. It cannot be and is impossible. I appeal to this Government to make road access for my people in Hograno/Katova/Havulei Constituency for coffee development or kava development.

What I am trying to point out, Mr Speaker, is that income generating projects and social service oriented projects must be proportionately balance. The rural people must be empowered with adequate infrastructure to boost production. Road infrastructure must be proportionately balanced amongst our provinces as we all contribute to the economic development of this nation.

With that, Mr Speaker, I on behalf of my people of Hograno/Katova/Kia/Havulei Constituency and Isabel Province as a whole sincerely thank the hardworking Honorable Minister for Infrastructure and Development and MP for East Kwaio for the assurance given on the floor of this Parliament that he would prioritize the road infrastructure study in Isabel Province. I further thank the Honorable Minister for assuring SI\$1million for road improvement in my constituency, especially the Kaevanga-Kove road.

Mr Speaker, Isabel Province is one of the main provinces of Solomon Islands. It also contributes a lot to the national revenue of the government. It has abundant potential resources for economic development and we are people from Solomon Islands. But it is sad to note that although we contribute a lot to the economy of this country, we have always been neglected. We are the only main province without a road. This has been the main hindrance factor to rural development in Isabel Province. I sincerely hope the bottom up policy of the government will surely address our difficulties so that we boost production for this nation Solomon Islands.

On development donor, Mr Speaker, I on behalf of my people graciously thank the Republic of Taiwan for its generous assistance on the many countless projects and for financing the rural development fund.

The decision made by our predecessor to develop diplomatic relationship with Taiwan was definitely not a mistake but a decision full of wisdom and blessing. Taiwan is the only donor that gives such funds without strings and rope attached to its assistance, and therefore it is accessible to our rural people who are not able to read and not able to write. It is the only donor that respects a democratic government institution and sovereignty of this nation, and it

is the only donor that respects the democratically elected 50 Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, let us not be complacent on the flexibility of such assistance. It is our noble duty as leaders of this nation to administer and ensure the fund is used for the benefit of our rural people. We are to facilitate, improve and empower our rural people through this fund.

In concluding, Mr Speaker, I wish to thank my people wherever they may be either at home, in the sea, in the gardens or in the mountains listening on the radio. I thank them for their continued support and encouragement. I can assure my people that I will be working very closely with the democratically elected provincial members in my constituency in the struggle to address rural improvement and empowerment.

Finally, Sir, I thank the government the Honorable Prime Minister, the Cabinet and the Government as a whole in addressing rural development. I appeal to the government to seriously consider road infrastructure for Isabel Province.

With that, Mr Speaker I support the motion and I resume my seat. Thank you.

Hon Sogavare: Mr Speaker, I rise to wind up the debate on the motion of sine die. A lot have been said by both sides of the House and just to respond to all of them would take us through the night, and so I am not intending to do that. I would only therefore concentrate on issues that I feel are fundamental to what the Government is doing.

Sir, in winding up, I would also like to join the others in thanking various institutions and yourself, Mr Speaker, thank you very much for your patience to sit and listen to us. I also thank those who have contributed and making useful suggestions, which I guess have strong feelings about the implementation of the government's program.

Sir, I would also like to take this opportunity as well to thank all the Ministers and backbenchers of this side of the House for sticking by the government on issues discussed in this House. Decisions that we discuss in this House are decisions that are properly nurtured through the proper system and also the Cabinet, and it is not surprising that this side of the House

is committed to uphold the principles of Cabinet/Government system that we adopted at independence. Unless that is reformed and we move away from it, then we can question the commitment of this side of the House to stand by the Government's decision.

I would like to thank the hard working Chairman of Government Caucus for holding the group together, in what I consider as a very trying time. I would like to take this opportunity as well to reassure this side of the House that I am ready to stand by them and take tough decisions that they want me to take.

As I said a lot have been said. Just this afternoon the Leader of Opposition was talking about the office equipment and maintenance of the Opposition Office, Mr Speaker, and I thought I explained that in the Committee Stage during our deliberation on the budget that we are sympathetic to that request and it will be funded under the National Parliament Head.

Talking about cooperation, I made the position very clear when I moved the motion that this side of the House is ready to accommodate that thinking, cooperation is a must I order to implement the budget. It is very important that when the budget is passed through this House, Mr Speaker, it ceased to become the government's property but it becomes the property of Parliament and we are all required to work together. My doors are open to talk with leaders who would like to raise issues.

