

MONDAY 27TH APRIL 2015

The Speaker, Adjilon Nasiu took the Chair at 9.45am.

Prayers.

ATTENDANCE

All were present with the exception of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs & External Trade; Environment, Conservation, Climate Change; Rural Development and the Member for South Vella Lavella.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND OF REPORTS

- **Medium Term Development Plan – 2015 – 2019** (National Parliament Paper No. of 2015).

MOTIONS

Motion No. 6 – Motion of Sine-die

Hon JEREMIAH MANELE (*Leader of the Opposition*): I rise to contribute to the Sine-die motion moved by the Honourable Prime Minister. Let me first of all on behalf of the Parliamentary Opposition thank the Honourable Prime Minister for moving this traditional sine-die motion to mark the conclusion of the 2nd meeting of the 10th Parliament to give opportunity to Members of Parliament to raise issues of interests pertaining to the affairs of our country and also to their constituencies.

I concur with the Prime Minister's views that this motion should also provide the opportunity for us to debate and discuss important policy matters raised by this side of the House. In addition, I appreciate his attention to task his ministers to further consider and pursue policy matters including proposals raised by this side of the House. I also thank the Prime Minister for the kind words and sentiments he

expressed regarding the performance of the leaders of the Independent and Opposition groups. I wish to assure this country that as the Leader of the Opposition I will continue to do my best to discharging the mandates and responsibilities of the office. I acknowledge the Prime Minister's comments on the importance of political stability and his views on motions of no confidence. Motions of no confidence in this country are being successful only when and if they originate from within the government and not from the Opposition. At the moment the Prime Minister has the numbers so he has the opportunity to perform 9.50 and deliver. If the Government does not perform and deliver, and if for some reasons it no longer has the confidence and support of his ministers, then a motion of no confidence is justified.

I agree that this meeting has certainly been a productive one. We started off with the Speech from the Throne from his Excellency, the Governor General who outlined the government's policy intentions and priorities as outlined in the DCCG Policy Translation and Strategy document. In his address, his Excellency articulated the government's fundamental and sectoral reform initiatives and priorities. He also reminded Solomon Islanders to be self-reliant and move away from the dependency syndrome. As leaders we have to educate and instill in our people the virtues of hard work and sacrifice. Our people must take the lead in helping themselves, their families, their communities, their provinces and, of course, their country before others can come in to help.

His Excellency further reminded us Members of Parliament to be mindful of our national motto - 'to lead is to serve' in discharging our duties and responsibilities including the important task of nation building. As we begin our journey in this 10th Parliament, let us therefore not forget our national motto. In this connection, the integrity of Members of Parliament must always be safeguarded. In this regard, I believe we must review the composition of the Members of the Parliamentary Entitlements Commission (PEC) by amending the relevant provisions of the Constitution which establishes the PEC.

The government's fundamental and sectoral priorities highlighted by his Excellency were subsequently reiterated by the Minister for Finance and Treasury in his 2015 Budget Speech. These priorities as we know provided the framework for the allocation of resources or funds in the 2015 Budget - 'the People's Budget, which we adopted last week.

We had a very lively, healthy and passionate debate on the 2015 Budget - the biggest budget ever in our country. If this side of the House was seen as a doubting Thomas or was lamenting about certain aspects of the Budget, such as the use of cash reserves or the credibility and sustainability of the budget, taxes, job creation and so on, it is simply because we care about this country. We are simply performing our constitutional mandate and role as a check and balance for the government of the day, and not necessarily because we are trying to score political points. I am sure you will be raising the same things if you were on this side of the House. As the Prime Minister admitted, he was also raising the same issues when he was in the parliamentary opposition.

I believe all of us appreciate the emphasis placed by the 2015 Budget on rural development and on economic infrastructure. This is appropriate since 85 percent of our people live in the rural areas and we need infrastructures to drive our country's socio and economic development. Investments in the infrastructure sector must be strategic. It must enhance the development and expansion of the productive sector including agriculture, fisheries and tourism. Now that the budget has been passed, we must now deliver on it. Our people are waiting for us to deliver important services and tangible developments that will make a difference in their lives. I concur with the government's stand that all constituencies must have a constituency development plan on the basis of which constituency development programs and projects will be prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Rural Development for approval and subsequently to the Ministry of Finance and Treasury for funding. I trust that we can at least start implementing some of our major constituency projects

within the next seven months and continue on next year. It is important we ensure to get 9.55 value for money in the implementation of the 2015 Budget.

I agree with the Prime Minister that we must empower our people in the rural areas because that is where resources are. We need to equip them with the necessary tools that they can develop their land, their agriculture, their fisheries resources, their forestry resources and so on. Unfortunately, the 2015 budget allocation to the agriculture sector, especially for our coffee, cocoa and kava farms is just not enough. We need to invest more in these commodities including their markets.

Equally, important is the implementation of priority national projects including those on Malaita Province earmarked for funding in the 2015 Budget. The Government must make some good progress this year on these important strategic projects so that we can build on this next year and thereafter. The Government has raised a lot of expectations on these projects so it must work hard to implement these projects during the next four years.

Let me comment a bit on projects with regards to Isabel province. While I acknowledge the funding allocation in the 2015 Budget for the Garanga Senior Secondary school and the Tatamba mini cannery in Isabel province, a number of strategic projects initiated by the province such as the Kaevanga/Kiloka road, the Kaolo airstrip, the upgrade of Suavanao airstrip and other infrastructure projects such as wharfs have been left out. Survey work was done last year for both the Kaevanga/Kiloka road and the Kaolo airstrip. These two projects are strategically located and would enhance and contribute to the social and economic development of the province and the country as a whole. I urge the government to support these important projects.

With regards to the Suavanao airstrip, I wish to congratulate the Isabel Provincial Government for taking the initiative to upgrade the airstrip with the help of a logging company with the view to accommodating Dash 8 flights in the near future. The initiative taken by Isabel province in this case is a classic case of public/private partnership. The upgrade of th Suavanao Airstrip will really boost

tourist flows between the Western and Isabel provinces and, of course, direct from Honiara. The government will need to assist with the establishment of proper airport terminal facilities at Suavanao.

Furthermore, the Zabana or Kia area in my constituency hosts the tourism potential for Isabel province given its many small islands with white sandy beaches and rich marine environment. The relatively huge population in the area as well as its close proximity to Arnavon Marine Conservation area makes it a viable location for an airstrip as it will also enhance connectivity and tourism flows between Choiseul, Western and Isabel provinces. I call on the Ministry of Civil Aviation to consult with Isabel province and landowning groups with the view of establishing an airstrip in the Zabana area.

Isabel province has been for a long time willing to accept sacrifice for the common good of our country. When this country was at its lowest, logging revenues from the province help to keep us afloat and sustain us during those difficult days. The province continues to contribute towards our national coffers through revenues or export duty largely generated by logging companies operating in the province. My constituency alone hosts more than 10 logging companies.

Now that the country has recovered, I believe it is fair that the province, despite its small population is assisted so that we can continue to contribute towards the development and the common good of our country. We particularly need new roads because we do not have enough. At the moment we are called the longest island with the shortest roads. Our desire is to become the longest island with the longest roads.

All constituencies and provinces **10.00** want or need a fair share of economic infrastructures - roads, bridges, wharfs, airstrips, hospitals, hydropower stations and so on, and I think this was quite clear during the debates on the budget. However, due to financial constraints and other competing needs and demands, we cannot do all these for all our provinces at the same time or even in four years. Therefore, I suggest that the government in consultation with the government of the Republic of

China consider using the ROC annual bilateral funding support for our infrastructure projects for the next 10 years; a year each for our 10 provinces, including Honiara city. I believe the government can fill in the gap in terms of the current ROC support to constituency development and to tertiary education. This may not be an attractive suggestion but with the strong political will that the government has shown so far, I do not think this is a difficult proposition. After 10 years or so, this country will have the necessary infrastructures in place in every province if we consider this proposal, but the national government and the provincial governments have to budget as well for their maintenance.

I believe it is important for relevant government ministers, such as the Ministers for MID, Tourism and even Aviation to visit our provinces to see for themselves the needs and potentials of our provinces. In this regard, I thank the Minister of Education for taking a visit to Garanga early this year. I hope his other colleagues will also follow suit. This is important because it will help Caucus and Cabinet to make informed and fair decisions when it comes to prioritization of projects and funding allocations in the budget.

At this juncture, I wish to remind this honourable House that it is the primary responsibility of the government or the country to put in place the necessary infrastructures before investors can come in to invest in our country. We must build the roads, bridges, airstrips, wharfs, hospitals and of course establish a reliable and affordable energy source. We have one of the highest costs of electricity in the region or even in the world for that matter. Now this is a major disincentive to any investor either local or foreign. We must therefore invest more in renewable developments, such as hydropower stations in our provinces to drive socioeconomic endeavors, including the proposed economic growth centers.

The comprehensive approach to reforming the foreign direct investment regime in the country the Prime Minister has mentioned must therefore include the above economic infrastructure provisions. As a coastal state, shipping services will continue to be an important mode of transportation for the movement of people and

goods and services in our country. I hope that the Government's proposed shipping policy will accommodate the needs of both new and existing shipping operators. Apart from the normal purchase of constituency ships, the policy should also assist the development of our local ship building industry.

On the Fisheries Managements Bill 2015, as we have said during the debate on the Bill as well as during the committee stage of the Bill, the Bill provides a crucial platform for the management, conservation and development of both our onshore and inshore fishery resources including aquaculture development. It would also support us to comply with our regional and international commitments in the fisheries sector.

With the adoption of the Fisheries Management Bill 2015, we are also on the right track towards addressing Goal No.14 of the proposed United Nations Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals, which is to conserve and **10.05** promote sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources. As alluded to during the debate on the Bill, its significance also lies in the fact that our fisheries and marine resources are an essential source of our food security and livelihoods for our rural population, apart from the revenue it generates for our economy.

My constituency has some of the richest fishing grounds and marine eco-systems in our country. This Bill is therefore vital for us, as it also provides the opportunity for aqua-culture development. Some of our rivers and streams need to be rehabilitated and given the opportunity to recreate and to restore their original eco-systems. Above all, we need to capacitate all the relevant stakeholders mandated to enforce the Bill so that they can effectively implement the Bill and ensure compliance. We could also explore or look at similar legislations to cover other sectors such as the forestry and agriculture sectors.

The Prime Minister also stressed in his statement the need for the 10th Parliament to get Solomon Islands out of the category of least developed countries. I completely agree with him, and that is why in my earlier statement in Parliament, I proposed the overall objective of a country's long term plan or strategy should be to

transform Solomon Islands from a low income country to a middle income country; that is from a least developed country to a developing country.

Why is Solomon Islands categorized as an LDC? The LDCs including Solomon Islands are a group of countries that have been classified by the United Nations as least developed because of their lowest indicators of socio-economic development, including low gross national income, weak human assets in terms of nutrition, health, education, adult literacy and, of course, a high degree of economic vulnerability. For your information, there are about 49 LDCs in the world, most of them are in the African continent. In the Pacific there are 5 LDCs - Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Samoa, Kiribati and Tuvalu. Samoa, I believe, has recently graduated and Vanuatu has also been recommended by the United Nations for graduation. That leaves only Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Kiribati to be labeled as a LDC. As the Prime Minister said, it is certainly not a good feeling or a comfortable group to be in.

There are no short cuts in getting Solomon Islands out of the LDC group. We have to work hard to improve our current social and economic indicators. In this regard, some of the fundamental and sectoral reform initiatives mentioned by the Prime Minister along with political stability and strong national leadership are critical to our efforts to graduate from the LDC group. At the constituency level, our constituency plans and programs must be tailored to contribute to improving the social and economic situation of our people enhancing our changes to get out of the LDC grouping within the next 5 to 10 years.

Certainly, Solomon Islands is one of the most aid dependant countries in the region and probably in the world. How much of these foreign aids is actually spent and used in our country or economy is also an important question. As a country, we have the highest number of external consultants and advisors in the region and that is partly why we are also highly aid dependent. For some donors, a good share of their funding support is used to finance technical advisors or consultants who are part of the project or program being funded and most often from donor countries themselves. I am not saying we do not need these external consultants but we must

be selective in engaging them. We should engage them only in areas where we do not have local capacity and expertise. The donor partner must also be willing to fund local consultants so that local capacity is further developed and sustained. We will continue to need **10.15** support in sectors such as education and health, but we should not forever become an aid dependent country. Otherwise it becomes a structural problem that will be difficult to get out of. Foreign aid must be used according to our priorities and needs, and I am glad to hear from the Finance and Planning Ministers that they have been working hard on this front. It must also be sustainable. It should also be used in areas such as infrastructure to drive economic growth, thus help us to sustain and finance the delivery of essential social services on our own.

Lest we forget, foreign aid is also a foreign policy tool used by donor countries to pursue their foreign policy objectives and interests. Sometimes these interests are mutual, sometimes they are not. The onus is therefore on the government of the day to bear in mind that foreign aid is part of the dynamics in the day today management of our bilateral and multilateral relations.

Let me now turn to comment on a number of other issues that I believe we should give some attention to. The latest dismissal of the chief pilot of Solomon Airlines calls for an immediate investigation into the Airlines board and management. I am sure the minister responsible is attending to this matter. The issues affecting the airlines management need to be sorted out quickly, we cannot prolong them. Solomon Airlines is our flag carrier, it is a national entity and identity that needs to be protected by all means against odds that may distort its smooth operations.

Earlier this year, I also raised the issue of a rehabilitation package for April Flash Flood Victims at the April Ridge. I understand this matter is yet to reach Cabinet for its consideration. It is important that the government must seriously consider rehabilitation of the April Flash Flood victims. Delaying it may have some

rippling effects, especially on the peace and harmony of surrounding communities and in our city as a whole.

On sports, it should be noted that our national game - soccer is declining. This is because we have never approached soccer in a developmental manner. If we want to see our national game advancing, we need to invest in sports infrastructures and development programs that are evenly shared throughout our provinces. I encourage the relevant ministry and institutions to be developmental in their approach and with the support of the government, our youths can become assets contributing to the development of our country. Sports can be a platform for addressing the many antisocial behaviors by our youths in the country. In addition, it can also create employment opportunities as well as revenue earner for this country.

The other issue I wish to comment on is the rise of interest groups in our country. It is time that we as leaders realize that the rise of interest groups in the country must not be underestimated. I feel that it is appropriate and timely to echo this sentiment in this honorable house. For example, the growth of social media in Solomon Islands must ring a bell that the power of social networking is thriving and is growing digital world and can ignite both positive and negative impacts on the development our country. It is the most powerful tool used around the world by interest groups.

Social networks have removed all the communications and interaction barriers. Now people are united on a huge platform for the achievement of some specific objectives. These medium has awoken the sleeping giant, and that is our people. It has to be noted that the rise of proactive groupings in our country can be attributed to the failure of successive governments to address issues of national interest such as corruption. In this regard, the effort by the government to address this issue holistically is an important one. My call here is to recognize the existence of these groupings, thus create an avenue where we can discuss issues and also to engage them as important stake holders in the development of our country.

Furthermore, on West Papua, the issue is a sensitive and complicated one. However, I hope geopolitics will not overshadow our commitment towards humanity. The fact that we have diplomatic relations with Indonesia provides us with the opportunity to have an open and honest dialogue with Indonesia on the

plight of our Melanesian brothers and sisters in West Papua. In light of the MSG leaders meeting in Honiara this June, Solomon Islands should take a stand, especially in relation to the application by West Papua United Liberation Movement for full membership within the MSG.

