

THURSDAY 22 OCTOBER 2015

The Speaker, Mr Ajilon Nasiu took the Chair at 11.02am.

Prayers.

ATTENDANCE

All were present with the exception of the Minister for Foreign Affairs & International Trade and the Members for East Are Are and Fataleka

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Submarine Cable Project

17. **Hon JEREMIAH MANELE** (*Leader of Opposition*) to the Minister for Communication and Aviation: Can the Minister inform the House on the current status of the Solomon Islands Submarine Cable Project?

Hon PETER SHANEL ANGOVAKA (*Minister for Civil Aviation and Communications*): In reference to the Submarine Cable Project, there are two options and option one is the Solomon Islands Oceanic Cable Company (SOCC) that is proposed by NPF and Telekom to run from Sydney to Honiara; a direct route from Sydney to Honiara. The other proposal is to have what is called the ICN2 cable that runs from Port Moresby to Honiara and then from Port Vila to Nadi and onwards.

Both proposals have their advantages and disadvantages. In regards to the ICN2 Cable, the PNG delegate that came has already briefed Caucus and the SOCC Cable too has already made some presentations. As the responsible minister, I have yet to advise Cabinet on which options to take. As I said yesterday in my answer to some of the questions yesterday, this is only my second week at the ministry and I will bring a paper to Cabinet on my findings and due diligence work to advise the government on which option to take.

Hon MANASSEH MAELANGA (*Leader of Independent*): I would like to ask the Minister to explain which provinces those cables will go through.

Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka: One of the proposed cables will run from Sydney to Honiara and from Honiara it will be connected to the Western province and another one to Malaita province.

Mr BRADLEY TOVOSIA (*East Guadalcanal*): In regards to this undersea cable, there were already discussions about this in Caucus where two presentations have been done as far. I think this project has been around for quite some time now and so it is good that our people are informed as to why it is taking too long for a decision to be made about it. This is going to benefit the new generation that is coming. I strongly believe that a decision must be made as

soon as possible on this. Why it is taking too long is the question I would like to ask the Minister.

Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka: It is taking too long because the previous Ministers have not brought a cabinet paper to Cabinet in order for Cabinet to make a decision. Now you have a minister who is capable of bringing a cabinet paper on this matter to Cabinet so that we can go forward with the undersea cable project.

Mr COMMINS MEWA (*Temotu Nende*): I want to put things right here in Parliament; and we must not tell lies. When I was the Minister for Communication and Aviation this issue has caused frustration and that is why you see me sitting down here today. Cabinet asked me to bring an information paper to Cabinet which I did. After that, I was asked to bring in technical people of the Communications Division of my ministry, which I also did. I was able to convince Caucus that the best option for this country is the Sydney to Honiara cable. By the time I was about to bring a paper to Cabinet, I was advised by the Prime Minister that during the MSG he was told by the Prime Minister of PNG that there is going to be another presentation made so I have to wait for that before I can make any further moves. However, that presentation never eventuate, I do not know why and that delayed me because I wanted to listen to what the other presenter would say but that presentation never eventuate and I am still waiting and that is why I am here on this side today.

Mr RICK HOUENIPWELA (*Small Malaita*): Can the Honourable Minister confirm my understanding that with these two options, the first option had a financing agreement already been signed by the previous government. I want to know if this financing agreement is still there or not.

Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka: I think the financing arrangements are still waiting for us to go back to them to agree on which options to take before they can go ahead with the financing agreement. But just to refer back to the statement made by the former Minister, my good friend the member for Temotu/Nende, we are still waiting for the Cabinet paper to be presented because that is what we are going to bring before Cabinet for Cabinet to make a decision as to which options to take. **11:12** So he is right.

Mr CONNELLY SANDAKABATU (*North West Choiseul*): This is out of ignorance for the benefit for my people of North West Choiseul; which is quite far. When my people heard about this cable they thought it would improve communication out there in the remote areas, like where I come from we have to travel about 2 hours in the bush in order to catch any network coverage. Telekom did very little in helping us with that. Bemobile is yet to reach Choiseul. And so my people are really banking on this cable if it is going to eventuate. I want to ask the Minister is this broadband or whatever it is called going to improve coverage in Choiseul, especially the people of North West who are struggling to catch any Telekom network coverage.

Hon Peter Shanel: The simple answer is, yes, it will improve communication, speed, the amount of data and the time it takes to reach you, and it will be much faster.

Mr Bradley Tovosia: I think the Minister did not answer my question. I think the reason why there is a delay is because had we followed the story of this sea cable, there were some arrangements already made, and that could be the cause of the delay. I think he is a new Minister and so he is not aware but I he was in Caucus a couple of times and so he should have answered like a minister attending a Caucus meeting. This thing has been delayed for a very long time. And we know from the very beginning that there were some kinds of agreement already in place. If there is any delay I want the Minister to inform the people of this country so that they know, otherwise there is a cover up of the things that are still holding this issue up.