So far, on that score, we have not had consultations but we are hearing issues in the media. Please, as leaders if we are serious about cooperation, then use less of the media, call into the office and we will discuss issues.

On answering questions and the call that Ministers are very defensive, Mr Speaker, there is also the need to observe the provisions of Standing Orders. We need to appreciate that. This is Parliament and it is guided by rules and procedures. The Standing Orders is there to help us organize the way we conduct ourselves in this House. So may be defense of attitude is seen that way but we also feel that we need to respect the rules that govern the way we organize ourselves in this House.

Sir, I touched on the bottom up approach at length when I moved the motion and

so I do not need to go through it again. But I appreciate the points raised by the Leader of Opposition that it was exactly what I was putting across to Parliament when I moved the motion.

This is the first of the budgets that we presented to address this issue of bottom up approach and we want to develop it as we move on. I announced that I would be employing the MP for Aoke/Langa Langa and South Vella to look at developing the bottom up approach and the issues that the Leader of Opposition was concerned about will be addressed.

On aid, Mr Speaker, this side of the House is not against aid donors. There is a big difference between aid dependency and taking on a bit of aid donors. What we are warning this country is for us to be careful because we have now gone through 28 years of nationhood and if we do not get out of just basically depending on aid and do nothing about improving our ability to fund our own budget, Mr Speaker, we may not be able to get out of it. That is the warning we are putting across, and we not anti donors.

Sir, I will only be touching on one issue which is divided into sub issues, and so with your indulgence, Mr Speaker, I would like to talk on this issue. But first of all, I was going to speak at length on the bona-fide demands of the people of Guadalcanal, but I will be having meetings with the coordinating committee of Guadalcanal Province to be led by the Premier and so I will not do that today.

Sir, I find the comments of the Member for East Are Are irresponsible on this matter when he literally challenged the Prime Minister for continuing to emphasize the importance of the underlying issues that caused the country to collapse in year 2000, and the allegation that the Prime Minister is politicizing the issues for political gain. Mr Speaker, that is not right. That is a very, very irresponsible statement and position to take. In case we forget it was the neglect of these issues that caused the ethnic unrest in 1998. How can we be so naïve and insensitive to the feelings of our fellow Solomon Islanders? We are not talking about politics, we are talking about the lives of people and the feelings of real people.

Talking about the collapse of the economy in year 2000 is very serious. The Minister of Peace made reference to the

underlying issues and the Minister of Education made reference to them as well. We incorporate the issues that draw this country down the path of ethnic crisis in our program. In trivializing this matter, Mr Speaker, the Member for East Are Are is effectively saying that he does not care about the pain and suffering that many Solomon Islanders had to go through during the crisis.

Mr Speaker, the Member also argued till kingdom come but he will not convince people of this country that in order to achieve lasting peace as clearly outlined by the Minister of Peace, the underlying issues must be tackled head on. Any political grouping that disregards these issues would be simply irresponsible. It is for this reason that the Grand Coalition for Change Government is taking the underlying issues seriously. What we are concerned about as a government is the allegation that the government is doing nothing about it.

This issue was politicized recently by people who used it to advance their own agendas, Mr Speaker. In fact it is a subject of discussion even during a meeting alleged to have been organized by a prominent Member of the Opposition at his residence on the 20th January 2007 to which a number of Members of Parliament were invited. During that meeting the Members were informed of what they were going to do. In fact they were suggesting this vote of no confidence as well.

Mr Speaker, as head of this government, I would like to say that we are not stupid. We are fully, fully conscious of the fact that addressing peace is a fundamental issue of this country. Security, law and order are issues that are dear to the heart of this government as well. In fact all these arguments, all these standoff, and all these things are concerned about security, law and order and lasting peace in this country.

In fact, addressing the issues that brought the country down the path of ethnic intolerance is really the cornerstone of the Grand Coalition Government's development strategy.

Given that scenario, Mr Speaker, how could the critics of this government ever dare to accuse us for doing nothing about the bona fide demands of the people of Guadalcanal? Only people who probably have other agendas that are

not right would do that. I can only describe it as grossly, grossly unfair for this government when it took office it said that the way we formulated our development strategies will be structured around the question why this country collapsed in year 2000.

I guess it is not only because of the fact that the Grand Coalition for Change Government is probably the only government that is taking the issue seriously in our development strategy. But more so because of the fact that that last regime, which actually had eight former Members of Parliament from Guadalcanal as part of it, virtually did nothing about the demands. As head of this government it is a surprising thing that despite this negligence, the government then was not under any pressure from the so-called people who represent the peace loving people of this Province.