(hear, hear)

The other upcoming event this year is the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting in Papua New Guinea this September. This is an important event and I believe our government will be prepared to engage in discussing important regional matters which have an impact on our country. I understand that the agenda will include regional connectivity, the new regional framework, the post 2015 sustainable development goals, climate change and natural disasters and, of course, the IPA negotiations.

I also propose that Solomon Islands should bid to host the 50th Pacific Island Forum Leader's meeting. I think we only hosted the Forum meeting once and that was in 1992; only once. I believe it is important that we bid to host the 50th Pacific Islands Forum Leader's meeting. This will be historic as it will be the jubilee of the Forum. In preparation for this, the government should build a fully equipped and standard international conference centre. This will also enable us to host other regional and international meetings and events as well as domestic conferences, seminars and workshops.

In summary, it has indeed been a very successful and productive meeting of Parliament. We have passed two very important pieces of legislation - the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015 and the Fisheries Management Bill 2015, preceded by the Speech from the Throne. It has also been a learning curve for some of us new Members of Parliament. I personally find the deliberations in our parliamentary standing committees and the committee of the whole House on the bills that came before us very enriching and fulfilling. We are a small country so we should be able

to manage our affairs and control the destiny of our country; we must be in the driver's seat. This calls for closer collaboration and unity among us leaders so that we can focus on the common good of our country and not on our own narrow interests.

In this connection, the change that the government is spearheading or proposing has to start from within; from the government itself and from here on the floor of Parliament. I share the Prime Minister's passion and new sense of optimism for a better and brighter Solomon Islands. The onus is on all of us, especially cabinet ministers to take the lead and provide the necessary directions for your respective ministries as you embark on implementing the government's fundamental and sectoral reform programs. It must not be business as usual otherwise we will never move forward. We must stop the blame game and finger pointing and move on with the important task of nation building and state building. Whether you are on this side of the House or on the other side of the House, we have a shared objective, and that shared objective is to lead and serve this beautiful country and enhance the quality of life of our people.

I also wish to thank all our development stakeholders including our development partners, the non-governmental organizations, churches, civil society, the private sector and our rural farmers and fishers for their ongoing contributions towards the development aspirations of our people. I trust that the government will continue to provide **10.20** that environment, that space for closer cooperation and engagement. Above all, it is the responsibility of all of us, all citizens to build Solomon Islands.

I also wish to join the Prime Minister in thanking all our churches for their continuing prayers and support. We need to remind ourselves that Solomon Islands is named after the wisest king in the Bible. Do you not think that was coincident? I believe not at all. We must remember that whatever development we undertake must be aligned with God's plan and so the need to translate the divine purposes

predestined for this nation must be the overarching agenda if our country is going to move forward in the right direction. This is my personal conviction.

Finally, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to your good self and the Deputy Speaker as well as the Clerk and staff of the National Parliament for the excellent efforts you have put in place to ensure the success of our meeting. Sir, you and deputy have done very well in steering our deliberations. With these remarks, I once again thank the Honourable Prime Minister for moving this sine-die motion. I beg to support the motion and resume my seat. Thank you.

Hon ISHMAEL AVUI (*Minister for Justice and Legal Affairs*): First of all, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion in which he outlined what has happened in the past, what is happening now and what is expected from each of us in this 10th Parliament in the governance of our beloved country, Solomon Islands.

What resonates from this motion is the need for seriousness, cooperation and maturity. Petty politicking must be put aside and I heard from him clearly thanking the cooperation and maturity demonstrated by the Honourable Leader of Opposition and also the Leader of Independent during this sitting. Also, I would like to thank you, Mr Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and Clerk for the manner you all have performed your roles with patience. You three have done very well and I am certain that it will only takes one more meeting and you will surpass all your predecessors. I also would like to congratulate the hardworking Ministers of Finance and Fisheries for the two important bills passed during this meeting. Also, the Attorney General for the drafting work of these two bills and also for his advice during this meeting. I would also like to thank the Chairman and members of the Bills and Legislation Committee for the scrutiny done to the bills. Finally, I would also like to thank the DCC Government and especially the Honourable Prime Minister for deciding on the business of Parliament which will adjourn this week.

As you know very well, I am one of the 17 new comers to this Parliament and I have learned a lot **10.25** in terms of parliamentary custom and procedures. I would

like to thank you all colleagues in this Chamber for advice and encouragement as I continue to educate myself on the role of Parliament and its auxiliary bodies, but more so how to deal with pressure from constituencies. Thank you very much.

I had earlier congratulated Parliament for passing two important Bills during this meeting - the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015 and the Fisheries Management Bill 2015. I would like to make some comments about this Fisheries Management Bill 2015 as I do not have the opportunity to contribute during its debate.

The passage of the Fisheries Management Bill 2015 reemphasizes one message, and that is we are definitely turning to the ocean to enhance revenue collection. This gives a signal that definitely logging is a sunset industry and fisheries is a sunrise industry. I envy and support this Bill because it provides deterrence for further depletion of our marine resources both by foreign boats using sophisticated technologies and also pressure from a growing population. The government has taken the right decision to protect its resources from foreign money-mongers, while encouraging sustainable harnessing of our oceans.

I am also happy about the Fisheries Management Bill 2015 as it encourages onshore development of fishery resources. At this time and age, we should be building industries so that we add value to our resources thus creating employment for our young and growing population. Industries should now be mushrooming in Honiara, Auki, Gizo, Lata, Kirakira and Tingoa, and not retail shops as expressed by the Minister for Commerce in one of his debates.

This Bill is the dawning of a new era in legislative drafting. Do you know what? Since independence all our acts of Parliament were designed in such a manner that the Permanent Secretary who is the accountable officer to the ministry is not responsible for the operation and management of development in our development ministries. For instance, in fisheries in the past, it is the Director of Fisheries who is more powerful than the Permanent Secretary. In Forestry, it is the Commissioner of Forest who is more powerful than the Permanent Secretary of Forestry. In Lands, it is the Commissioner of Lands who is more powerful than the

Permanent Secretary of Lands. In mines, it is the Director of Mines who is more powerful than the Minister or PS of Mines. That is why in the past, no matter whatever government policy is on controlling logging, still licenses were issued. No matter whatever the government says about controlling mining licenses, the opposite just happens. The DCC Government who advocates reforms has changed that arrangement in this new Fisheries Management Bill 2015. It has removed the discretionary power from one person and now to a committee and some control to the permanent secretary and the minister. The Permanent Secretary who is responsible for implementing government policy can now instruct the Director to implement the policy on fisheries and not to do whatever he likes. This is the dilemma permanent secretaries have in the past, and still is in some ministries like mines, forestry and other development ministries. This is a good start and I hope it will continue to do so with the other acts and legislations.

Let me now turn to my ministry. My ministry is one of the ministries that has been on the headlines in the media. It has been said recently that the judiciary is corrupt. **10.30** If the judiciary is corrupt then what is left for an ordinary Solomon Islander? Certainly he/she will feel unprotected. But where is your evidence to prove that our judiciary is corrupt? I do not think so. We have a very neutral judiciary. If anyone is not happy with the judgments they get, there is a Court of Appeal and the Court of Appeal comprises of learned and distinguished judges from other jurisdictions overseas. I cannot see why people and organizations say that the courts are corrupt. Give me proof and I will take it up. Do not just stand up and say it but prove it. I am sure you are wrong. If you say that the courts are corrupt, what have you done to correct it? Put your money where your mouth is.

That said, I would like to thank donors and Australia especially including Taiwan for the funding we continue to receive from them. Despite the funding received by judiciary from donors, I still feel the judiciary is not getting the attention it requires to be effective. The resourcing of the judiciary must increase and it is a developing phenomena that whenever you increase the national budget, you will

certainly increase activities which leads to individual, community, tribal or organizational conflict. Very often you will have disputes and surely these disputes will end up either in the Magistrate Courts, the High Courts or the Court of Appeal. To me increased budget means increase intensity and magnitude of court cases coming up.

Having said that, I now wish to focus my observation on community governance. The centre of power in the communities is crumbling and in tatters. Chiefs, in most communities are no longer playing a central role in managing the affairs of the communities. They too are in disarray and are powerless. In some communities, the chiefs are a broken institution. I for one can justify the role of a single person to influence the community. We have to look for an alternative. I do not know how and where we will find it but one thing is sure that the chiefly system is a broken class which cannot be reconnected. The forces that go against the chiefs are so strong. So what is the only institution the people can trust? They can only trust our judiciary system. But if the judiciary system is not supported, how would that be possible? We must not be responsible for the erosion of judiciary in this country. We must not see judiciary as an enemy but a friend and a means of developing Solomon Islands.

Traditionally as is today, justice has never been seen as a development issue and that is why no government bothers resourcing it. The intention of having a different autonomous body is not so much on the issue of neutrality of the courts, but it is more on lack of attention by governments since independence to support it with good manpower and enough funding. We see more funding for other sectors but less for the judiciary. Financial sustainability is crucial if justice is to be delivered in this country. This is already a big challenge for justice, but lest we forget the cost for disorder and injustice will cause enormous drain on our development in a fragile state like Solomon Islands. **10.35** It is therefore imperative that financial and human capital deficits must be addressed in the justice sector. I would like to thank past governments for resourcing the Ministry of Justice and the

National Judiciary and also the DCC Government for trying to address this resource issue so as to narrow the gap.

I am now responsible for the Ministry of Justice and I am also responsible to my people. I want to say to my good people of East Central Guadalcanal that we have just passed the budget. This is just a paper budget. It has big amounts that you have seen and heard in the media but these are only estimates. I am sure from my experience in the government as a permanent secretary, not all that you see or hear will come down to us. Do not talk about what is in the budget books. You should only talk about what enters our bank account.

Our constituency is the biggest on Guadalcanal and one of the most difficult one to administer in the whole of Solomon Islands. As such, I ask you my good people for your help and understanding, tolerance and cooperation as I now start to try and deliver services that you are hoping from me. We only have six months left to implement the budget. To my good people, I am looking forward to your cooperation. Remember we must not spend money on small things but we must spend money on big things; developmental projects. We also have established our constituency zone leaders. It is these leaders that are my eyes are ears in our community. Please, my good people go to them and discuss. They are the ones who will come to me.

Others would also want to speak on this motion, but one thing is clear - we must work hard now. The Ministry of Finance must work closely with ministries, especially the Ministry of Rural Development and our CDOs. If we are not hoping for a frustrated people who now know what they will get but get none? With those few remarks, I support the motion.

Mr NESTOR GIRO (*Central Makira*): Thank you for recognising me and for the opportunity as the representative of my good people of Central Makira to contribute on the floor of this honourable house. As alluded to by the other two colleagues, I wish to also thank the Prime Minister for the same accord in moving the traditional

Sine Die Motion to allow Members of Parliament to constructively debate on important issues for our beloved Solomon Islands.

I wish to speak on certain issues and extracts from the current parliament meeting now about to be concluded. The process conducted by the Public Accounts Committee in scrutinizing the 2015 Budget Estimates and the Bills and Legislation Committee scrutiny of the Fisheries Management Bill 2015 is overwhelming and the great work done is well complimented. Likewise, the two ministers responsible for these Bills in overseeing their final stages to pass through this honourable house is also my pleasure to appreciate and thank them on behalf of my people.

To arrive at justifiable legislations for our country can only be achieved through lengthy period of time where we expect sacrifice and patience. **10.40** I salute those who have sacrificed in the formulation of these bills through wide extensive consultations and reviews until the final stage of debate and passing of these bills in Parliament.

While the Fisheries Management Bill 2015 provides viable and accessible provisions to enhance economic development in all aspects (small, medium or large scales) I wish to register my statement to responsible citizens of this country and particularly my people of East Makira that we must be all policemen and women for the sustainable harvesting of our resources. The implementation of this policy shall be as good and effective if we all assist to monitor these policies in the practical world. The implementation of these policies and regulations are often beyond the reach of the implementers that leave no choice for us as responsible citizens of this country to carry out. We can help one way or the other to drive our country forward in a sustainable way.

I also wish to register my statement as the chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education and Human Resources Development. On matters of education and human resources training committee, as the chairman I am most delightful to make mention of the activities that the Committee has engaged in. Under the auspices of Standing Order 71(c), the Committee is mandated to make

examinations, observations and recommendations on matters relating to education and human resources development as it may consider appropriate or as referred to it by Parliament or the Government.

Since the beginning of this year, January 2015, the Committee has had two deliberative meetings to develop its annual work plan. Important educational issues have been raised, but the Committee has identified activities it may wish to engage in the course of this year and other years to come. During these deliberative, we also have audiences with interested individuals who have educational visions and aspirations for this country Solomon Islands. The Committee is happy to be an avenue for dialogue and a forum for discussion on significant educational matters affecting this country. We will also utilize parliamentary procedures to bring public educational concerns to the floor of Parliament. By this I mean in exercising the Committee's scrutiny role, we will use question times and if appropriate bring motions to Parliament.

At this juncture, I would like to thank my colleague Member for North Malaita for bringing to our attention the issue of pupils in our educational system that are without placements this year 2015. As you all may have been informed by the acting Minister, 7803 students in total without placement is alarming. We could make further analysis with the facts provided. For form 1 alone we need to have prepared 28 classrooms in 2014 to ensure that these pupils are still in school. We ought to have prepared 60 new classrooms to cover for pupils with no placement for forms 4 in 2015. For our senior secondary students who exited from forms 6 and 7, we should have made available 5144 spaces in our tertiary institutions or direct employment. These figures will certainly increase in the years to come and we need to ensure that we handle this well. While the minister responsible assures the House of the Ministry's plan to ensure these pupils who have exited our secondary formal education systems are captured in the tertiary and vocational institutions, I am sure shortage of space will still be inevitable. The issue of financing these trainings and

institutions and the issue of students and parents having to face financial constraints in paying for their school tuition still remains.

Let us not forget that education is the engine for economic growth. If we are not able to address all the educational challenges, at least we provide an education that enhances **10.45** one to be able to make meaning to his or her own life, be able to survive in his/her environment and embark on some form of macro-economical activities. Although we may face these challenges together as a nation, however, as national leaders we must ensure that government service delivery on educational services is still attainable. Therefore, we must boost and support the growth of our tertiary education institutions whether it be university, technical college or rural vocational centers.

I would also call upon our responsible ministry to consider giving some form of support to our locally owned and run training centers. To name a few, the secretarial schools, the SBEC and other training centers who are willing to provide certified trainings to equip our people with the skills for employment purposes and to be innovative to take up options for self-employment. Let me emphasise that the delivery of educational services in Solomon Islands can only be achieved through partnership.

I wish to commend on the partnership effort displayed by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, the education authorities and our local communities in ensuring our children and citizens at large have access to education. At this juncture, I also wish to thank the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development for being inclusive in their consultation process on the planned education bill to be brought to Parliament in the next sitting.

Based on the Education and Human Resource Training Committee report on its inquiry into teacher absenteeism in Solomon Islands Schools 2014, I wish to reiterate the following issues. But before doing so, I wish to thank the last committee and the chairman for the comprehensive report. The bill must clearly stipulate who is the employer of our more than 9,000 hardworking teachers right across the

country so that we can put to rest the confusion we have bestowed on our teachers in terms of who should be responsible for their working conditions.

Given the extensive national coverage of the inquiry into the teacher absenteeism report, it is recommended that the recommendations in the report set the baseline for further incorporation of teachers' welfare in the bill. The bill should be a benchmark for the implementation of regulations and policies. New policies should be given consideration as changes are always attached to cost. Finally, this Bill is as important as the Appropriation Bill because this bill when it becomes an act sets the direction of this country. Besides ensuring it is constitutional, we must deliver under the banner of education that serves our country and gives identity to us as Solomon Islanders.