Hon JIMSON TANANGADA (*Minister for Rural Development*): I stood up because this information is very important for the nation to know. I would like to make a comment if you can allow me please, Mr Speaker, to make a clarification as the Member of Parliament for Gizo/Kolombagara and an active member of Caucus for the DCCG. In my position, from my personal view why I as an individual leader in Caucus also questioned the cable, I was also one of them who was in support when the cable team came in and tried to seek approval, my point contributed to the necessity of the delay is because we should look at other options taking into consideration the cost, the efficiency of places that this cable will reach and so forth. Also, to make a correction as well, I want to say today that the team from PNG has already done its presentation to Caucus purposely for us to see the advantages of the cable coming through from PNG to Solomon Islands. SOCC also did its presentation for which I really appreciate the time given. And now I believe when the Cabinet paper comes in, as a leader for the interest of this country I can be able to make the right judgement as to which cable is viable and suitable for this country. Thank you.

Hon SYNDER RINI (*Minister for Finance & Treasury*): I would like to explain the total cost of the cables. When the Member for Small Malaita said they **11.17** have signed a financial agreement, that agreement was only for USD\$15million from the Asian Development Bank. The total cost of cable from the first bid; the one that they were thinking about, there were about four companies that applied and their first bid was US\$89million. From that US\$89million, about US\$70million would need a sovereign grantee from the government. They went back for their second bid, the second round and that US\$98million is just for second hand cables removed from the cables that run from Manila to Guam. The cable is 13 years old and was replaced and it is that used cable that they would like to use. So USD\$89million is just for the used cables. New cables will cost USD\$102million. The financial agreement that was signed with the ADB for loan is US\$15million. The others that will come in as well would also need sovereign guarantees.

In June/July, they went back for the second bid and that same company came to USD\$55million with reused and second hand cable. A new cable will cost USD\$65million. That is what the Government is concerned about because sovereign guarantees will be added to our national debts. We will also have to guarantee the Tina Hydro Project of USD\$150million. We

will also guarantee the Fiu Hydro project of USD\$15million. We will also guarantee a loan from the ADB for the new University of the South Pacific Campus here for another USD\$15million. If all those guarantees are added up, it is going to be more than US\$200million, and these will be added to our national debt. That is what the Government is considering at the moment as to which one would be the cheaper option for us to take.

The other option is for us to do it and you will come in later. That is the INC2. All those things have been costed including the spur that will be coming into Solomon Islands, which is less than US\$19million. These are the options the Government is considering at the moment.

In their costing, they even costed the domestic route down to Noro, which we are not going to pay but they will do it first and we will go in later. These are the options the Government is considering at the moment.

The former Minister for Communication and Aviation said that the other group has not made any presentation. I do not know where he was when that group made its presentation. They came two weeks after the MSG Meeting here—perhaps he was in Vanuatu at that time. This group came and made a very thorough presentation of more than 10 pages compared with the presentation of SOCC which is only one and half page. That is why the Government is considering this because of its cost implications.

The Member for Small Malaita always says that the cable is just about US\$30million when we signed the agreement. The agreement comprises USD\$15million loan and \$10million in grant, and \$25million is not enough for them to come and run the cable.

The first tender is \$102million for a new cable, \$89million for a second hand cable and that is SOCC direct from Sydney to Honiara. The second one that came, used cable because that is what they want, used cable is \$45million and about \$65million for a new cable. I think that is what I would like to clarify to this House.

Mr MATTHEW WALE (*Aoke Langalanga*): This project is one very important project for the country, which we have been talking about for quite a long time now. The agreement which the former Minister for Finance and Member for Small Malaita was talking about was signed quite a long time ago too. It seems what we are waiting for is for a decision to be made. Why is it taking so long for a decision to be made on such an important project that we need?

I note the explanation by the Minister of Finance, which is reasonable and rationale to compare the costs and those things, but it just seems to be taking too long. In the costing there seems to be inconsistency. I was in Caucus when the delegation from Papua New Guinea made its presentation and I have to say that thinking about it purely on commercial terms; the politics of it aside and the issues of perhaps sovereignty around the cable aside, just looking at it commercially, the cable presented by Papua New Guinea seems to be a far superior proposal than the one by SOCC. But again it is a matter that a decision must be taken but the discrepancy or inconsistency seems to me on the cost of figures.