One is fully justified to ask why that is like that. There can only be one reason, Mr Speaker. There are forces that are bent on undermining the government for reasons that are known only to them. How can people be that evil, Mr Speaker, it hurts me.

Like I said, Mr Speaker, this government is seriously addressing these issues but I guess it needs the cooperation of everyone. I am taking these issues up with the Guadalcanal Premier and the Coordinating Committee and the Members of Parliament of Guadalcanal. We will sit down and seriously discuss these issues and the issues that people of Guadalcanal have problems on, Mr Speaker.

Be that as it may, Mr Speaker, the Government has no problem and is indeed quite comfortable with the demands because they are not unique to the people of Guadalcanal. In fact they are issues that are fundamental to sustainable development, to national identity, to social harmony, and therefore we cannot possibly overlook them.

I guess the problem with former regimes and foreign advisers and Solomon Islanders who advance the argument that the demands are impossible to address is they were bogged down in the forms of the demands, and they become overwhelmed by the thought that the demands are beyond the capacity of the national budget to effectively address it.

Mr Speaker, I think the same attitude as well has been seen in the careless shelving of the Townsville Peace Agreement, and I am a bit surprised. This is not only surprising but gross carelessness because no where else would one establish the thinking of the warring parties except the Townsville Peace Agreement.

The issues that are resurfacing now, for example are standing issues from the Townsville Peace Agreement which have been brought up again. On many occasions, Mr Speaker, I made the point that the demands would be strategically addressed because they are serious development issues that would normally be addressed by any government under its development strategies.

Mr Speaker, I want to inform this House that this is how the present government views these issues. They are very much developmental issues. And for that, I would like to join the Minister for Education for calling on our good people of Guadalcanal to let us work through the demands. We have the sad lessons of 1997 and 1998 to look back and learn from them. There are people who use the youths for their own purpose, which led to the youths going to prison and the people walk free. This is quite serious. There are people who should be in jail who are still walking out there who are behind these issues.

I am saying this because there is this call now and again by people in this country that unless the people who are causing these things face justice, we will continue to have this problem.

Mr Speaker, I join the Minister for Education as one leader of this province to echo again that call to our good people of Guadalcanal. I will leave this issue because I will have time to discuss with the leaders of Guadalcanal.

Mr Speaker, I am disturbed and I think I will take this opportunity to clear a few things. I feel this is the appropriate venue to discuss matters or to voice concerns to both sides of the House, and not the media. I am making reference now to the letter by the Foreign Affairs Minister of Australia. He touched on a lot of issues that continues to arise in here and made reference to by a lot of our leaders.

In the beginning I was saying that I was disturbed, and I was really disturbed on what I

clearly see as a deliberate effort by certain groups of people, and unfortunately including politicians and political groups who are and have been actively pursuing a seditious agenda in collaborating with these people.

I want to make reference, and I think the disqualified motion of no confidence is one of such strategy because in the Solomon Star the issues are just the same issues that were echoed to by that side.

Mr Speaker, I just want to warn here that without realizing it, these people have hopelessly become the mouthpiece of people who, probably, have no respect for this country. To me that is very sad.

Talking about sedition, Mr Speaker, you cannot be any far from it. I find it very, very disturbing that Solomon Islanders are so engrossed in their hatred of the present Prime Minister that they are prepared to go to the extent of working for them to overthrow a legitimate government elected by the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, I find the way the Australian Broadcasting Corporation puts it very, very disturbing. I was not going to raise these issues but it was actually broadcasted in the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. The reason for the motion, according to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation is because of the issues that caused the diplomatic stand-off between the countries. You cannot be any clearer than that, and that is why I was raising this concern about a very seditious agenda. I asked this question: how can Solomon Islanders stoop that low to allow themselves to be used by others to achieve this narrow interest.

I agree that a motion of no confidence is a constitutional mechanism to put the government in check. But it must be used responsible to advance the political, economic and social development of the people of Solomon Islands. It was never, never intended as a mechanism to advance the interest of others, let alone seditious agendas.

I am saying this because if you look at the Solomon Star it listed down all the issues that caused the so-called standoff with Australian Government.