Since the Government's intervention on the history of our educational system, it is of pertinent that it balances both sexes for our education focus. Whilst we develop our human resources for public administrative purposes, we must not also lose sight of disseminating moral principles and cultural values that keep us united as a nation. Many of these values are Christian values. Take out these fundamental values for Solomon Islands and we will have a totally new society, more social shocks and secularism to topple up social problems on the grounds. With this statement and remarks, I would like to support the motion and now resume my seat.

10.50

Hon DEREK SIKUA (*Minister for Education and Human Resources Development*): I would like to thank the Honourable Prime Minister for moving the motion of Sine Die. I was not in the House when the Prime Minister moved the motion, but I would like to support the comment made by other colleagues who have already spoken on the success of this meeting. This meeting was a successful one and a very good start for the DCC Government as there have been a lot of differences on how the government conducts its business compared to the last House. In supporting the comments made on the success of this meeting, I would like to congratulate the

Prime Minister for the manner he has conducted and introduced government businesses in this House during this meeting. The honourable Prime Minister has observed when introducing government business our standing orders and on certain occasions a good observation and strict observation of certain provisions under our Constitution in bringing matters to the House, and I am very thankful to the Prime Minister for that.

The conduct of business, as I have said, is a good start where we have seen bills introduced, for example, the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015, when it was introduced ample time was given to the Public Accounts Committee to scrutinize and interrogate the Bill. In the past, as the honourable Prime Minister who was the chairperson of the Bills and Legislation Committee, which I was also a member of, we were only given one or two days at the most to scrutinize bills and come up with a report. That is one of my observations that this meeting has been a very successful one, and, of course, the passage of the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015 and also the passage of the Fisheries and Management Bill 2015 and for that I want to congratulate my two colleague ministers, the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Fisheries & Marine Resources, the Government and this House as a whole for the successful passage of those two every important bills.

This House started off with a Speech from the Throne, 10.55 in which his Excellency the Governor General delivered the Speech from the Throne in late March. After the Speech from the Throne, the honourable Prime Minister moved a motion for us to debate the Speech from the Throne, which I did not have the opportunity to participate at that time and so I would like to first of all go back to that Speech and make my contribution on what I was intending to say at that time.

During the Speech from the Throne, his Excellency the Governor General rightly mentioned that the Speech from the Throne is a traditional speech delivered by him, being his special duty and privilege as the constitutional representative of Her Majesty the Queen who is the Head of State at the first sitting of a newly elected parliament. And of course you know that this is in line with our Standing Orders,

especially Standing Order 7. I do believe that the timing and delivery of that speech is very important and very opportune for all of us. I commend his Excellency the Governor General for the thrust, the tone and the posture in which he delivered the Speech.

His Excellency the Governor General embarked on delivering his speech by conveying warm greetings and special well wishes on behalf of our Head of State, Her Majesty the Queen. This to me is a reminder that whatever we do as a government we are not alone, and we are indeed reminded that we are truly Her Majesty's Government, a government that must always be honest, vigilant, accountable and transparent in its undertakings in the governance and leadership of our country and people.

Perhaps unbeknown to some of us, his Excellency the Governor General does report to Her Majesty the Queen on a regular basis, perhaps on a quarterly basis basically on how the affairs of this country are being conducted by Her Majesty's Government. That is the reason why the Prime Minister goes up to brief His Excellency the Governor General on a regular basis, Ministers do the same at the request of the Governor General on a regular basis because he has to report to the Head of State on how the affairs of this country are being conducted by Her Majesty's Government.

In successfully securing the mandate to govern the sovereign affairs of our people and country, his Excellency the Governor General has been most gracious and kind in congratulating our honourable Prime Minister for assuming the onerous task of leading this country. He also went on to thank all of us who are ministers in the **11.00** DCC Government for accepting our assignment of responsibilities in becoming ministers of the government. We are all keenly aware of the very high expectations from our people throughout the country as we eagerly await to see and be part of the changes we profess, and to actually feel and experience the much needed change pronounced by our government, particularly through the reform programs we say we are going to do. Indeed, his Excellency the Governor General is

right in reminding us ministers that much would depend on our proactive political directions and sound strategic planning as we drive the day-to-day implementation of our government policies, and above all to spearhead the political leadership in our respective government ministries.

The buck stops with us ministers, and if things we promised are not going to be done in a business as usual fashion, then we all have to work hard to provide that political leadership and direction to our permanent secretaries and staffs in our ministries. Otherwise what is the use of blaming our permanent secretaries and public servants?

In conveying his sincerest congratulations to my good friend and once upon a time my very hard working SPM, the Honourable Leader of Opposition and Member for Kia/Havulei on his timely appointment, his Excellency the Governor General also reminded him of his very important and vital role. This is a role I am quite familiar with as a former leader, and it is not an easy one and it comes with a lot of maturity and responsibility. My experience is that if you have a good government in place, you will have the easy task of giving credit where credit is due. On the other hand, if there is a lousy government in power, you are guaranteed a tough time ahead of you and you will spend sleepless nights planning and scheming motions of no confidence to overthrow us.

We in the DCC Government want to be a good government, so we will try our best to make your life easy. Come what may, his Excellency, the Governor General has very aptly reminded my good friend, the Leader of Opposition that he has assumed the vital role of providing the pivotal mechanism provided for in our parliamentary democracy, which ensures checks and balancing to keep Her Majesty's government honest, vigilant, accountable and transparent in its deliberations and undertakings to govern and lead our people and country. And I am very, very happy to say here that the Leader of Opposition has done exactly that in conducting his role, **11.05** and so I want to congratulate the Leader of Opposition in that regard.

In applauding the Leader of the Independent Group, his Excellency the Governor General also reminded him of his very important role as he steers the government towards the course of national reform and change. Further and most importantly, he is to backstop the official opposition to give the necessary support to the government as it implements its policies and strategies. This highlights an important practice I have not seen in my last two terms in Parliament. Certainly, in my last two terms in Parliament, I have observed that the Independent Group is more inclined to support the Opposition Group rather than the Government. I hope that my good friend, the incumbent Leader of Independent Group and Member of Parliament for East Malaita including members of the Independent group take his Excellency's advice to heart seriously. I am happy to observe as well that that is what is happening exactly during this meeting. I am also in support of what the Honourable Prime Minister said in thanking both the Opposition and the Independent group in their conduct and support to the Government in this meeting.

His Excellency the Governor General went on to remind all Members of the 10th Parliament that our people hold envious confidence in our leadership abilities and capabilities to provide sound guidance and clear visions, not as micro scale project managers or Automatic Telling Machines (ATMs) but as national legislators. I cannot agree more because our role as Members of Parliament and members of the legislature is first and foremost to make good laws and good laws for that matter for the smooth running of our country and for the betterment and wellbeing of our people.

As we commence our next four years, his Excellency the Governor General in his speech from the throne summed up all what he has been saying to all of us on the government side, the official opposition side and the independent group by pointing us to the spirit and letter of our national motto - "to lead is to serve." This is an important reminder because in leading our country and our people forward, we must do so with diligence, vision and wisdom.

We as Solomon Islanders are all one people and belong to one country and his Excellency the Governor General is right and correct in reminding the government that in the spirit of national unity, it must recognize the importance of putting our people first and putting our people right at the centre of development and nation building. As a government, I agree that it is incumbent on us to play a positive and lasting role as custodians of our resources and natural wealth. However, we always say **11.10** that we are graciously endowed with abundant natural resources on our land and in our waters. But the question is, why are we still poor? This is the question that we as leaders of today must try to answer. Nonetheless, we must acknowledge the strength our country has in the wealth of our diverse cultures, sound religious heritage and the vast talents possessed by our people, particularly in our youth. Our young people are indeed the leaders of tomorrow so we have a responsibility to impart virtues and skills to them to ensure the long term wellbeing and prosperity of our nation.

His Excellency the Governor General also stressed the importance of having a strong government with good policies that empower our people to be engaged in productive and worthwhile activities and absorb in gainful employment. Whatever we do we must avoid instilling in our people, including ourselves as leaders, the dependency syndrome or the *cargo-cult hand-out* mentality where we look to aid donors and the CDF to provide cash. We must inculcate in the minds of our people and in our own minds the values of thrift and impulse control. Impulse control being the ability to resist temptation, especially the temptation to give up in the face of hardship or to quit instead of persevering at a difficult task or when the going gets tough. No society could exist without impulse control. Our people must come out of the attitude of living for the moment and must be reminded of the need to control themselves, resist temptation and prove themselves at every endeavor.

Impulse control goes hand in hand with the need to instill in our people and ourselves as leaders the value of hard work. There is no substitute for hard work.

Countries that have elevated themselves from third world status to developed world status have been able to do so mainly out of sheer hard work.

The fundamental of what his Excellency the Governor General was saying to us in his Speech from the Throne on the 24th of March 2015, is that if we can hold our heads high and be proud of ourselves, work hard, have a strong government with a good economic model, then our country can safely progress and sail to the shores of peace, tranquility, security and prosperity. **11.15** Those were the comments I was intending to contribute to the debate on the Speech on the Throne. I will leave my contributions there and I would like to move on now to my Ministry.

Before going onto my ministry I wish to thank the Minister for Finance who was supervising my ministry when I was away overseas by answering questions regarding my Ministry's component during my absence and had the budget passed. It is no secret that my ministry, the Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development has the biggest share of the cake of this year's budget, and it has been for many years; and rightly so. The policies and programs which the DCC Government has in the Ministry of Education & Human Resource development have been adequately catered for in both the recurrent and development estimates and the budget being passed, my Ministry looks forward to implement our policies in the education sector as supported by the budget. But the thing to say about our education system at this point in time is that we are at the crossroads and we need to look at the existing legislation. I think Parliament is already aware, as I have said earlier on, of the review of the existing legislation - the Education Act 1978 and the possibility of bringing in the new bill for Parliament to debate in the course of this year.

I hear what the Chairman of the parliamentary committee on education and Member for Central Makira is saying and I am in support of all that he said. The way forward for education in this country is that we must look at education as the tool and the instrument that will take our country forward in every way, and that is why I would like to say that in moving forward, we do not want to leave anyone

behind. We do not want to leave anybody behind because everyone has the right to be educated; every Solomon Islander has the right to be educated. That is the driving force behind what we do in education from here on. **11.20**

Over the years our population has increased. From independence we only have a small number and as time goes on and up to this point, we continue to face challenges in the quality of our education system and we still face challenges in access to the education system. We still have gender issues that need to be addressed as well as management issues. Those are basically the three areas to look at in trying to modernize and move our education system forward - issues of quantity, issues of quality, access and management. But I am very happy to say that we have come a long way; despite of these challenges we have come a long way in the last 10 years. We are now at the point that we must look at where we want to be in the next 30 to 50 years and therefore the importance of the need for us to gear our legislation so as to modernize our education system.

As you might know, the existing Education Act has very little provision for higher education. It only deals with basic education. Because of the increase in the population and as succinctly summarized by my good Chair of the Education Committee, we need to look at how we can give the Ministry of Education and its management the ability to focus on early childhood education, primary education, secondary education and to give more focus and attention to the development of higher education in this country.

The DCC Government policies do point to that need. We have made good strides in providing places in form 1 for our students exiting the standard six exams. It is not a hundred percent but it is close to, and I am very happy to inform Parliament about this. Meaning that Solomon Islands has met its obligations in meeting the 2nd Millennium Development Goal on universal primary education. It says universal primary education and I think we have achieved that. We have managed in our policies, as we have said, nine years of basic education. We have managed that as well to a lot of extent. I think we have made good progress there.

The challenges remain in the upper secondary school level from grades 9, 10 or forms 3 to forms 4 and in forms 5 to 6 and so on. That is where we will need to focus our attention whilst continuing to maintain and expand provisions in basic education.

On quality, I am very happy to inform Parliament that the quality of our education system also continues to improve. **11.25** This is measured in our literacy standard or competencies of people in our schooling system. The literacy and numeracy performance in year 4 and year 6 of primary pupils at the national and provincial levels in year 2013 have been achieved. For your information, the baseline for primary school literacy and numeracy were quite appalling when the Solomon Islands Standardised Test of Achievement was first introduced or administered in the primary school system in 2004.

A lot of our stakeholders, including the parents and the general public raised so many questions and were pointing fingers at the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development and were also pointing fingers at our teachers and maybe pointing fingers to the Minister too, who are teaching the children. Everyone wanted to know what has gone wrong and hoped that the poor school literacy situation would be remedied. I am delighted to tell you that over the years, my ministry has done well and was able to raise the primary school pupil's literacy and numeracy standards. So the dividends are paid off. For example, in 2013 the results of the Solomon Islands Standardised Test of Achievement showed that 66.4% of year 4 primary pupils performed at or above the expected literacy standards. Also, in 2013, Solomon Islands Standardised Test of Achievement, data indicated that 66.7% of our pupils performed well or above in numeracy standards. Also data indicated that 62.3% of pupils in year 6 performed at or above the expected literacy standards while 86.6% of year 6 performed at or above the numeracy expected standards. These figures show that our pupils at the primary education level are achieving the standards we have set and therefore on the quality side I can say that we are

continuing to improve but there is still a lot of work to be done and we will continue to work hard.

In terms of access, I have mentioned the big work that we need to be doing at the higher levels of our education system. On the gender equity issue, I want to inform Parliament that we are also doing well in reducing the gap between male and female pupils in our schools as all our schools are coeducation institutions. On the issue of management, and this is where the issue of our teachers come in, and I have heard what the Chairman of the Education and Human Resources Development Committee was saying **11.30** and the MP for Central Makira, I just want to say that we are working closely with our teachers and education authorities on issues that affect us, whether it be on travel, whether it be on accommodation and whether it be on their salary levels and re-leveling. My ministry is working hard on those issues and we continue to collaborate and talk to each other on the best way forward. I have talked on the management of our education system and as we move forward we will continue to ensure that we work with our education authorities to strengthen the weaker ones and to help the stronger ones so that they can assume more responsibilities for teachers that serve in their jurisdiction.

I know that the ministry will continue to work towards achieving the aims and the objectives that we set ourselves and above all the policies and programs of the DCC Government, and as we move forward in the course of the year, as we only have about eight more months to go, we will continue to review and make sure we are on target in all the activities under our mandate.

There is an important issue of providing fee free basic education to our students and therefore there is a allocation in the budget that will cater for this and as soon as we receive the warrant for spending, we will advice our education authorities on how this is going to be implemented. There will be very clear instructions to education authorities on what they can and cannot do in terms of charging fees or other extra costs to our students. That will be something that we will do as soon as we can. But as you know there is always the tendency by our

education authorities to add on additional costs and the ministry will be looking out for those education authorities.

One of the things I want to mention is the approval of the levels of school fees that our schools are charging students. The law requires that those levels of fees charged in schools are approved by the Minister before they can be implemented, and most of these school fees have been charged over the years without the prior approval of the Minister of the Ministry of Education. We will be looking into that as well and instructing schools on what the correct levels of should be if fees needs to be charged, especially at the upper levels.

Despite of the fact that the Ministry of Education has the biggest slice of the SIG Budget, 2015 will become a more difficult year due to cut in the budget support from our development partners. This is one of things we would like to discuss with our development partners, and this has come about as a result of the difficulties **11.35** to achieve other performance targets that have been set out with our donors in 2014, particularly the scholarship budget. This situation therefore calls on the Ministry to dig deeper and to manage our resources by creating value to the government through our current level of resources and through fiscal discipline and development of robust processes, I am sure my ministry will continue to manage our resources and deliver on the outputs stipulated in the current phase of our National Education Action Plan 2014 – 2015, as well as the DCCG policies and programs in education. The ministry will continue to work in close partnership with all our stakeholders to manage the risks that will potentially affect the budget and ensure it is able to deliver the desired results by the end of 2015.