Let me outline the seditious agenda of the Australian Government, as clearly outlined

on behalf of the people and Government of Australia by the Foreign Affairs Minister of Australia, in an open letter to the people of Solomon Islands, which the local media carelessly carried for the purpose of selling their papers. In fact I was told that the newspaper companies were invited to the High Commission and given this open letter with cheques to print in their papers.

I feel that I have a duty now as the elected Prime Minister of this country to rebut these serious and seditious allegations by the Australian Foreign Affairs Minister. I will do so in the order they are raised in the open letter as follows:

There is the claim that the Solomon Islands Government is trying to undermine RAMSI. This is absurd. The claim is a mirror image of the stubborn position that Australia is continuing to take on the request of the Solomon Islands Government as the most important stakeholder in the Regional Assistance Mission's arrangement to improve the partnership arrangement. This position was placed before the Pacific Islands Forum leaders at the Fiji Forum Meeting. I did that on behalf of this country.

The Government's position on behalf of the people of this country is to improve the partnership arrangement. That is all. This is contrary to the unfounded allegation by the Foreign Affairs Minister of Australia who obviously was misinformed by his agents on the ground. Nothing in that country position was talking about undermining RAMSI, as it was originally designed in 2003.

In fact the intention of the Six-Point Plan of the Government was intended to remind the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands that it has deviated from its original structure as a regional initiative to pushing only the narrow agenda of Australia in the Pacific region.

Sir, what is wrong with Solomon Islands raising that concern? What is wrong with that? As I said in the beginning, Solomon Islands as a major stakeholder in the Regional Assistance Mission arrangement must be satisfied that the arrangement does not overstep its bounds.

The initiatives were clearly not, and the way I see it, clearly not in the narrow interest of

Australia. And since the Pacific Island Forum leaders agreed to a review of RAMSI, the Australian Government had been actively involved in influencing the Terms of Reference of the review to protect its narrow interests. In fact, the terms of reference was brokered seven times, it went from the Forum Office to us, and we sent it back and seven times and they still want to amend it.

Mr Speaker, this begs a serious question as to what really is the interest of Australia in the so-called RAMSI arrangement to help Solomon Islands.

Sir, the Government is rightly concerned that the line between RAMSI and Australia bilateral arrangement with Solomon Islands is not clear so much so that RAMSI has become Australia's agent to suppress the legitimate government of Solomon Islands. This is a fact.

Since the arrival of RAMSI in 2003, RAMSI is yet to be clear about an exit strategy. All it continues to say is that it will be here until the work is done. What work is to be done? Is it annexation of Solomon Islands?

Mr Speaker, the new position RAMSI is taking now is that it will be here as long as it takes. This is just even worse. What the Government wants is a clear exit strategy. We want an active consultation with the Government and be clear with that.

Our position is just clearly related to Canberra by our High Commissioner. The Government and the people of Solomon Islands must be fully informed of an exit strategy. We agreed to allow RAMSI to come into the country to help us stand on our own two feet, and we thank them for that, but not to take over the government of Solomon Islands.

The Government's initiative is not bringing up any new agenda. What we are saying and will continue to say until the Foreign Affairs Minister and Prime Minister of Australia come to their senses is, let us put RAMSI where it is originally intended. That is all we are talking about and we are asking, Mr Speaker.

It is Australia, in our view, that needs to come out very, very clear as to what its real agenda is in the so-called RAMSI arrangement because right now it is threatening the existence and operation of the legitimate government of Solomon Islands.

In fact, Sir, I am disturbed by the open desire of Canberra to see a regime change in Solomon Islands, and this is no secret, it is open about it. It would like to see this Prime Minister go down. Canberra said this openly. What right does Canberra have to demand such a move? This is sedition.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, is the claim that personnel and their families are finding it difficult to enter Solomon Islands to take up their duty. Sir, the Facilitation Act does not give them the freedom to just walk in and out of Solomon Islands as if it is the seventh state of Australia or the eight state. No way! This is a sovereign state, an independent country called Solomon Islands, in case we forget.

Before the imposition of some guidelines, Mr Speaker, do you know what happened? People just walk in and say RAMSI and they were just allowed into the country. We do not even know whether they are real RAMSI but just because they say RAMSI they just walk through. That is not right. These are the issues that we are concerned about. What about if some drug dealers come inside and they are not checked?

The question is, what is wrong with applying our laws and enforcing our laws? What is wrong with that? I find it absurd for the Foreign Affairs Minister of Australia to find the guts to appeal to the people of Solomon Islands to allow their laws to be trampled under feet by foreigners. That is not right. I would like to, I guess, repeat the question "are we all right"? This is ironic because RAMSI is supposedly here to protect the laws of Solomon Islands, and I find all these sweet talks that RAMSI is here to do that hypocritical. The truth is that the laws of Solomon Islands are only strictly complied with when it suits them. Sir, playing double standards is not good, and this is what is happening.

If the Foreign Affairs Minister of Australia thinks that he will just walk all over the laws of Solomon Islands and appeal to the people of Solomon Islands to allow him to do that, then the Solomon Islanders who think that way must think again.

Did I hear rightly, Mr Speaker that RAMSI is here to enforce law and order? This is clearly reflected in what the Foreign Affairs

Minister of Australia is trying to do here. The Government does not have any problem with people who have valid travel documents and adhere to the laws of this country governing work and residence to come into this country. You can come according to the law, Mr Speaker. But we will jump on people who think that they can simply walk all over our laws and treat us as uncivilized bunch of bush Kanakas. I will not allow that. Gone are those days, and thirdly, the concern that Government might remove the immunity granted to all members of RAMSI contingent under the Facilitation Act. The true color is starting to show - the true color of Australia, and I guess their supporters come out clearly in this concern.

Sir, this privilege was granted in 2003 for good reasons when the situation was understandably unstable in their assessment. But I am surprised that when they arrived here they were welcomed by choir and not guns.

Sir, that facility was intended to ensure that should it be necessary to resort to actions that may clearly contravene standing laws in the achievement of the objectives of the intervention, their actions would be considered as breaking the laws of the country.

It is now four years since the arrival of RAMSI and its record in respect of this privilege is hardly impressive. Not at all. They amount to gross and deliberate violation of our laws for very dubious reasons. One is fully justified to begin to question the wisdom of this privilege to be continued to be enjoyed by the contingent. Let me cite some examples:-

- Cases have been reported to the government where members of the contingent have removed very important war relics from the country without valid licenses. In late 2004 six boxes, six big boxes were lifted from the sea just outside of the GBR, and no one knows what they are because no one is allowed to check them. They are immune. Who gave them the right to remove just anything they want Mr Speaker?
- A Second World War tank was reportedly removed from the country illegally. Soldiers leaving the country

on end of tours leave have been reported to remove swords and pistols and because they are not subject to any checks at the airport they get away with it because of this immunity.

Sir, if that is not serious a number of very, very serious road accidents involving the members of the visiting contingent which resulted in the death of a number of Solomon Islanders have gone unpunished. Why, because the drivers are protected under the immunity provided under the Facilitation Act. There is no way we can check whether the drivers have valid licenses because members of the visiting contingent are not required to have valid driving licenses of Solomon Islands.

Sir, the issue here is not whether you have a valid driving license here or whether you know how to drive because there is no way we can check that.

There is no way we can check whether the vehicles are roadworthy too, because vehicles used by the visiting contingents are not required to go before professional vehicle tests to certify whether the vehicles are roadworthy here in Solomon Islands.

Members of the visiting contingent can just walk into the office of the head of the executive Government of Solomon Islands, kick the doors and in any government office too for that matter un-procedurally and get away with it. They are even allowed to disrespect state secrets and get away with it. Statements like, 'we do not care about your state secrets'. Who are you to make that kind of statement?

Members of the visiting contingent can be careless about the way they institute arrests and detention of alleged criminals and not be bothered about the concern for human rights. They can even step in and frustrate cases that involve their citizens who are alleged to commit serious crimes against the people and government of Solomon Islands and get away with it, as in the case on gold smuggling and the assassination attempt. These are serious, and I am fully aware of what is going on. I am fully, fully aware.

We can go on, but I think the point I am trying to make here is that the immunity granted

to the visiting contingent needs to be re-looked seriously into.

Another one is the allegation that the Government lied about prostitution on RAMSI premises. This is a very sensitive one and a serious allegation, Mr Speaker, which I cannot allow to go unchallenged. The Foreign Affairs Minister of Australia is suggesting that we are complete idiots to deliberately lie about this matter, and I find that very, very insulting.

Since we have been openly condemned in the media by the Minister, I do not know whether it is appropriate to read some of these letters, and I have a couple of them here. These are very, very serious letters, a graphic description of what is happening in the GBR. I am going to hand this over to the Commissioner of Police to investigate this and other letters here that people wrote in telling the government that yes this is happening in GBR. We are not idiots to allege something like this on different people and in the media too. This is a very responsible Prime Minister, and so I am not going to do that. I think out of respect I will not do that. I am going to them to the Commissioner of Police to investigate.