Before I finish, I just want to go back to issues that relate to my constituency of North East Guadalcanal. For us in Tasimboko and Paripao our biggest obstacle is the road. Some of us need ships and plane to get to our place but for us road is very important to us. That is where we can move our goods, our timber, cocoa, copra and logs to the market and do businesses. And so I am very happy to see a huge allocation for infrastructure development in the Budget. In having conversations

with my good colleagues, the Minister for Finance as well as the Minister for Infrastructure, some of the funds in the budget will be for the road from Mberande to Ruavatu and from Ruavatu to Aola, Longgu and even to Marau. My colleague MPs for the other two constituencies are very happy as well about this. Maybe the Mberande-Ruavatu road will be tar sealed and so I am very happy that it will be done during the time of the DCC Government. And, of course, feeder roads; I have five feeder roads in my constituency where funding for their repair is also inside the budget. I am very happy with my good colleague, the Minister for Health has allocated funds for two of my clinics – two area health centres. My people will be very happy with the Ministry of Health. I am happy to see these in the budget.

In my view, in any development, the order it should take is health, education, agriculture and infrastructure. That is the order of how funds should be allocated and how policies should be prioritized, and that is why the DCC Government has put it in that order - **11.40** health, education, agriculture and infrastructure. I am also very happy with my good colleague, the Minister for Agriculture because he is about to distribute the cows. The cows are in our constituency not far from here and the numbers have increased 450 heads to 750 heads. Since they were brought here in 2011, they have given birth to more heads. The Minister said to me that he is about to distribute the herds. But some of them have gone missing, and so I urge my good Minister for Agriculture to distribute the herds quickly to our farmers before they all go missing. I want to urge my colleague to quickly distribute the herds.

Otherwise I would like to say that this has been a very successful, fruitful and a good meeting and I hope our new Members of Parliament do learn something out of it, and I am sure there is more to come. My good Prime Minister has already in mind a parliamentary timetable for us to follow this year and the years to come and so I am happy. We have achieved a lot; there are only two bills but I am sure there will be more to come.

In closing I would like to thank you Mr Speaker for the work you have done with your Clerk and staff in guiding and conducting parliamentary meetings in a

very successful way. I would like to thank all our public officers, our permanent secretaries and staffs in their ministries for the huge work they have put on the budget. Now that the budget is passed, I would like to call on everyone to work hard to implement the policies of the government. As we move forward, I would like to extend my good wishes to His Excellency the Governor General and his family as well as our Premiers and their provincial governments as they look forward to implementing their programs alongside the programs and budget of the national government.

I must not forget my teachers and our students who are studying in the country as well as outside. I think there is an increase for them in this budget so I think we should roll that out for them. With that I support the motion. **11.45**

Hon AUGUSTINE AUGA (*Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Development*): Thank you Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to contribute briefly to this important Sine Die Motion as we end this session of Parliament, which saw the passage of the historic 2015 national budget. Let me thank you Mr Speaker, for your cool handling of the sittings, and in your absence, the Deputy Speaker, the hard working Member for Central Honiara constituency for doing an excellent job. I would also like to thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion. I also thank the colleague ministers and backbenchers for the solidarity shown in getting the budget through. It is worth mentioning the Fisheries Management Bill 2015 brought to parliament by the hard working Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, the honourable Member for West constituency.

I would like to thank the leaders of the Opposition and the Independent Groups and the members for scrutinising the budget and enabling issues to be given more clarity so that the people listening are also clear on what programs the DCC government will be implementing in 2015 and beyond based on its policy statements and strategies.

As a first time Member of Parliament and a minister for that matter, this session of parliament has been a huge learning curve for me but I am happy to note that understanding has been displayed by everyone towards those of us who are new. Things will be different next time.

My ministry will do its best to implement the policies of the Democratic Coalition for Change Government in relation to agriculture and economic development for our nation. As a ministry that relates to 75percent of the rural population, my team will its best to address the three pillars of food and nutritious security, livelihoods and economic development as calculated in the 10th Development programs and farmers support approved for 2015.

My ministry not only looks forward to implementing the policies of the DCCG, we are also working very closely with other stakeholders to address issues that are pertinent for developing of the agriculture sector. This includes climate Change Adoption, which we are addressing through programs funded GEF, SPREP, UNDP, SOC and EU-NARI Agriculture Research and Development. These programs look at appropriate adoption technologies to address sea level rise and salt water intrusion into farming land in the atolls, lagoons and coastal areas.

Rest assured my good honourable Member for Aoke/Langalanga constituency, that as far as agriculture is concerned, my ministry is seriously working on this. Non-communicable disease is becoming an epidemic that is related partially **11:50** to the food we eat. Therefore my ministry with other stakeholders such as the SPC, FAO and the ministry of Health are looking to encourage families to grow and eat more local food. On this, we have built vegetable and fruit trees nursery per constituency to provide planting materials for families to establish *supsup-gardens* around their houses, seeing that Honiara has the highest number of NCD cases. Let us start with Honiara first.

Market access for our agriculture products is very important, the Australian funded pacific Horticulture and Agriculture market access program has working on assessing certain markets for cocoa, coffee, Kava and other products. The expansion

of our export base is critical for our country. Bio- security and strengthening program funded by DFAT Australia is vital for securing our Agriculture from pest and diseases. We will be looking at installing an x-ray machine at the International Airport as a measure to monitor undeclared plants and animal products coming into this country. Bio-security should be everyone's business as the saying goes 'prevention is better than cure'. Disaster resilience is a new *buzz-phrase*, however, it reflects in getting our people prepared by minimizing risk to enable them to cope with disasters, UNDP is facilitating the funding of this activity will pilot in the Temotu province based on the Tsunami that occurred there. Encouraging Agro-business developing in this country will transform our economy from just subsistence to a more commercial-oriented sector.

The Agriculture sector has the potential to drive rural development by creating employment out of the 80% rural population. Just imagine that this country would be like if the energy is locked up in that 80% is unleashed in Agriculture business development. The World Bank, DFAT, IFAM funded and RDP to component is going to begin this Agro-business partnership with farmers and others in the cocoa and coconut industries. Hopefully other sub sectors will be addressed likewise. I believe in self-sufficiency, therefore the programs that my Ministry is implementing hinges on empowering the rural population to be able to improve their productivity to cater for their food and nutrition security, their livelihoods while at the same time participating in employment creation and contribute to economic growth of the nation to achieve the ultimate goal of our national wellbeing. In order for us to receive the best price of our products, value adding zone trim processing of the economics of the commodities must take places; private sector investment will be supported to develop products that must meet market demands.

The livestock industry is ripe for private sector investment, beef dairy cattle, poultry, piggery, honey, goats and tropical sheep are **11.55** but some of these areas for private sector commercial investment. It is pleasing to note that a potential

investor in the poultry industry has shown great interest and is ready to put substantial investment in this industry. Mr Speaker, a robust private sector driven agriculture should be the way forward, it must be result orientate, small holder driven, commercial market driven. Associations based with multi stakeholders linkages as well as strengthening a small holder, subsistence sector in the presence of climate change and global food and fuel price hicks and its external shocks. As eluded by the other side during budget debate and which I agree that research and development is fundamental for agriculture, thus the lack of research support facilities is a major concern that has to be address if the sector is to progress or even experience developing innovations that are essential for economic growth.

Sir my ministry is taking this seriously by establishing mini laboratory to cater for pest and dieses diagnostics and bio technology, the first step towards establishing agriculture associate laboratories to support the sector. I am proud to be part of the DCC government in which is going to bring about meaningful reforms that will bring positive changes to developing our nation. I am looking forward to this whole of government approach to address the countries developing aspirations. Let us put our heads or our hands together to bring our nation forward if leaders do this, come 2018 we will be back to continue the good work.

Mr Speaker, 2015 should be a changing year for all of us in this house though we have only eight months left to implement the programs plan. This should not be an excuse to spend unwisely but do things in a way where our people would benefit and help grow this economy. We must appreciate the efforts that our people are putting into the economic development of our country. At the substance level, although access is vital inputs may not be easily available; our people have the spirit of improvisation to make do with what they have how much more when the constituency development resources are made available in the rural areas. I am sure sir, the productive sector such as agriculture, fisheries, tourism, forestry and others will see a significant growth resulting in not 3 percent economic growth as focus but 10 percent or more. I must applaud all farming families out there who grow crops

and raise livestock's to continue to feed the nation and help to grow the economy. Keep up the good work your contribution to the nation building has rightly earn you the back bone of this nation. To the various partners and NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, Civil society and line ministries **12.00** partnering to address issues of development, is the way forward. Let us not work in isolating and create barriers and compete for limited resources which should be shared to help address the issues of nation interest which should be the main focus of what we do.

In conclusion, I would say thank you again to the Staff of Parliament for your hard work and support to us during this Parliament sessions. I would also like to thank the hard working staff of my ministry who continues to facilitate the implementation of agriculture development programs, though at times faced with different situations. My staffs are very versatile and they can be called up to perform duties beyond their normal job descriptions, as they have always been involved in normal program such as elections and disaster response and recovery work which has become an annual activity for most of them.

Finally to my good people of Lau/Mbaelelea Constituency, I believe in you and I know you believe in me too so let us show the nation that we are ready to offer our resources for development, and Suava is the first of more to come. Let us put our differences aside and work together to bring economic development to our doorstep and show others, especially in Malaita province and the nation for that matter that land disputes will get us nowhere. Only development can bring positive changes to our families, our communities, our villages, our constituencies, our provinces and our nation. With these remarks, thank very much and I resume my seat.

Sitting suspended for lunch break at 12.05pm

Sitting resumed at 1.32 pm

Mr MANASSEH MAELANGA (*East Malaita*): Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to contribute very briefly. Thank you for allowing me to make a few comments as we end this session of Parliament.

This meeting has been a fruitful meeting. First and foremost I want to register my thankfulness for the general participation of all Members in this Chamber; it has been a good one. There is genuine understanding and appropriate courtesy rendered to and by members in this Chamber and that I am glad.

We have been graced by the Speech from the Throne presented to this Parliament by His Excellency the Governor General. This is a very important occasion in which the Parliament is given a snapshot on what we will expect during the Parliament session. However, for this session, the Speech from the Throne seems to cover an ambitious full term of the government's plans. I understand that the Government really wants to take full opportunity available to disseminate its policies. However, I am of the opinion that it should only cover the expected business of the current session rather than stating projections far and wide.

We have also witnessed, debated and approved the People's Budget. We have also debated and passed the Fisheries Bill 2015. These are important matters that this House has deliberated upon. It is our legislative duties to do so.

My good people of East Malaita want to see new laws introduced into this House. I will again stress the need to have a comprehensive legislative calendar. We need to do institutional reforms to our legal support systems, specifically the Attorney General's Chambers, the legal drafting unit and the role of the Legal Draftsman. How can the Attorney General draft laws on one hand and vetted on the other. We can reform these areas and in turn experience a vibrant Parliament. To set out our priorities right we need to introduce laws that guide us and help us to govern this nation. **1.37**

We can work on laws that aim to tackle corruption at all levels in this country. We can introduce laws that would help put us leaders of this country to account. Laws must be able to hold us, hold offices and those who man them to account. Any

government must be cautious of these challenges. This time is the right time to do right things.

Allow me to comment briefly on the National Budget. First of all, we need to follow the guidelines set out when passing the Budget. We need to have the Public Accounts Committee Report well ahead of time. It is quite difficult to do a comprehensive analysis on a budget that is rushed into this House. Ample time is needed to do a better response to the budget – even possible amendments. As a country we must improve on our budgeting process. We must not be reluctant to improve and we must not follow past mistakes. Secondly, our national budget should be guided by stronger laws to help in its implementation phase. Budget management must be tightened to address unnecessary gaps and possible leakage to the budget. We have passed the Budget that should be able to address the policy directions of the DCC Government. Paramount to this is the major development programs of the government.

I am quite skeptical of the manner in which government programs are driven. I am wary as to the participation of government institutions in implementing these programs. Are we using government personnel to execute these programs or hired consultants? As much as possible, government officials should spearhead these programs for the very reasons that governments come and go.

In terms of the Recurrent Expenditure, I am glad to observe the manner in which the government plans to appreciate its implementation. It has bold stance on its revenue projection and management. It has stated clearly its debt management plans and that national debts are taken care of.

I have stated during the debate that this budget must be able to deliver the policies that the DCCG is very vocal about, and it should be able to do that. The budget is a solemn promise between the government and the people. It represents the trust between the government and the people. There must always be avoidance in the breakdown of trust. Failing to deliver will lead our people to lose confidence in the government of Solomon Islands. Public confidence is good for every healthy

democracy. It is not a commodity to be bought but it is something that must be gained. Therefore, any succeeding governments will be affected by decisions taken in the past. I am always careful about these and as much as possible strive to make government decisions that should not be a problem later on. Nevertheless, I am confident that the DCCG will deliver on its priority programs and that we should experience some form of progress. After all, any government programs are programs for the good of this nation and its people.

Passing the Fisheries Management Bill 2015 with amendments is an achievement by this Parliament. I want to thank everyone for your contribution to the Bill, and especially the hard working Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources for tabling the Bill. I would also like to thank the Attorney General for providing invaluable insights on this Bill. In stating the above, I would like to stress two important things that we must do. We must ensure we pass good laws, good laws that will secure economic benefits, social security and serve its purpose [1.42](#) to protect our people and enhance their daily activities.

Secondly, the government must enact regulations that support these laws. Without supporting subsidiary legislations, bills passed in Parliament can be very vague and abused. Our nation is a struggling one, hence we need all the resources available at this time to help build this nation. Good regulations are to ensure that correct framework is in place to meet the needs of these challenging and developing political systems. Good regulations make lives easy for all.

I must stress that the government must ensure proper regulations are in place. I fully support the sentiments shared by the Minister for Commerce that the system needs total overhaul and that appropriate regulations must be enacted. As if it is not heard loud and clear, the Member for Aoke/Langalanga had stressed time and time and again during the debate of the Fisheries Bill of the need to have regulations to clarify different parts of the Bill. In general, all other institutions in this democracy must work diligently to support directly or indirectly the work of the executive government.

In other words we need to support constructively the work of the government. This side of the House has been steadfast and has been very clear of its political intentions. I have raised my concern for support by the government to the work of the Office of the Independent Group, and I have noted the positive feedback by the Prime Minister rendered to this call. I would like to thank the Prime Minister for recognizing the need to support and resource both the offices of the Opposition and the Independent Group. Thank you Prime Minister, we will follow up accordingly on this matter.

The office intends to bring bills to Parliament as a parliamentary group or as an individual Member of Parliament. This will, of course, need support in the consultation stages and the parliamentary stages. We will develop a comprehensive plan on this proposal to be able to bring bills to Parliament.

I would also like to thank the Opposition Leader and the office for its ongoing good work. This is a mandated function to provide the ultimate watch on the business of the executive. Being a leader is not an easy task but I have observed that you have executed your duty well.

Before I conclude, I want to thank the ongoing services of our public officials - the administrators, the police, nurses and teachers. I would like to encourage our people to be innovative and add value to progress this nation. I understand that all public officers are very hardworking and faithful servants of the government. I encourage all of us to work together and build this nation in whatever you are doing.

To conclude, I would like to comment on the role of the Independent Group in Parliament. I would like to briefly look at the role of the Independent Office for the benefit of this House and the ordinary people of this country who have very little idea on the work of this office. The office is established under the National Constitution of this country. Earlier today, my good friend and Member for North East Guadalcanal and also Minister for Education & Human Resources stated that in the past he observed that the Independent Group is more inclined to support the

Opposition than the government. That position has changed over my leadership. I am more inclined however to support or disagree on matters of public policy and not necessarily on political interest. Of course, the Independent Group in parliament is a political group, hence we have **1.47** direct interest on how the government is run and on the basis it is driven upon. However, we will render support where it is due. Thus, as a responsible government institution, the independent office will observe the progress of both the Government and the Opposition. We will support the Opposition when it is necessary and we will support the government the same. Our fundamental interest is to have the right political environment in which government business can be executed in a fair and transparent manner. This means that the government must be responsible on how it runs its affairs. I understand the official Opposition will always see to that. When the Opposition does not raise matters that we think are important, then we will do so accordingly.

On the other hand, there are a few things that are up and above politics and there are a few things that do not need unnecessary political paranoia and there are other things that we could take a bipartisan approach on. The office of the Independent Group is open to this opportunity. If the government wishes to take a bipartisan approach on national matters, matters that warrant such an approach then we are ready to render willingness. The paradigm in which we operate within is quite fluid and can be adjusted when needed.

In terms of the work of the office, and I believe former Independent Leaders will agree with me, the office does not have supporting laws or regulations to support its work. Therefore, one thing we could do is to have a bill introduced into Parliament to clarify the work of the Independent Office. To date, we have a direct reference to the provisions of the Constitution. I truly believe that we should have a more elaborate law that outlines the scope and the manner in which this office does its business, how this office relates to other offices and so forth.

I understand that our fundamental role is to give proper oversight to both the executive and the opposition through parliamentary democracy. I only hope it can

be expanded to provide the appropriate platform for constructive politics to prevail. For the time being, I only hope and pray that with the right support, I will execute this constitutional function accordingly.

To the people of East Malaita, we must continue to build our constituency. We must continue to be good and productive citizens of this nation. We must work hard to help develop this nation. We must strive to be that beacon of progress and success. This is our creed at this time as we together with other brothers and sisters of this nation work hard towards a prosperous nation Solomon Islands. With these few remarks, once again I would like to thank the honourable Prime Minister for moving this Sine Die Motion so that Members can share things they would like to share in this House. I support the motion.

Hon JOHN DEAN KUKU (*Minister for Public Service*): I rise to contribute to the motion moved by the honourable Prime Minister 'that at the adjournment of Parliament on Wednesday 29th April 2015, the present meeting shall be concluded and Parliament shall then stand adjourn Sine Die'.

I have a few brief remarks to make and observations to report 1.52 in passing. Firstly, I join the Leader of the Independent Group to say that this meeting has been a very fruitful one, especially for those of who come into this House for the first time. It is fruitful because those who have been here in the past have been a model for us. Had they not been, we would have learnt very little. I thank them for showing us how we should behave and how we should discuss matters of national interest in this very honorable House.

For weeks and months, newspapers across the country have always reported crimes committed against women, girls, children as well as men. Families are the cornerstone of our society. Their livelihoods and security must be supported, strengthened and protected. The National Parliament of Solomon Islands has no higher obligation than to protect and provide the personal safety of our citizens. It is our collective responsibility that we must not fail.

Children must be safeguarded from sex offenders. Law enforcement officials, courts and victims must be given the legal tools they need to fight criminal. Violence against women and girls must not only be condemned but given severe penalty. Rape must have the maximum penalty the law of the land can offer. Our law abiding citizens should be placed above criminals. Let us not turn a blind eye to these evils.

We must be more determined now than before to provide ordinary Solomon Islanders with better access to justice and legal services. People living in isolated parts of Solomon Islands should be able to have access to legal assistance and support and access to the courts without having to travel to major centres. Justice should be the basic right of every Solomon Islander, and not just a luxury for those who can afford it. We cannot talk about the rule of law if the weak, the vulnerable and the poor do not have access to the justice system.

Judiciary is an important arm of the government. The judiciary helps the executive arm and the legislative arm of the government to consider how we achieve law and order, safety of our children and the environment. The voices of our judicial officers are respected and accepted even beyond our shores. They help in giving us new insights and directions. They help us to resolve questions that upheld the right of our future generations. Let us be honestly mindful and considerate in the nature of the work, the measure of their responsibility and their duty of care. My ministry stands ready to assist.

We need to revisit our business environment to address deficiencies that have denied indigenous Solomon Islanders their right to be active partners in the economic and social development of Solomon Islands. Business activities reserved for Solomon Islanders reserved for Solomon Islanders must be for Solomon Islanders. It is their right so why should we take it out from them? It is time we return this right back to them.

It is also time that we consider provinces to hold licenses in the fisheries sector, and not foreign individuals or groupings. This also applies to the marketing

of marine resources like the sea cucumber. Let us provide them the opportunity to participate with us. 1.57 Likewise, time has been long overdue for indigenous Solomon Islanders who own the resources to hold felling license in the logging industries. Foreign operators should only be contractors, not license holders. Let us think more differently now. Let us empower our people in the utilization and management of their resources. In this way, resource owners can be able to control and manage the harvesting of their resources and identify ways to manage and conserve their environment.

At this juncture, to our friends from abroad who have decided to make or have Solomon Islands as their home, let me say this. Citizenship should not be simply a passport of convenience or a change to plunder the riches of the happy isles. Citizenship is a pledge of shared responsibility and a shared commitment to the beliefs, aspirations and values rooted in the history of our various cultural groupings that make Solomon Islands a nation state. I ask that you help develop Solomon Islands with honesty and in all fairness.

On July 7 this year, we will celebrate the 37th anniversary of our political independence. The 50th anniversary is 14 years away. At the end of the 10th Parliament we will have 10 years to approach this wonderful and historical milestone. What had we as the people's representatives of the past prepared and what will we as the people's representative of the present prepare for this historical occasion? On 7 July 1978, celebrations were held at the Lawson Tama sports ground. Will it be held on the same sports ground after 50 years? We have 14 years more to answer this question.

It is only in Parliament that we see both the executive and the legislature together. It is therefore fitting that I present before the House the constituency of North New Georgia. My people are passive recipients but active participants in implementing government programs. We had taken on board a number of government programs only to be failed by the same programs. Reforestation, oil palm development, only to name two, but we have the heart for this country. In a

six-year period from 2009 to 2014 under the North New Georgia Timber Corporation, my people and my constituency of North New Georgia had contributed a total sum of \$102,625,046 to the Solomon Islands Government from our timber resources alone. You can calculate for yourselves how much my people have given the government since 1984. This is 40 years now.

The North New Georgia Constituency has super abundance of supply to spare. I can only ask this honourable house that you give consideration to my people and constituency of North New Georgia. I am very grateful that the Prime Minister had confirmed my observation on the role of the parliamentary opposition and the independent group. I shared with the honourable Leader of the Independent Group informally the determination from the opposite benches to analyze issues thoroughly in order to make things happen accordingly. This to me is a sign of mature political leadership. I thank the Leader of the Opposition and the Independent Group and their members for this art of statesmanship.

The Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and 2.02 the Bills and Legislation Committee and their committee members have executed their responsibilities very constructively. I thank them for the job well done. The Clerk to Parliament and his staff have also done an excellent work in ensuring the business of the House and personal matters of Members of Parliament are addressed effectively and promptly. They too deserve my words of thanks. Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you sincerely for your resilience and perseverance in conducting the business of this House. Your work as well as your leadership is commended. In your absence Sir, the deputy Speaker did not fail the office of the Speaker. In fact, he added flavour and rigour to the deliberations of the business of the House, and for that he receives my admiration and commendation.

This National Parliament is privileged to win the trust and goodwill of the people of this nation, hence it is only honourable that we seek to re-earn the trust day by day as we deliberate and deliver the goods and services to our people during this 10th Parliament. I now humbly join the Honourable Prime Minister that at the

adjournment of Parliament on Wednesday 29th April 2015, the present meeting shall be concluded and Parliament shall then stand adjourned sine die. I support the motion.

Hon BARTHOLOMEW PARAPOLO (*Minister for Culture and Tourism*): Before I make my contribution, as the Minister for Culture and Tourism, let me acknowledge the traditional landowners of this land, whom this Parliament is built upon and who have given us permission to be on this land. Let me also acknowledge the traditional leaders of our beloved nation Solomon Islands who have been pillars of strength to our people from the past, the present and into the future.

As we know, our nation comprises of three pillars - our culture, our church and the government. I would also like to thank you Speaker for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this motion moved by the Honourable Prime Minister. It is a fitting occasion for me to make this contribution on behalf of my ministry and also on behalf of my humble people of Ngella Constituency.

As we come to the end of this Parliament meeting, let me firstly convey my most respect and appreciation to the Governor General of Solomon Islands who has for the first time of this meeting, deliver his Speech from the Throne. The Speech has set the tone of government priorities and especially for the deliberation we just have had on the 2015 Budget. I would also like to thank the Prime Minister and the Minister for Finance & Treasury for their **2.07** leadership in taking through the budget for our deliberation to be passed on the floor of this House. This is a reflection of their hard work and commitment to the people of this nation.

The 2015 Budget is a testimony of a new dawn for Solomon Islands. It is a chapter written by the DCC Government to take Solomon Islands into a renewed future. I have been observing the deliberations and it shows to me that we as leaders of this nation have been very concerned about the welfare of our people. We have not fully utilized our resources for the benefit of our people and hence our development process has been slow. The 2015 People's Budget has been well

articulated to ensure our rural people get the benefits they pursue all the time. It is written to reflect the needs of our people on areas which were shown are addressed most.

We know that addressing our people's needs and the economic development of our country is not easy. We may have great plans and policies but if we do not resource them well, we still remain on square one. I am pleased to say that for the first time in our history, the tourism sector was given high priority by the DCC Government. We have been a beacon of hope for our country as the opportunity in this sector is so high so let us hold hands together to build it. It is a partnership that should provide a bright future for our people. I am so happy that during the discussions on my sector, I see both sides of the House being very supportive. This is the kind of partnership we should all have.

On this note let me thank the Honourable Prime Minister and the DCC Government, the Leader of Opposition, the Leader of Independent and the Chairman of Public Accounts Committee and even the Member of Parliament for Aoke/Langalanga and all Members of this House for your great support to the development of tourism this country. Tourism is everybody's business so we must work together now to build the best platform for future endeavour and to ensure Solomon Islands is a destination for visitors.

In the first quarter of this year we have received nine cruise ships where we have had good responses from the public who were selling their products. We are now looking forward to more ships this year; we are looking at not less than 30 ships this year. We will continue [2.12](#) to work hard to see our people benefit from the investments we have given to the tourism sector. Let us see this as an investment and not as money that will be wasted. I can assure this House that the return on tourism will be huge in terms of our economic development.

I would like to add the voice of the good people of Ngella in this Honourable House. As the representative of my people, let me also thank this House for passing the 2015 People's Budget that focuses on our rural people. Ngella is just a distance

away from the capital and the people have been very humbled but have the potential to trigger a greater economic contribution in here. We are grateful that the robust policies of the DCC Government through its 2015 Budget will address the needs of my people, especially to improve their livelihood.

Addressing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the National Development Plans is a collective effort by all of us in this House. In fact the DCCG policy has taken into consideration the historical approach towards addressing these important goals. And it is up to us leaders to get the developments down to our rural people. I must say here that the good people of Ngella are hardworking people and if given the chance, they too can contribute significantly to the development of our country.

It would be remiss of me not to thank our development partners for their involvement in our nation building. I would like to thank them through the 2015 budgetary provisions for the respective areas they will be assisting us on. It must be a partnership built on trust, respect and understanding and must be a partnership that Solomon Islands must take the lead and ownership of.

I would also like to thank the Honourable Prime Minister and the DCC Government for bringing a new sense of hope to our beloved Solomon Islands. It is a dawn of hope that is important for nation building as it creates partnership with respect and responsibility. Let us be responsible leaders for our people. Have all our differences put aside and join hands to build our beloved Solomon Islands. For me as the Minister for Culture and Tourism and Member of Parliament for Ngella, I must say I am a proud Solomon Islander despite of the differences of opinion we have. All I want is for our people [2.17](#) of this nation to develop our country for the betterment of our future generation.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to thank you for your strong leadership throughout our parliament meeting. You have demonstrated great leadership qualities, and I must thank you for that. Let me also thank your officials who have

worked very hard, even at odd hours to ensure that we have a smooth parliament meeting.

Finally, I would like to thank the people of this nation whom we were called to represent in this House. Let us be proud of our nation Solomon Islands and embrace the spirit of tolerance, forgiveness and unity. We are a nation blessed by God so let us join hands to fight against the spirit of evil who comes to destroy. No man is an island. We want to take our nation forward. God bless Solomon Islands. With those few remarks I support the motion.

Hon WILLIAM MARAU (*Minister for Commerce, Industries, Labour & Immigration*): I would also like to thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion of Sine Die giving us the opportunity to share our ideas and thoughts regarding the business of government. As we come towards the end of our first meeting, I would like to reflect on the stages of the whole parliamentary session that we have come through.

First of all, I would like to thank the Governor General for delivering the Speech from the Throne. That is the first business of this meeting when we starting this meeting a few weeks back. I would also like to thank the Prime Minister for tabling that Speech for our debate to thank his Excellency. I also thank the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the Clerk for overseeing the whole process of debate and discussions during the Speech from the Throne.

In terms of the Budget Speech, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Finance Minister for preparing and tabling it in Parliament. I also thank the Chairman of the PAC for scrutiny of the Budget. I would also like to thank the Minister for Fisheries for preparing the Fisheries Bill and tabling it on the floor of Parliament. 2.22 I also thank the Bills & Legislation Committee for scrutinizing the Bill before it was brought to the floor of Parliament. I also thank the Legal Draftsman and the Attorney General for the legal advices rendered during discussions of the Fisheries Bill. Now that we are discussing the Sine Die Motion, once again I want to thank the Prime Minister for giving us the chance to contribute

more to some of the important issues that we have already discussed during this meeting.

I will be very brief. Firstly, now that we have passed the budget, which is one of the very important things that this Parliament would like to see through, I would like to thank everybody for supporting the budget, especially the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Independent and all Members of Parliament for not only supporting the Bill but also for playing your important role of scrutinizing the Bill before it was passed on the floor of Parliament because that is one of our very important role as legislators. Now that the budget is passed, as we all know it is the tool we have been waiting for, we can now start working, we can now start implementing the programs and developments plans we have as a government. I would like to thank the Opposition and the Independent groups for playing a very important part in contributing towards the passage of this Budget. I would also like to thank Parliament for passing the Budget because it means a lot to the work programs and development priorities that my ministry will be embarking on this year. Without the budget my ministry will not be able to implement some of the programs we are planning for this year. I would like to thank Parliament for approving \$46million as allocation for my ministry. This is a composition of \$34million for the recurrent and \$12million for the development budget.

My ministry will continue to prioritize some of the important areas, and one of this very important priority my ministry will embark on is capacity building. This is to ensure we are capacitated and fully equipped with the human resource and materials we need to ensure our work programs and tasks for this year are achieved and effectively implemented. We will also be focusing more on the EGC and Industrial Parks as one of our development priorities. My ministry will ensure that the necessary resources are made available so that we kickstart some of these programs and complete some which are already in the pipeline.

On private sector growth, the ministry will be looking at encouraging and supporting the private sector to grow and in that sense we will also be looking at

revitalizing CEMA as part of strategic actions to ensure the private sector is given the necessary support.

In terms of foreign investment, which is also part of the ministry's priority for this year, it will continue to ensure we have the necessary investors to come and provide us the necessary employment as part of our move towards encouraging employment and trying to meet the UN Development targets.