Mr Speaker, the allegation that the assassination plot against the Prime Minister may have been fabricated by the Government, but more so it was directed at me. The way the Australian media puts it, is me, it is this Prime Minister trying to get even. This is another serious allegation. The Foreign Affairs Minister of Australia is suggesting that the Government or more appropriately and more particularly the Prime Minister is deliberating fabricating this case to get even with Australia. Why would I want to do that? Why would any one want to do that?

The way that the Australian Federal Police handled another case involving also an Australian citizen who was charged with smuggling of gold, Mr Speaker, which is now before the court, and so I will not go into detail, raises a lot of questions in the way that assassination case was dealt with. We have enough evidence.

The case was basically ripped off the hands of the Solomon Islands Police by the AFP officers and instead of investigating the alleged plot they went straight into attacking the

evidence provided by the police officers who initiated the case freely at their own initiative. It is not us who went hunting for this information. Here is a concerned officer, in fact, that guy went in there, in broad daylight, not drunk, full normal and discussed this matter with that police officer.

Sir, any inference that I or anyone in the government went hunting for the case is totally absurd. The case was freely reported to the government by the officers themselves. What is most surprising is the fact that the officers concerned suddenly took a U-turn from their original position and deny what they said out of their own free will in the first place. Indeed, I would like to know why they suddenly changed their positions. I heard the AFP said that they will investigate how the charges were laid in the first place. That is wrong. They should really be investigating why the officers changed their positions. That is what should be investigated.

What this case is turning out to be is a clear case of a deliberate strategy to clear the man from the charges. This charge has been dropped and so I am willing to talk about it. The government is taking this issue very seriously, and we have information that the officers may have been under pressure to alter their statements. They can do that and get away with it.

This is common sense because how could a normal human being who was not pressured to report the case suddenly turned around and made a statement totally opposite to what he original said? Are we saying that the whole case has suffered from the “happy drunk” syndrome or tainted by an assumed mentally unstable individual walking into the Police Station fully normal to discuss the plan with a senior police officer? The whole thing stinks, Mr Speaker.

The only way to unravel the truth behind this case is through a full inquiry. Two issues need to be resolved here, Mr Speaker. Firstly, whether the case has any substance, and secondly, why the police officers changed their positions and are now talking about the plot to kill the witnesses in the case that they are trying to frame up against the Prime Minister alleging his involvement in the 2000 coup. That is the twist in that case.

Mr Speaker, the problem I guess with the Foreign Affairs Minister of Australia is that he only listens to one side of the story and only embraces the version that suits him. No wonder we are getting garbage from them.

The other concern that was raised is the concern over the rearming of certain units of the Police Force. This is an issue that is a subject of a full debate in this House and I have no intention to go into it again. But it was really blown out of proportion.

The full intention of the government did not yet come out, and as I was expressing here what seems to come out was that there are five, six or seven gun boats, big boats anchored just outside there at Point Cruz, loaded with guns ready to be distributed throughout Solomon Islands for everyone to have guns. That seems to be the picture that is put out.

But as I said, this was a subject of a full debate in this House, and I fully respect the views and the feelings of some people, I have made a commitment in this House to explain that, to make appropriate consultations. But I guess as a way forward in this, we have just sent a diplomatic note to the Papua New Guinea Government to make an alternative arrangement. Since Solomon Islanders do not want our own people to hold guns at this point in time, what we are saying now is that members of the RAMSI contingent and other Pacific islands will now provide arms support to the Prime Minister and His Excellency.

The rearming of the Police Field Force is being taken up with the Police Department because it takes time. It is a process. But it is just blown out quickly by people who, I guess, have serious agendas here. It was blown out of context and getting the support of people to support their cause.

I want to make it clear to our people in this country that training for these officers will still go ahead. There is nothing stopping them to be trained with arms too at this point in time. I do not see any reason why they should not be trained with arms. But bringing in arms and rearming them, Mr Speaker, we are listening to our people. The way we are going about it now, as I have said, we have sent a diplomatic note to the Chairman of the Pacific Islands Forum, Papua New Guinea to take up the offer by them.

We accept the offer by Papua New Guinea to provide support to the Close Protection Unit until such time that we have full consultation with our people in this country on the rearming program of the government.