Earlier on the Leader of Opposition raised a very important point on Solomon Islands still being a LDC, and that is a very sad story. My ministry and other productive sectors will work towards doing something to meet those UN standards, and one of them is employment. This is to create opportunities for employment by bringing investors over. If we can go back to the UN indicators of least developed countries, one of them is the low human development index and the other is the high dependency on foreign aid. But I would like to touch a little bit on 2.27 the low human development index. When we talk about low human development index, we are referring to factors or areas categorized under three levels. The first one is intellectual or the mental factor, the other one is the social factor and the third is the economical side of it. When we are talking about intellectual and mental side, we are referring to the level of education. I heard earlier on the Minister of Education mentioned something about the increase of illiteracy rate last year. We need to do more in order to meet the standard set by the United Nations and so we will continue to work hard.

In terms of social, I think we still have problems here. When we talk about social we are talking about things like health, employment, housing, transport, communication etc, and these are the things that we still need to work on to ensure there are some improvements to these things to at least meet the criteria set by the UN standard. We also have the economical side of it, and that is where we are also looking at the unemployment rate. As most of us are aware, the majority of employees in the country are low income earners hence one of the reasons why we are still referred to as a least developed country. The other one is the low purchasing

power because we are low income earners. We have also experienced that it is common that we have the problem of affordability in meeting basic services. These are the issues when we are talking about UN indicators of least developed countries, at least we have a fair idea of the issues they are looking at so that we can be able to come up with solutions to address the problems.

Also, as part of an effort to ensure that we bring reforms to our nation, there is the need to review our acts, our present regulations and government policies. I am very encouraged that the DCC Government is driving at reforms and it is very important that the ministry takes a holistic view. We need a total system overhaul. A point in case is the Fisheries Bill, which we have just passed. That is what I meant. We need to have bills come onto the floor of Parliament to address some of the very critical issues we are currently facing. I know that most of our past acts are out of date and need to be reviewed and amended to address the current problems we are facing now. And so I am very encouraged that a first bill has already had the endorsement of this honorable House - the Fisheries Bill. It is very important that this Bill is passed because it will not only address current situations but it is part of addressing our livelihoods. 2.30.38

I would like to make some comments on the Fisheries Bill, we have heard and seen on the media that we have being given yellow card by the EU for not meeting some of the requirements that they imposed on the countries which usually export fish to the EU and because of that we have being given a yellow card. This fishery bill is very important and it is been passed to ensure that we come up with the right measure that our market to the EU is not banned from us. It is important to note here that with our current arrangement with the EU, some of the benefits are this. First, our main exporter to EU is SOL TUNA and NFD, these two companies together they employed about 2500 workers and annually they generate about \$400million export earnings and out from that \$400million, \$65million is paid to the government as Tax. 2.32 That is why this is very important that we cannot afford to lose our market access with the UN. Otherwise if we are given the red card then we will lose

out hugely in terms of export earning and also in terms of employment of our own people. It is very important so these are the kind of activity and problems that we need to bring into this Parliament. Bring more bills over to ensure that we bring or rectify some of the acts to ensure that we address the current situations that we are facing now. As part of some of those activities I also would like highlight here just another reform that will be coming over soon and that is land reform. And I am feeling very encourage that very soon will be having another land reform bill coming over for us to debate on. Also the political integrity bill I understand that it will come later on. To ensure that some of the lope holes that is still in the bill can be patch up to ensure that we have political stability in this country in the years to come.

The next thing that I would like to talk about is on good governance, the success of our program the current program of the government. The success of it relies much on good governance and the engine on good governance is the parliament. I would like to thank the UNDP Strengthening program towards the parliament and today I am glad that some of the services that we receive in parliament is due to that program. So I would also take this time to thank the UNDP Strengthening program towards the parliament.

Also I would like to reiterate here that the parliament needs to strengthen through human resources and also through technical equipments, so that their work can be strengthened. And also the other institutions such as the ombudsman and the leadership code commission must also be strengthened. And also the opposition group and independent group must also be strengthened and also they must do their work effectively. Otherwise we won't see any good governance in this honourable parliament house or in the running of the government. Because it is the work of the parliament to scrutinize the activity of the government and ensure that they implement their policies well. And to ensure that there is public participation in decision making and those are some of the indicators of government going in the right direction to promote good governance. So I would like to say here that the role

of parliament is also very important in the running of this country, through playing a watch dog role.

The next thing I would like to share is this and this is just a recommendation or an idea or suggestion. If we can relook into the Electoral Commission Act and perhaps come up with an idea of re-adjusting the date for elections after every four years. As we have already experienced the timing is not in our favour, so I am just suggesting if the Electoral Commission Act can be reviewed so that a new date for election can be look into. To make it earlier so that we don't overlap to the other year, that is just a suggestion if we can look into that in the future.

I would like to take this time to acknowledge our international donors and partners who have assisted us in our budget. Especially in our budget support and also in the developments budget, so I would also like to take this opportunity to thank them for their continuous assistance towards our budget, to ensure that the implementation of programs can be done.

I would also like to raise some issues concerning my constituency, this is just in relation to the Island of Ugi, in our constituency we have two Islands. One is Ulawa and one is Ugi. Ugi at the moment is without road and without wharf and I am glad that in the government's development priorities for this. The road and wharf for Ugi were included in the development priorities and I would like to thank the government for that. One of the issues as well is shipping, 2.37..I was told that islands like Ulawa and Ugi does not need a ship, as their route is uneconomical but for the record I want to say that there is no uneconomical route in the Solomon Islands. This is because we have a lot of resources out there that are just staying idle and they are just idle because the government is not doing anything to make them productive and that is the issue here. So it is up to the government, if we want to convert the uneconomical route to the one that is economical then we need to do that and we cannot blame or victimise our rural people by not buying a ship for them.

Finally this is just a message to the teachers, especially to the schools that I have sent my students to do their studies. I have received warning from the

respective schools to pay up their school fees but I want to say now if they are listening in that I will pay their fees as the budget is now passed and I will make the payments through the various schools bank accounts. I think that is all I want to discuss and contribute to this motion.

Hon DUDDLEY KOPU (*Minister for Provincial Government & Institutional Strengthening*): I would like to briefly contribute to the Sine Die motion that has been moved by the Honourable Prime Minister, the theme of my contribution is on isolation and it will be brief. First of all, I just want to thank the DCC government for bringing those two bills that we have just passed in the House and besides, I want to thank the development partners both regional and global for their financial help in those two bills.

We are now turning 37th year old this year since gaining independence and since then we have very unique features; an island nation with scattered islands, different languages, races, cultural diversities and very simple lifestyles. Since independence 85 per cent of the population lived in the rural areas and dependent on rural subsistence. What make Solomon Islands special is that our independence was given to us without strife or die for it, so as the name Solomon Islands. Our existence and presence as an independent nation should be felt among the league of nations we share common goals, face common challenges and seeking common solutions. **2.42** In our time and age, policies of isolation should not be welcome e but as an independent nation we should commend our resources for the good of mankind.

The Budget 2015 was the 37th budget which I had the opportunity to be involved in and is a historical one. It was tabled, debated and went through the scrutiny process and finally passed. The budget, I believe, should awake the conscience of the 85percent of the rural population to participate in the political, socio economic infrastructure development of this country. If there be a time the government needs you, it is this time.

To the light of our society, we should not create a social class that discriminates or labels fellow Solomon Islanders as others as if they are aliens of other planets. Instead we should be fair and be humble to identify the marginalized and vulnerable constituencies by our own making policies, rules and regulations. Let me illustrate it this way. If a student comes from a poor background but scores high in his exam for scholarship, give it to him/her. If a worker deserves promotion, please do not deprive him/her but promote him/her according to what she/he deserves through his/her hard work. If anyone seeks equity, listen to him, only then would the budget be a meaningful one. Those who do not respond choose to ignore and practice unfairness, isolate themselves and their organization. Remember isolation is a cowardice act.

I would like to acknowledge the good work of our development partners for their continuous assistance. Thank you very much for your good work. To our bilateral and multilateral partners and NGOs, my office is an open sky policy for you to come and discuss any matters that will improve the provinces and the provincial governments where 85% of the population with 90% of their resources lives. I would like to make special thanks to the European Union, the UNDP and the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands for funding and implementations of the PGSP.

I reaffirm my government's support for Phase 2 of the PGSP for the next five years that will be addressing some of the key issues still facing the provinces and its people. We need to be reminded lest we forget that since independence we are part of this global family. We have our regional and global friends. We share common interests, common problems and seeking common solutions as we live in one world.

We must honour the stroke of our pen. We have signed into charters, a party to conventions and participated in the global realms. Have we lived up to the standards and practices of those institutions and organizations? Solomon Islands is a state nation and must take an active role and commitment. How long shall we be bystanders or at the receiving end?

Vanuatu was stricken by cyclone, people of Australia have lost millions of dollars from properties 2.47 damaged from cyclones, do not forget our turn will come. Where is our commitment to our friends? Remember that lack of responsiveness and choosing to ignore is isolation and is cowardice. We must build this country up to be able to participate in helping our regional friends.

Let us also look at institutions that we are members of. Solomon Islands is among the 183 member states of International Civil Aviation, a UN specialized agency is the Global Forum for Civil Aviation. It works to achieve its vision of safety, secure and sustainable development of civil aviation through cooperation amongst its member states. The objectives include safety, security, environmental protection, efficiency, continuity and the rule of law. This is what is expected of its member countries and that is to develop its infrastructures to meet these objectives. As a member state we are obliged to develop our airport to meet the required objectives. Failure to comply will isolate us from the rest of the 162 member states, thus isolation is cowardice. We will be cut off from the rest of the 162 member states and this will affect our economy.

Another area crucially important is the marine sector. We are a maritime state and therefore we are a global maritime community. We are a member of the Regional Maritime Association which other associations relate to. The objectives of this sector include promoting a safe, secure, clean and sustainable maritime sector throughout the country. This area guides ships' safe travelling from international waters to our waters. All infrastructures in this sector must be maintained and sustained. Failure to comply will isolate Solomon Islands from the rest of the Association, thus isolation is cowardice.

Solomon Islands is a member of the Pacific Maritime Transport Alliance, which Ports Authority is a member. It is a regional group that promotes regional cooperation, friendship and understanding between ports and port users. Through the Association there is exchange of knowledge. It promotes measures to increase efficiency and safety. Non-compliance will affect the country's economy and

delivery of service. We have to develop as a regional partner. Inefficiency and lack of regional cooperation will isolate us.

There are many other institutions and organizations, but because of time constraint I will not make mention of them. I encourage us to honor our affiliation to these governments, institutions and organizations that we are signatories to and play our part actively. Stick to our commitments efficiently and comply. Bystanders can isolate us from the rest of the world.

Finally, there are new challenges that our nation will face as we go into the 21st century that will rock the very fabrics of our society. It will hit us on every side morally, mentally, socially and environmentally. The issue of climate change, population increase, 2.52 gay and international prostitution, food security, mass migration, unemployment and child labor, terrorism and many more.

Why am I bringing these to this honourable House? This is where allegiance is going to be tested. I have made myself very clear that there are no bystanders and no isolation but we have to develop our nation to be politically, socially, economically and infrastructurally strong to withstand external and internal forces. Some of these need global solutions while others internally. Being visionary will ease our way forward for isolation is cowardice.

In conclusion, as a nation we should not politicize isolation but we are one global family working with our development partners to achieve our objectives. Refusing invitations undermine the provincial governments and people. We should honour our global and regional affiliations because they are important both economically and socially and new challenges facing us depend much on our global participation and commitment.

In Solomon Islands there are no cowards but braveries. The motive of the motion is clear. With these few remarks I support the motion and resume my seat. God bless Solomon Islands and its people.

Mr DICKSON MUA (*Savo/Russells*): Indeed, I thank you for this opportunity to take the floor of this Honourable House to contribute briefly to the Sine Die motion moved by the Honourable Prime Minister on Friday 24th April 2015. I concur with the Honourable Prime Minister on this motion as stipulated provision on Standing Order 83 that this motion must be accorded with the expressed provision of Standing Order 84. I do understand that Parliament has five main functions. Representation is the one out of the five at this very time, and I stand on behalf of my good people Savo/Russell constituency to be their voice.

Allow me to share some of my brief reflection as I will try as much as possible to confine myself to the substance of this Sine Die Motion. During this meeting, especially in passing the Budget, as I listened to my colleague Members of Parliament who are so lively and excited in their debates regarding the welfare business of our people in this Honourable Chamber, I can note the same tune singing in debating the 2015 Appropriation Bill 2015 that the DCC Government will deliver. Of course, the key phrase as the main subject of the 2015 Appropriation Act 2015 "is to deliver", 2.57 and you can underline that word.

The Democratic Coalition for Change Government outlines some of the key priorities in its policy statement and policy strategies and translations respectively. I know some sentiments have been raised in respect of government policy try as much of a balance taught by both sides of the House. What has become part and form of the government agenda in a policy is for right actions that I believe will be the productive force to drive the change for our beloved nation Solomon Islands. The hope we would like to see through this change based on the people and improving their livelihoods, as my good Minister of Finance & Treasury alluded to in his 2015 Budget Speech. On the same note, I am afraid otherwise of a productive drive to change and an unethical point of view I am more than aware that it happens globally that some right actions are not productive for the greatest comfort of the population. I say this because of the experience we have gone through in the downfall of the Russell Islands Plantations Estate Limited (RIPEL).

The effects of the downfall of the plantation estate limited really affects my constituency in their daily livelihoods but when you speak in volumes in the right actions, we as leaders are probably not making the right choices in sustaining the issue at hand during that time. I reckon that things have gone down that way due to RIPEL management having its own interest causing reduction in happiness and increase harm to my good people of Russell Islands and our nation as a whole. Employment has been affected, services poorly performed and instability of our country's economy are protested.

Being the development of the day during that time, not compromised with issues, and I am not pointing at anyone and who to blame, but we must realize the fact that we talk so much about livelihood, common good and service delivery in our term as the government of the day and leaders to serve our people. We must consider our rural people and even those in the urban centres who are going through many experiences of pain and suffering.

My humble view is that the DCC Government takes notice of these and creates a better economic environment in that a consensus of political will for the greater comfort of the population of Solomon Islands. Although my comfort to the issues the DCCG has taken onboard to facilitate the acquisition of the Russell Islands Plantation Estate Limited, this is one among top agenda in the productive sector that has long established the drive our country's economy in the history of our beloved nation Solomon Islands. I do understand the DCCG is taking this as one of its high priorities – solving the RIPEL saga, and I applaud the DCCG for this.

On the Fisheries Management Bill 2015 tabled by the hard working Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources, I did not have the chance to debate the Bill in its second reading as I understand we were given limited time. 3.02 So at this juncture I wish to make some of my observations that the Bill is taking on in trying to address for the common good of our nation in partnership with other important stakeholders. The Bill is already passed and I believe it is going through its normal process for assent which means Clause 1 of the Bill is that the Act may be cited as the

Fisheries Management Act 2015 and commences on the date appointed by the Minister by notice published in the gazette. I hope the Minister's discretion under clause 1 of the Act will not be prolonged to appoint such a date when the Fisheries Management Act will fully come into operations.

Why do we need the Fisheries Management Act? One would think of many facets and raise some critical criticisms. Fish and fisheries are an integral part of most societies and make important contribution to the economic, social health and wellbeing of many countries and areas. It is a global issue and it is no exception for Solomon Islands. As leaders we need to make the right judgment, and I concur with the intention of the Bill that it will bring millions of revenue through improved fisheries management system.

Fisheries is a big industry on its own and that I will not argue with the Government's policy intentions. My view is that regulating the core management of this economical industry is very important to see grey areas for improvement, and this rests upon the Minister for Fisheries and his hard working team of experts and must not be referred to without distinction as the 'fisheries management authority'. The term 'fisheries management' is used probably in the Act to describe that legal entity which has been designated by the state as having the mandate to perform specific fisheries management function.