The other thing that was raised in the letter is the urged to leaders of this country to listen to people's wishes. Again, appeals like that do not make sense to me because the Prime Minister of Australia is now under pressure from his own people to withdraw his forces from Iraq, and he stood his grounds. That does not make sense to me.

Mr Speaker, the concern about the Australian High Commissioner designate to Solomon Islands, and I fully appreciate the concern raised by the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. There are serious issues here that we need to address here. In fact what they are suggesting was that there should be a meeting first between our Foreign Affairs Minister and the Foreign Affairs Minister of Australia. One of the conditions they raised was for us to accept the credentials of this person. That is the position they put to us. We have sent another diplomatic note to Australia on this proposed meeting between Australia and Solomon Islands. We feel we should put aside the issue on the Australian High Commissioner first because we feel there are some serious issues that we need to address with them.

As I have already said here on this floor of Parliament, I have no real problem with the High Commissioner designate and even the former High Commissioner of Australia. As I stated in here they should be congratulated for standing up and for being faithful international public servants representing their countries.

There are a lot of other issues that we need to settle with Australia and we are doing that. But I fully appreciate the concerns raised by the Chairman of Foreign Relations, and we will looking into these issues by myself and the Minister for Foreign Affairs or we may need to discuss it fully in Caucus and Cabinet as well to get some kind of direction as to how we should move ahead on this particular issue.

Mr Speaker, I can go on and talk about that because I feel that I need to put the records right on this matter but I also realized that people are hungry may be and very tired as I

know it has been a very long week. We have been exchanging hard words in this House. But it is normal for this side and that side of the House to throw hard, hard words, and this is what this House is for. The comments that are coming from that other side are taken up in that light.

As expressed by our colleagues around this House, I think this is one of the very civilized Houses. You go to other places and see how a parliament session is on. Question time is basically a mad house because it is not time to answer questions but it is basically who shouts the loudest. They do not answer questions in Parliament, they just abuse each other.

Like other very developed parliaments, the line is not permanent in this House. Other developed parliaments, Mr Speaker, the line is permanent. You go out from the Chamber you go to your own restaurant; you do not mix up with the Opposition. That is why I said this Parliament is really civilized. We go out from this chamber, go into the kitchen, sit down and crack jokes. Every argument and every hard talk finishes inside here. That is one good thing about our Parliament. We get angry at each other and so forth but we do not fight. We do not fight this time but in the past our old timers used to fight outside of Parliament. "You come outside and I will break your mouth". Words like that. People actually hold each others necks and fight. I think all of us here are new, we are yet to witness anyone fighting physically in this House, but I think one or two here have witnessed it. Mr Speaker, our discussions, exchanges and all those are very healthy.

Mr Speaker, as I said earlier it is time to work. Thank you very much for passing this budget, and as I said as soon as the budget is passed in here it ceases to be the property of this side of the House, and it is now the property of Parliament and this nation. And that side of the House has responsibility and duty just as this side of the House to ensure that the intentions of the budget are delivered.

I meant what I said, Mr Speaker, that this side of the House is open. Members of this side are very, very accommodating and they understand that it is time to work. We know that since we only have four years we need to deliver

some of the big things we have been talking about.

I thank the Parliamentary Entitlements Commission for approving the suggestion to give us the option to employ people other than ministers to concentrate specifically on specific programs to be delivered within a specific time. These parliamentary secretaries are paid at Deputy Speaker level; they have all the fringe benefits attached to the Minister. So work is available. If anyone wants to work you can work in this government. We are serious about delivering the bottom-up approach.

The good thing about it is that those on the other side of the House did not question the approach and the direction. That is good. We have one common understanding of it. It is the 'hows' and how to go about it is what we are arguing over. We have explained it that this budget will be improved as we go along.

Sir, I do not want to take up more time of Parliament, and I so would like to stop here. Mr Spaker, I thank you very much for giving me the time to round up this motion and I thank you very much for being very patient with us by sitting down there while we go in and out of the Chamber, but you continue to sit down there and guide the discussions inside Parliament. I would like to thank you very much. I thank the Clerk and your officers and of course, the government. It is time to work as soon as this budget is assented to by His Excellency the Governor General.

With that, Mr Speaker, I beg to move that at the adjournment of Parliament on Friday 23rd February 2007, the present meeting shall be concluded and Parliament shall then stand adjourned sine die.

The Sine Die Motion agreed to

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

Mr Speaker: Before I formally adjourn Parliament, I would like to also take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister and Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition and all Members of Parliament for their kind words to me, my Deputy, the Clerk and the staff of National Parliament.

Honourable Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Deputy Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers and Honourable Members of Parliament, in the last three weeks our people have been hearing us through the national radio, the print media and the newly established T.V One News, and of course those who find time to come into the Chamber to listen to the debates here.

First of all, I would like to congratulate all Members of this house for what is truly an excellent three weeks of discussion on issues facing this country, and the passing of the 2007 Budget. We must thank ourselves for fulfilling this very important constitutional requirement. Perhaps it is important to remind ourselves of the heart of Solomon Islands system of government, so as to appreciate the gravity of the work we are doing for this nation.

The heart of Solomon Islands system of government is a parliament elected by universal adult suffrage. Parliament is the link between the government and the people. It informs the government of what the people want and it informs and educates the public about the government's intentions.

Last year the process of electing our representatives has completed and you are now given this mandate to continue with the responsibility of governing Solomon Islands, as we all know is a democratic state and you Members of Parliament are given the unique opportunity to ensure that the democratic rights of all Solomon Islanders and its friends are protected.

I should say that democracy is always a risk exercise. It is a never finished piece of business. Democracy reflects human imperfection - how things go wrong. This can happen even with good people who are in charge. Power goes with the office and can be a competing influence. The core problem of orderly government and good governance was perceptively discerned by James Madisson two centuries ago when he stated, and I quote: "*In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this. You must first enable the government to control the governed, and in the next place, oblige it to control itself.*" End of quote.

Honourable Members of Parliament, you are the elected representatives of the people and must in turn aware of the beliefs, needs, aspirations and circumstances of the people you represent.

Let me remind you again to exercise sound judgment on behalf of our people and make your hearts their concerns. Make yourselves accessible to the people individually and collectively so as to take our people with us in our policies and actions. I do not have to over-emphasize to you again the importance of your leadership to this country, but would like to encourage you to build this nation in unity.

On this note, I would like to reiterate and acknowledge the Honourable Prime Minister's inspiration for a united effort for all Members to be the front liners in leading this nation forward. Whatever opposing views we have on issues facing this country, we all must appreciate the fact that it is for our good and the good of the future generation.

Solomon Islands had parliamentary democracy for the past twenty eight years. The events in the recent pasts have tested our commitment to the values of parliamentary democracy. When we pause to think about it, we will acknowledge the fact that leaders like yourselves have the full weight of democracy duties on your shoulders in how you conduct yourselves, your interaction with the society, how you present yourselves with individuals and how you communicate views because at the end of the day our people look up to your leadership.

This country is looking into adopting a new federal government system from the current unitary system. This is yet again, another new challenge you will be facing in the immediate future during your leadership. The proposed federal system of government is an example of new challenges that this country will be going through. It is my hope that we as leaders of this nation take positive and serious steps in informing our people of the new challenges of this new federal system.

The proposed state government system like all other systems does have its limitations and as responsible leaders it is our responsibility to make sure we thoroughly explain to our people what the system is and to be honest about its likely positive and negative ramifications.

That is to say to them what is good about the system and what is not so good about the system. The misconceptions that at times create animosity amongst our people, is an area we all as leaders must try to overcome so as to ensure our people are well informed.

As a democratic state, Solomon Islands and its leaders must uphold the importance of the rule of law ultimately as leaders in whatever we engage in must always be lawful and at no time we should let ourselves to corrupt practices.

Having said that, we all must appreciate that no anti-corruption strategy, no matter how well designed and well intended can succeed without a broader commitment to the two over arching requirements. The first is an independent judicial system based on the rule of law regime. That includes the concept of the process and the principle that the rule of law applies equally to everyone from the poorest and the least privileged amongst us to the highest echelons of government and society. The second requirement is a government that is open, accountable and transparent. What sometimes people often referred to as a government in the sunshine.

Before I conclude, I would like to call on you the politicians, our leaders that the people of this nation to put their interest of our nation first and to live at peace with our foreign friends who one way or the other are doing their best in helping us rebuild our nation.

I think I have said enough and once again, I wish to thank you all honourable Members for your recognition and kind remarks to the Office of the Speaker, the Clerk and the National Parliament Staff Office.

With these few comments, I adjourn Parliament sine die.

Parliament adjourned sine die at 7.00 p.m.