As alluded to earlier in my speech, I am representing my good people of Savo/Russells to be their voice hence mandated to debate in this honourable chamber. Having said this, the DCCG's plan to focus more on development projects is welcome news. In the past, millions of funds have being spent in the rural areas but failed to satisfy constituents, especially in my constituency. By implementing development projects, I am sure our rural people will be satisfied as being participants themselves rather than waiting for handouts by their MPs. In identifying development projects for my constituency that I am now moving forward with, we are going to start with ice making machine, virgin coconut oil milling and downstream processing with our 2015 funds.

As one would like give credit to many in acknowledging who are engaged to support our good governance, especially to ensure we perform our role as a mandated government of the day. Mandate oversight role of the Office of the Opposition and the balance view role of the Office of the Leader of Independent group in Parliament respectively. I thank you all for that. I wish to join my colleagues who have spoken before me to thank our good office and that of the Clerk for your new appointment to that office, also parliamentary staffs for their professional support and yourself Mr Speaker and your Deputy Speaker for all the work you have done in making sure Parliament procedurally deals with its core business of the House. 3.07 Although that is government business but when it comes through and before the floor of Parliament, it is subject to your ruling to consider such business in Parliament.

At this point before I take my seat, I would like to sincerely thank my good people of Savo/Russells for their patience and tolerance in understanding the delay of funds for this year 2015. I wish to remind my good people that those few houses that are yet to receive solar lightings, probably less than 50, they will come soon and also more to come. I will take on the words of the DCCG, and that is 'we will deliver to our people'. I support the motion and I resume my seat.

Mr CHRIS LAORE (Shortlands): Thank you for allowing me on behalf of my people to contribute to the motion of the Sine Die moved by the Honourable Prime Minister on the 24th April 2015. The motion of Sine die is a traditional motion to mark the end of a meeting of parliament, and in this case the 2nd meeting of the 10th Parliament.

This meeting we have a total of 18 days of meeting and during those 18 days we have passed three motions and two bills. The motions are the Speech from the Throne, and the expression of our gratitude to UNDP and the Sine Die Motion. The two bills are the 2015 Appropriation 2015 Bill - the Budget and the Fisheries Management Act 2015, and I thank the government for these. Within 18 days we have gone through three motions and two bills.

Allow me, as part of my introduction to quote the first sentence of the vision of the DCC Government in its policy statement. It states, "With the grace of God, the DCC Government humbly pledges to empower all Solomon Islanders to attain a meaningful quality of life through social and economic reforms". My approach to this motion will not be judgmental nor rebutting any one's rhetoric on this floor of Parliament or trying to be a warrior of good governance on legislations that have gone through this House in this second meeting. I am not here for political point scoring but I am here to debate things affecting my constituency. I say this with due respect, Mr Speaker, in that every time we go through bills clause by clause, the question you normally ask is, "does anyone wishes to make a comment" and so I am commenting on your verbal command now. But sometimes you would say 'do not make a comment but just ask the question'. And so today I will not make any additional comment but to follow what the Prime Minister has said.

Allow me as part of my debate to share my views on things which I think the government will look into or can support. Before delving into the gist of my debate, listening to the mover, personally I concur with the Prime Minister when moving this motion. Therefore, I will refrain from debating along those same lines, nor counter what have been said, because in doing so I will be repeating myself. Rather the approach of my debate will be mainly to try 3.12 and remind myself of my key primary role as an elected Member of Parliament. In other words, as a Member of Parliament of what actually is my duty.

As a second term in this House representing my people of Shortlands, I have experienced a lot during my tenure as an elected leader for Shortlands coming in through a bye-election and also coming back again to this current House. I was also a minister of Her Majesty's Government in the last House and currently a member of the Independent Group.

My constituency was fortunate to be a recipient of the Parliamentary Civic Group in 2013. Having this group come to my constituency was also a learning experience for me too. What I have come to experienced is that first and most my

role as a Member of Parliament is to represent those who elected me. In this case, I represent the women, children, men and all the ethnic and tribal groupings constituting Shortlands. Whether they are indigenous or settlers, in my capacity as their MP, I equally represent all of them. On the same token, let me thank them for their confidence in me thus giving me this tenure again to represent them in this House. That is why when it comes to my debate, not only that I talk about issues of national interest but also issues pertaining to my people of Shortlands. At this juncture, when fellow colleagues through their debates allude to some of our approaches as being narrow, I am very sad because what I am doing is fulfilling my role in representing the people who mandated me to this House.

A specific point to note is what I infer during the Fisheries Management Act 2015 debate in that when some of my people who might not have the privilege of having indigenous rights are overlooked in this piece of legislation. This really concerns me. Now it still concerns me because even in the committee stage, the explanation by the Minister and the Attorney General far flung the assurance given in the winding down of the second reading, and "I quote "if they are within the EEZ then this bill belongs to them". I listened during the committee stage and the reality and the practicality of such an assurance by the Ministry is that of uncertainty. What I can concur as the solution to having the right to natural resources by naturalized Solomon Islanders is first to amend the relevant sections of the Constitution or intermarriage.

Personally, as someone whom a good portion of my constituents are naturalized Solomon Islanders, I felt disheartened merely for this reason. And allow me again to quote from His Holiness Pope John Paul VI's Encyclical letter 'Populorum Progressio on the Development of the people and I quote in paragraph 18, "A man's personal and collective fulfillment could be jeopardized if proper scale of values were not maintained. The pursuit of life's necessity is quite legitimate hence we are dutybound to do the work which enables us to obtain them". Allow me further to quote another paragraph of the same encyclical on paragraph 21,

which says *“What are truly human conditions? The rise from poverty to the acquisition of life’s necessities; the elimination of social ills’; broadening of the horizon of knowledge; acquiring, refinement and culture. From there one can go on to acquire a growing awareness of other people’s dignity, 3.17 a taste for the spirit of poverty, an active interest in the common good and a desire for peace. Then man can acknowledge the highest value and God himself, their author and end”*. End of quote

My humble question to this honourable floor in this regard on behalf of my constituency is, were decisions made on this honourable floor represents the interest of our people for the common good? And is it guided by the grace of God as envisaged in the vision of our Executive Government? I let the actions of men and a woman in the form of the DCC Government and ask Members of Parliament to be the answer to that.

I believe, whether I am on this side or the other side of the this Honourable House, we are dutybound by providing oversight to any piece of legislation that is presented on this honourable floor, and therefore it is incumbent of me to be responsible in debating. Failure to debate regardless of my natural temperament is a mortal legislative sin, in the capacity of me being an MP. Thus whether we are a part of an Executive Government or being an independent member or a member of the Opposition, we are of the same and equal importance but differing in our duties.

In that, it is ensuring that we oversee what belongs to the people of this country and that we make informed decisions and implement laws that benefit our people, more so rescue us from the challenges facing us and ensure we (both leaders and our people) live a happy life, a peaceful and prosperous life in our communities and in this country we called Solomon Islands.

My other role as an MP is to scrutinize the people’s budget. The budget is fundamental to the livelihood of everyone because it enables the government of the day to provide goods and services to the people we serve. We can plan and have policies but the real indicator of the transition of our plans to reality is the budget.

Therefore, it is of extreme importance that those responsible to be answerable for this budget are well versed and have an in-depth understanding as to what the figures are for. More so whether the allocation can really fulfill what is envisaged in the policy implementation plans.

While we might improve in the level of debates, but the answers that we on this side receive sometimes are not proper. The budgets are the truth about what executive governments are doing to deliver to the people and people need to be really clear about what the Government is going to do with their allocations.

I think that in the debate of any motion or bill, at least more than three quarters of us Members of Parliament must contribute in anyone bill or motion. For instance, with the Fisheries Bill, I think only six or seven of us MPs contributed and then we quickly go onto the committee stage. I feel like we have not contributed enough. Others would still want to contribute but there is not enough time. We should allow at least three quarters of MPs to debate any bill or motion, unless one does not want to contribute. I say this because regardless of our personal backgrounds, we are first and foremost legislators and I wonder whether our people are conscious of this or not because other things are secondary to us being legislators. 3.22 I am flagging this as I feel MPs have a lot of things to say on the floor of this House.

On the same note, regardless of our approach or views to a certain bill or motion, we are in fact helping the executive governments to make sound decisions in implementing Acts. Therefore, our debates should contain credible justifications or notes that the executive can refer to. Therefore, I would like to encourage us that whilst the media is important, advisors or political appointees of the government should not be too dependent on media reports as substance to advise government policies but they have to be proactive.

On the separation of power on the three arms of the state, a French philosopher, *Charles-Louis* stated in the *Spirit of the Law* in 1748 - *The system of government of the state must ensure that it creates checks and balances*. And I think that is

what the Leader of Opposition also highlighted and that the Opposition Group's duty is to provide checks and balances on any government policies. Failure in doing that can be best summarized by Lord Walter in 1978 Committee Report in the House of Commons, and I quote, *"When the government has the clear majority, it wills a lot of power to push through legislation. The balance of advantage between parliament and government is so weighted in favour of government that it is inimical to the proper working of a parliamentary democracy.* I cited these issues in this debate to continue to remind myself and all of us that we must ensure proper planning as measures for good governance in upholding the democracy that we aspire to uphold in this country. Not only that, but we as leaders must serve the people that mandated us and not vice versa. What we envisaged in this tenure is change, which the DCC Government professes to bring to this country. That change must be experienced by our people. It must be the change to ensure they receive God's grace and blessings. We Members of Parliament are all in this together to make this change happen, the whole of the society and more importantly to us personally because we cannot expect people to change for the better if we ourselves do not experience such a change as a person.

The question of change to an extent tickles my moral conscience in that now we are compelled to create change. However, the question is how people will react to the change they are experiencing or going to experience in the near future. This is because the responsibility of being a Member of Parliament is a "calling" and not some ordinary jobs that we can interview for. Hence, whatever reaction our people have from the changes we make will either bless or curse us in this life and the life after. This is because even if the Lord is a Lord of mercy and died for us on the cross, but I think the prerequisite for the release of forgiveness depends also on our neighbors. Because the keys of Heaven given to Saint Peter in the acclamations says: "What you bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven". It means that every one of us has the right to forgive and not to forgive. But if the multitudes of our people curse us leaders and do not forgive us for the wrong decisions we make, may be our lives

as MPs will be our doom, both on earth and in the afterlife. How can it be possible to ask the people of this country to forgive us for the miseries that we cause them **3.27** because of the wrong decisions we made in this Chamber. As I have stated, earlier my contribution is merely as a self reminder and the intentions are not compel anyone but should anyone be felt implicated then I beg him for his or forgiveness.

Once again, I thank God Almighty for His everlasting love for allowing his people of Shortlands to mandate me as their representative. For that, I do accept with a humble heart. I also thank the government for the policy statement to ensure change and the huge budget to implement it and the ministers of Her Majesty Government and the staff for their part in preparing it. We on our part as leaders will assist in the implementation of the Budget.

Finally, I thank you, Mr Speaker, the Clerk and your staff for the assistance rendered to us during the second meeting of Parliament. Now that we are given leave by Parliament it is time to help implement the change for the betterment and benefit of our people; more importantly also for our own salvations in life and life after. May I leave this quote from St John of the cross before I resume my seat? "At the end of life we shall all be judged by our charity and service to our people;" and not from our personal wealth and rich friends that we have. Therefore we as leaders must have the right change that our people want and expect from us as our form of charity and services in order to receive Gods grace here on earth and pave our way in the after live. With these few remarks I support the motion.

Hon STANLEY SOFU (*Minster for Infrastructure and Development*): Thank you Mr Speaker for allowing me to add my voice to this very important motion. I stand on behalf of my people of East Kwaio and the ministry that I am looking after to thank the Honourable Prime Minister for seeing it fit to bring this motion to Parliament. I would also like to register my word of thanks to my colleague minister and permanent secretaries including staff of various ministries for the good work which

they have done during the course of the preparation towards the budget which we have already passed. I must also thank the Leader of Opposition and the Leader of the Independent Group including their members for their valuable contribution to the Budget and the Fisheries Bill.

Mr Speaker, **3.32** I must not forget to thank you. You have done well. You are new to the office but you have done very well. I would also like to thank the Deputy Speaker, my colleague Member of Parliament for Central Honiara who has done a good work of deputizing in the absence of the Speaker. I would also like to thank the newly appointed Clerk. I congratulate him for taking up that very important responsibility. It is not an easy task to look after Parliament. You are looking after leaders and it is something that needs understanding and working together with leaders. I would also like to thank the Deputy Clerk and staff of Parliament for providing service to Parliament during the course of our meeting. I thank all the officers of the National Parliament.

I would also like to thank premiers of the nine provinces and the Honiara City Mayor and the executive for working together with the national government. We need their support in the implementation of the Budget. I must thank them and look forward to working together with them, especially the Ministry of Infrastructure Development. I need the participation of our provincial premiers and their executives.

I must not forget to thank our churches that pray for the government, the Opposition Leader, the Independent Leader and all Members of Parliament. It is God's wisdom that is still leading us. Where our hands fall short, there is someone that can extend our hands so that we can reach out to what we want. Our human strength, power, knowledge and wisdom cannot work well but we depend very much on the prayers by our churches. There are times that we feel sad, there are times we think we fail but we thank our churches for their prayers for uplifting us and bringing us to a height that we continue to do our work.

The Ministry of Infrastructure Development has the mandate to provide and maintain accessibility and connectivity in terms of roads throughout our country. It is important that we experience connectivity and accessibility. As I said during my Budget Speech, in order for our people to continue grow the economy, the mandate given to my ministry is to ensure the ministry provides and maintains accessibility and connectivity on roads, sea, wharf, land and airstrips.

In relations to our sector policy, my ministry has a sector plan and strategy, which is the National Transport Plan that guides the development and maintenance of priority transport infrastructures in our country. 3.37The National Transport Fund was established in 2009 and it provides long term funding on the transport sector in terms of development areas or priorities according to its yearly work plans.

The National Transport Plan sector policy is directly linked to the National Development Strategy (MDS). We are in support of Pillar No. 6 which provides connectivity and accessibility for our people and business investors in order to progress the economy of our country.

I would like to say that the 2015 Recurrent and Development Estimates have been passed already. As you can see, the DCC Government is placing importance on infrastructure as a vehicle to empower our people giving them opportunities and the environment where they can do something to advance their standard of living.

This Budget is rural focused and the DCC Government has to deliver to the people after it is passed. I would like to remind this House that this Budget can only materialize to serve our people through the ministries and through funding that goes directly to the constituencies through partnership and working together. And I am happy to hear from others who have spoken already echoing the importance of cooperation and working together with Members of Parliament.

The DCC Government has delivered the budget and so we now request the cooperation of the central government agencies, provinces, landowners, private sector contractors and suppliers to work together with the Government to implement the 2015 Budget. In this regard, I call on our people in the rural areas to

be patient and cooperate with the government and the private sector to deliver much needed services in our constituencies. We talked so much in this House about the People's Budget. Some Members who have spoken today have called on their constituencies to be ready, to be patient and asking for their people's understanding. There are laws and process that we have to follow in implementing the Budget. The Budget has been passed but to just come to us MPs and ask for funds from us is not the right way to do and is going to be quite difficult for you to get the funds you need. We need to fulfill the laws and requirements which guides the funding. It will take time to access the funds but certainly it will come. So be patient with the processes of accessing the funds. CDOs, project officers and accountants who will be doing the work are still being recruited yet. I ask for patience at the 3.42 constituency level.

Resource owners need to be fair with the government in order to realize maximum benefits reaching our people. Big countries in this world are advancing and progressing because of stability. In the opening remarks of the honorable Prime Minister on this sine die motion, he stated stability as very important. The same sentiment was also echoed by the Leader of Opposition and others who have spoken on the sine die motion.

The DCC Government needs stability to deliver the people's budget. It needs Members of Parliament from the Leader of Independent, the Opposition and the Government side to work together to deliver. What the Leader of Opposition was saying today is very true. This is now my third term and I can attest to what the Leader of Opposition said that the governments always breaks up due to motion of no confidence. However, I believe this will not happen to the DCC Government because it needs to deliver and fulfill what we are saying on this floor of Parliament. And so I fully support the statement made by the Leader of Opposition earlier on today.

I would like to touch on a few issues raised during the committee of supply in regards to the Ministry of Infrastructure Development. Concerns were raised during

the committee of supply on shipping grant, and which I have already touched on during my budget speech. The government's position on this does not change but remains the same that the DCC Government will have to develop the first shipping grants policy for expending of the amount budgeted for under shipping grants in 2015. The government wants to support operators that have records to progress, expand business and sustain operation where the rural populace can benefit from the services they are providing. I think sometimes next week the Minister for Infrastructure Development will have to bring a paper to cabinet on this for cabinet to deliberate on. It is very important that I do that so as to clear some of the doubts which some of our colleague members may have and even the public as well.

Infrastructure is a driver in the economy and supports rural development, which is part of the DCC policy. Increase funding for the National Transport Fund and other sizable allocations in the Development Budget simply means implementing DCCG policies in areas that include a good volume of priority roads, wharfs, airports that needs to be maintained. A good volume of infrastructures to be studied and feasibility studies are being conducted. Increased support to donor to co finance projects, more resilient infrastructures built, rebuild better infrastructures for those affected by recent disasters and climate change. My officers have gone out to get reports on damaged infrastructures caused by the recent cyclone. 3.47 More capacity building in my ministry, local contractors and consultants through more work. There is more connectivity and accessibility for people, businesses and investors. This proves that this budget is truly the people's budget and my ministry is committed to implement the budget for the people of Solomon Islands.

On donor assistance, my Ministry has for the last 10 years been able to deliver much needed infrastructures country wide all because of the assistance from aid donor partners in the transport sector. I would like to make mention the great contribution to the transport sector and capacity building in the Ministry of Infrastructure Development (MID) by the ADB, Australia, New Zealand, European Union, Japan and recently the World Bank. This partnership in the transport sector

has been rewarding for the Ministry of Infrastructure Development since 2006 when the National Transport Plan was adopted, which resulted in the volume of assistance greatly increased.

In 2006, the total budget for MID was only SBD\$5million for the whole country but donor assistance and SIG commitment today is now at a combined value of more than SBD\$350million. This increase investment in this sector is also challenged by ageing infrastructures, which I stated earlier on through a question I was asked during the committee of supply. I said that ageing infrastructures and increase in heavy loads damage our roads. Increase vehicle imports versus a decline in road network development, land and planning pressures in urban settings like Honiara.

On capacity issues, to counter the above challenges, my ministry has gone through reforms on our establishment with more qualified personnel now joining us. In 2004, when reforms started, there were only two qualified civil engineers but today we have more than 10 qualified civil engineers, more procurement officers, managers and officers working with us to implement projects smoothly. The number of machine based contractors has increased from two in year 2006 to now about 10 of them. The MID has also trained and engaged more than 60 labour based contractors nationwide. This is slowly increasing confidence and capacity in the Ministry of Infrastructure Development to fully utilise budget estimates consistently over the last five years. We are dishing out more community based maintenance programs in most provinces and encourage more participation by women as contractors and workers. It is good that women in our rural areas participate in this labour based program as they will have money to buy things that they want.

We are also working very hard to improve the performance of contractors and training more supervisors to constantly check on works onsite. We are engaging a number of certified equipments at our laboratory this year to enable us check the quality of materials used by contractors against specifications. I want to shed light on some doubts people may have about the labour based contractors, I want to say

that they are well supervised and they went through training before taking up those work. As I have said earlier on in my speech on the Appropriation Budget, labour based contractors are doing good work on roads and can also do maintenance work.

The MID is 3.52 bringing a bill to Parliament known as the Infrastructure Management Bill, which looks at the standard and safety of infrastructures in Solomon Islands. There was a policy question raised during the committee of supply, and my ministry is preparing a bill that I will certainly bring to Parliament when it is ready this year or next year.

The National Building Code and Road Act will be repealed and merged into an Act to allow us manage and enforce safety standards on all roads and building infrastructures in this country of Solomon Islands. This will increase safety on buildings and road structures and allow citizens to own homes that guarantee them return on investment and access insurance.

The MID 2015 work plan to be firm after passing by Parliament of the budget, the Ministry of Infrastructure Development to mention a few is looking at delivering the followings: Continued funding of maintenance program, most of which are community labour based contracts and machine based contracts; studied projects highlighted in the DCC Policy; conduct feasibility studies on projects highlighted in the DCC policy; rehabilitation, improvement and ceiling of priority infrastructures.

For Malaita - Auki road tar sealing, tendering process expected in July and work should commence in June or July 2015. The North Malaita missing link section rehabilitation, Gwaunaru'u Airport rehabilitation and maintenance, the Uhu wharf, assistance for Bina and Suava Bay commercial and fisheries development study. Those are for Malaita.

For Guadalcanal - continued maintenance of main roads and priority feeder roads. (As I am speaking some of my colleagues over there are laughing). The Naro to Lambi bridge rehabilitation our government started with \$30million. That is part of our contribution to the National Transport Fund.

For Honiara - implementing the Honiara Market to SINU fisheries headquarter road and bridge rehabilitation. We are aware that this will be done by JICA and SIG. The Honiara Port second berth development is also taken by JICA- our good friend. Flood recovery projects by the ADB and SIG. The Munda airport 2nd phase. The Vurango wharf construction in Choiseul Province and continued road maintenance in all our provinces. Maintenance will be done on all roads in the provinces. That is in the work plan of the ministry because connectivity and accessibility is very important.

The Solomon Islands Ports Authority, a state owned enterprise belongs to the Government of Solomon Islands. As the responsible minister I would like to inform this Parliament that reforms are taking hold and that issues raised in the media on the withdrawal of strike actions are being dealt with head on. That is for the information of Parliament and our people. The Solomon Islands Ports Authority will be in a stronger position after reforms to perform its core function and make it a successful State Owned Enterprise in Solomon Islands.

The expansion and safety of the Honiara Ports and Honiara City is something the government needs to seriously consider immediately. Two fuel companies need to relocate to allow safety at our ports and safety for all business houses in Point Cruz areas. **3.57** The expansion and development plans for the Solomon Islands Ports Authority will be jeopardized if relocation cannot take place. Relocation plans must be firm and the Government to assist in moving the two companies to their designated areas in Ranadi and Lungga. We believe there are landownership issues and access on the Ranadi site and the government will assist in sorting out the mess.

While the Ministry has a sizable budget, time is a constraint and we expect all provinces and stakeholders to assist in the implementation of this budget. Land issues, gravel extraction and the usual compensation that comes with many projects must be managed, and we need the support of all. If we want to see road upgrade and new road constructions in our provinces, we need to work together with landowners. The Government has some funds under the National Transport Fund

for rural infrastructure but resource owners are charging gravels at exorbitant prices, and this is a concern. We need cooperation in this area. Our government is trying to provide service for connectivity and accessibility to our rural populace for transportation of goods and services to our remote settings. And so I am appealing to landowners of this country for your understanding. We only have limited funds to pay for gravel. I am looking at acquiring land for quarry so that whenever any contractor comes to construct road, we will not have any problems with gravel. That is what I am seriously looking at as well as the ministry.

While my Ministry has a sizable budget, time is a constraint and we expect all provinces and stakeholders to support the government to implement its program. We only have a limited time left this year, and we want to utilize the budget for our roads. Our provinces must take ownership and participate in decisions during implementation so that we impart a sense of ownership all round. We must participate in the give and take policy. Infrastructures are built on land and power in our hands will only determine the success of the implementation of the budget. This is the people's budget.

Be rest assured that my Ministry will work very closely with other government agencies and our good donors in fulfilling the DCC Government policies in the transport sector. My Ministry believes that the Budget is credible and adequate to fulfill and progress our work plan for 2015. Of course, with all of us working hand in hand, I believe we will go forward and we will certainly implement this Budget.

Before I resume my seat, I want to take this opportunity to join the chorus of thanking all public officers. They are the ones who will implement this Budget. I thank them for their good work in the past, present and look forward to working together with them - public officers, nurses, doctors, police and correctional service officers. 4.02 I would like to thank them for the work they have done during the course of the Parliament meeting and we look forward to work with our officers.

I must not forget my permanent secretary and officers for the good work they have done and I am looking forward to working together with them implementing this budget. Before I take my seat I would like to say something. There are complaints I have received about my officers practicing corruption. I welcome all the complaints and if anyone has any evidence please present it because there are ways of addressing such situations. Otherwise, I fully support my staff, not until there is evidence of corruption by my staff within my ministry. With these few remarks I support the motion.

Mr BRADLEY TOVOSIA (*East Guadalcanal*): I stand here to thank the Honourable Prime Minister for the sine motion. I stand here to acknowledge you, Mr Speaker, you deputy and the parliament staff for the good work you have been doing in looking after us MPs in the last two weeks and now are .

At the outset, I would like to comment on how we debate in Parliament. I would like to support what the Prime Minister has said in that we only have one yellow card. However, there should have been many yellow cards because most of the time when we come in the morning there is no quorum. I think this goes to all Members of Parliament because it is our obligation to be here in Parliament every morning. I would like to thank those of us on this side of the House for our understanding – the Leaders Opposition and Independent because we raised a point of quorum only once. As I have said we should have raised many points of quorum but we did not. I think this side of the House fully supports the budget. There were only a few things raised during the Committee of Supply because of the need for understanding and clarification, otherwise I sense that this side of the House supports the Budget.

In regards to the policy of the DCC Government, I think there are many good things they have outlined. I would like to suggest a few things thing. I would like to thank the Minister for Education and Human Resources Development who talked about bringing a policy for our students to do their studies in Australia and New

Zealand. I would like him to do that as I think it is a good one because we need people to be trained in other institutions outside of the Pacific region to be able to contribute in a global scale. Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu are just like Solomon Islands. Let us get our kids out to other places.

The other thing I would like to comment on in regards to the DCCG policy is tackling corruption head on. This is an important one and I would like the Minister of Health to take note of this. I would like to make mention of the Ministry of Health reemploying senior officials who were involved 4.07 in dubious dealings with aid donors money is not a very good idea. To use qualification and work experience as an excuse to keep these people on the payroll is one thing I strongly disagree with. I heard this from a question that was raised in here. I urge the honourable Prime Minister and the Minister responsible to take into consideration the immediate replacement of such people. They are dead weight, an hindrance and obstacle to the development of our nation. I can assure you there are qualified and capable academics that are just chewing betel nuts along the streets of Honiara. If given the opportunity, I believe there is a young and strong workforce who can make things for the better. It is high time we make full use of these people to replace those who are old and tired in their profession. The Ministry of Health, more than the need to be maintained, needs innovative minds that have passion and vision for the work they are doing for people in the country. The DCCG as a whole must create an avenue for the workplace to be able to do this. It has been expressed and I quote 'the National Referral Hospital is a monument of corruption in Solomon Islands'. As a leader today, I do not take this as an offense but rather an opportunity to build and improve on what has been done in the past. We learn from our mistakes and press on.

We were part of NCRA in the previous house and maybe we did not do it better; maybe we were part of it. I would like the DCCG and the Prime Minister to ensure that these people must go, they must leave the place, they cannot remain there because things are still creeping in there.

I would like to raise to your attention the incomplete mini hospital which I raised during the committee of supply. And I thank the Minister for the \$4million, which I later learnt. The \$400,000 drawn during the time of NCRA, I do not where the materials are. I was told that materials have been paid but where are they? I know the bits and pieces of my constituency and nothing is there. I urge the minister to take note of this. NCRA did not do it and so the DCCG must do it. The government must also deal with the growing situation of employing qualified people walking the streets.

I would like to mention the distribution of \$6.2million for each constituency. My constituency may be small, a total of 6,000 voters. But I feel sorry for the bigger constituencies that are receiving the same amount of money as the smaller ones. I would like the DCCG to change this. Let us put up a good story for this to reflect the number of people we have in the constituencies. I want the DCCG to take note of this. I would like to thank the DCCG for the \$6.2million as this is going to drive forward the housing project that we are planning.

I also thank the DCCG for taking onboard the Suava and Bina harbor projects. These are big projects that we have to do. NCRA has failed so now we will see what will happen with the DCCG. It will happen if we can drive it properly otherwise history will be just repeated. These are just challenges. Some time ago I asked a friend from Malaita whether they are aware of projects from the national government that went through provincial governments but he said they never knew anything about it. That could be a point we need to consider.

I would like to respond to the call by the Minister of Infrastructure and MP for East Kwaio regarding gravel. 4.12 My constituency believes it is a two way thing. The goodness that will be built between the government and the people has to be a two way thing; both sides must cooperate with each other. Mr Prime Minister, please take note that my constituency of East Central Guadalcanal is willing to provide gravel to the country. If it is expensive to buy gravel from this side then please come over to the other side. We have big rivers there, so please

come to the other side. The Minister and the Prime Minister, please take note of this. Find the means of getting a crusher over to our side and come. I am not just saying it, but I am putting it in here; please come. We can create an understanding between my people and the government to take the gravel for free. Just come and your only help would be to build our roads; help our people to move forward and we will give you free gravel. Our constituency does not encourage mining and logging. There is no logging in our constituency and it is quite impossible to take any loggers there. We can only contribute gravel to this nation.

We also have abundant water resources in my constituency that we can do bottling of water. Water is just wasting away. Can the DCC Government take note of this as it is the intention of my constituency to do it?

I also want to thank the Minister of Fisheries for tabling the Fisheries Bill as it enhances the fisheries sector and those working in the ministry. It has been a long time that the bill is needed; NCRA did not do it and now the DCCG has done it, so thank you for that. I think it is the way forward for this country bringing in revenue for this country. I can recall once as the Minister for Fisheries when I went and signed an agreement with New Zealand, a bilateral understanding of about \$6,000 on the VDS scheme, which is a good scheme. That VDS scheme must be alive because it reflects the economy of this country. I hasten to say that I regretted it very much that a lot of fish have been already taken out of the country a long time ago because we have not been doing it properly.

I want to personally thank a doctor who is the director of the Nauru PNA. That person should be really honored by us because he has been doing a lot of good work for the PNA program. He owes a lot of acknowledgement from us as a government and the people of this country. That is one of my comments on the Fisheries Bill.

I am winding up now and would like to say that the Budget and the Bill has been passed and it is now time for us to our work with the \$6.2million for each constituency. I believe that the services we are going to provide is up to us each

Member of Parliament. We have to drive this properly. We should come and report back to Parliament what we have done with the \$6.2million in our next meeting. We should inform Parliament of how that money contributes to the economy of the country. I think that is important. Rather than giving the money and not knowing where the money goes to. I know that one audit report says that every constituency funds only goes towards consumable items. It could be spent on people coming to our houses; I do not know. But that is from an audit report. We have to find ways to educate our people about these funds. I fully support the motion of sine die moved by the Prime Minister and I resume my seat.

Hon Manasseh Sogavare: I move that debate on this motion be adjourned to the next sitting day.

Debate on this Motion adjourned to the next sitting day

Hon Manasseh Sogavare: I move that this House do now adjourn.

The House adjourned at 4.17pm