In that particular Caucus meeting, the Minister for Finance mentioned the figures he told us about but the Prime Minister seems to think that those figures are not really accurate so we do not know which is which. The accurate information perhaps has never been brought to Caucus or Cabinet and certainly not here, but a decision needs to be taken. We cannot continue

to prevaricate and obfuscate and vacillate on this matter but a decision needs to be taken so that work starts on this very important area.

Mr Speaker: Do you have a question to ask?

Mr Matthew Wale: My question is when are you expected to make a decision finally?

Hon DANNY PHILLIP (*Minister for Planning and Aid Coordination*): I just want to make a further background to the optic underwater sea cable on the two options we are talking about.

In terms of our country's legislation, the Ministry of Aviation is the right Ministry to deal with telecommunications in our country. This is a big public investment and so it is not altogether the Ministry of Aviation which is the regulator of aviation in Solomon Islands.

In terms of putting a big capital outlay as an investment, public investment for the country falls under the Ministry of Finance so let us make the demarcations clear first.

In the beginning there were a bit of usurpation of responsibilities. The Ministry of Telecommunications thought that the investment part also belongs to them so there was some arguments with regards to that because ICSI is the shareholding agency of the Government and the loan guarantees come under the Ministry of Finance and Treasury and ICSI comes under the Ministry of Finance so there needs to be some coordination there. And we seem to settle down on the investment side of the cable and when that is finished it will be passed over to the Ministry of Aviation as the regulator on the operational side of the cable.

I would also like to highlight the two options that we have. As the Minister for Finance and Treasury has mentioned there are pros and cons on both of them. The first one SOCC is 100 percent ours. But if you take into account the geopolitics in Melanesia, there is an advantage of having tribal ownership along with two other countries on this other option by ICN2 to connect Port Moresby, Honiara, Port Vila and on to Fiji. Fiji is already connected to the southern cable, the main cable coming from the western state of the United States of America to Australia. And so they are good, they are not part of this ICN2 arrangement

Financially, as already explained by the Minister for Finance, it is a huge capital outlay on SOCC that we have to give them sovereign guarantee. In the light of a very comprehensive rural development policy of the Government, this year is \$335million, when we start to limit our options for development programs of this country, most probably our in-country programs will be smaller in the budget.

Second is the community obligation of telecommunications in our country, which I am aware, quite a number of MPs in here, their constituencies are not yet covered by any Telekom network coverage. Telekom is yet to put up towers in their constituencies. We need to have a very clear DCC policy that until the country is fully equipped with modern telecommunication before we can go into other options. It is true that the optic cable option does facilitate for fast communication and most probably in our economic sector which comprise about 10, 0000 people. But we have a bigger country that Telekom must take care of first.

In the light of those scenarios, the Government is looking at a much cheaper option, maintaining our development policy aspirations at the same level or lifting it up without putting out a sovereign guarantee. Sovereign guarantee is basically a signature to say that the

state will bear the cost of the capital outlay so it will be quantified as a loan burden to our country. At the moment, we are reasonably comfortable with the total loan obligation of the country. As soon as we put our pen to paper for sovereign guarantee on this huge capital outlay, our loan burden will greatly increase. That is the reason why it is taking the government a long time to make a decision.

The ICN2 option will be totally borne by PNG in terms of its cost but there are also some politics in PNG in relation to that as well. Under the geopolitical arrangements it will be sovereign ownership by three states. For the SOCC option, it would be 100 percent owned by an entity, telecommunication, which is owned by us but it is not the government owning it but a private sector owning it. So you cannot say that is also a sovereign ownership of SOCC cable.

The ICN2 cable which will run from Nadi, Suva to Port Villa, which is now in existence is the ICN1; that one is already connected. The ICN2 cable runs from Port Villa, Luganville, south of Honiara to Port Moresby. And there is a cost that we would have bear to bring the cable to Noro and then to Honiara and then to Auki and so is the SOCC cable, which will come through Noro, to Honiara and then to Auki.

It is a fallacy to think that the SOCC underwater cable is going to connect all the provinces. Not so! Communication will still have to be transferred from the towers – the mode of communication. We need to establish the spread of telecommunication throughout all the sectors of our rural communities before we can go into huge capital outlay, public investment programs of such magnitude.

I just want to make this clarification in case we do not properly understand the background as to the factors affecting the slow decision by the government just because we want to make sure that the decisions we make do not encumber us on something that will limit our development budget at this time.

Mr DERRICK MANU'ARI (*West Makira*): My question still relates to the increased access that this project if it comes to fruition will bring to our country. While we are focusing on enhanced access, there is this concern about cyber security. The increased access will also expose us, the people of Solomon Islands, especially those that are new to this technology to the cyber world, the World Wide Web. There are serious concerns in regards to cyber security that is likely going to affect our ordinary people. What is the Ministry currently doing in light of this upcoming project to address cyber security?

Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka: At the moment we do not have a national ICT policy. The Ministry has now in place a write up of our national ICT policy to guide and regulate what the Honourable Member was talking about. I will bring a policy paper to Cabinet for its approval to assist us in terms of reducing cyber-crimes.

Mr DOUGLAS ETE (*East Honiara*): I would also like to contribute to this. All the things the government is saying are known information; we are all aware of them. The question is why is it taking too long? I am saying this because the Minister needs to come up with the model and put it to Cabinet. There is a split in Cabinet between the Melanesian Optic Underwater Cable option with SOCC. That is the truth of the matter. The Prime Minister, when he was in New

York, told me through a text message to leave this issue aside until he returns. And so I urge the Minister to do it quickly so that we stop talking about it in Parliament. All the things you are saying are known information. It is which option to take that Cabinet must not be split. My question is, when are you going to do it?

Hon Manasseh Sogavare: I think we are going around with the answers and we will end up nowhere. Yes, it is a very important project and at this point in time Cabinet needs to make a decision. I guess the beauty of cabinet/government system is that there are views and that is why we have a cabinet to discuss issues. People have different views on things to trash out in Cabinet and then come up with a common understanding and decision. We will do that. I think the Minister said earlier on that he will consult Cabinet again and we should be able to wrap up a decision on this matter. The two options you are talking about are true. It is just a matter for Cabinet to conclude and that will happen very soon.

Mr Speaker: Honorable Members, I think we have covered enough of that particular question so may I ask the Leader of Opposition to thank the Minister for answering the questions.

Hon Jeremiah Manele: I would like to thank the Minister for Communication and Aviation for his responses. I also thank my colleagues on this side of the House who have asked supplementary questions. Also to thank the Minister for Finance, Planning and Rural Development for the additional information they have furnished the House.

MOTION

Motion of Special adjournment

Hon MANASSEH SOGAVARE (*Prime Minister*): I beg to move that at the adjournment of Parliament on Thursday 22nd October 2015, the present meeting shall then stand adjourned to Thursday 3rd December 2015.

As you would remember, Mr Speaker, when we started this meeting, with your permission I made statement on how the Government wanted to conduct this sitting of Parliament. I made the intention of the government clear that we would like to use this opportunity, while leading to the budget meeting which will happen later on in December, to allow Parliament to discuss reports, asking questions to government and so forth to get the government accountable for its functions since it came into office.

The turn of events in politics has changed all those things in that a number of very important key ministers of this government have decided to resign from the Government and can be now seen sitting on the other side of this House. Their resignation is going to affect a number of very important programs the Government is planning to put forward. Bills, is one thing that needs the active supervision of the minister responsible of a ministry to finalize the bills. The other matter, of course, is the budget preparation which also needs ministers responsible to sit down in the ministries to help the preparation and finalizing of the budget for

its eventual tabling in Parliament, thus the need for the House to take a break and allow all these things to happen so that when December comes we will be ready to deal with the budget.

This year, we passed the Budget very late in the month of April because the election took place very late last year in 2014 and therefore the Government did not have enough time to prepare the Budget and has to resort to the use of the special resolution to allow the Minister for Finance continue to use funds from the consolidated fund to allow government services continue. The Government was only able to freely work from June and this month we would have had only five months of work, and we do not want to repeat that if we do not handle this thing very carefully.

To allow things to run smoothly, the Government needs a lot of reorganization now given what has happened thus the request to Parliament to allow us have a recess or take a special adjournment until the 3rd of December 2015 when we will go straight to the Budget. That is a brief explanation of the request and so I beg to move that at the adjournment of Parliament on Thursday 22nd October 2015, the present meeting shall then stand adjourned to Thursday 3rd of December 2015. I beg to move.

Debate on the motion ensued

Hon JEREMIAH MANELE (*Leader of Opposition*): Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the motion of special adjournment moved by the Honourable Prime Minister that at the adjournment of Parliament on Thursday 22nd October, 2015, the present meeting shall then stand adjourned to Thursday 3rd December 2015.

I note the reasons outlined by the Honourable Prime Minister, however, I beg to differ from those reasons and so I rise to speak against the motion of special adjournment moved by the Prime Minister, given the political uncertainty and instability we are now experiencing as a result of the resignation of a number of ministers and government backbenchers from the DCC Government. The Prime Minister no longer has the required support or majority that he used to enjoy in governing this country. And based on the fundamental Westminster democratic principle of majority rule, it would be irresponsible to adjourn Parliament to the 3rd of December 2015. As responsible leaders we cannot and must not allow this to happen.

Furthermore, I have yesterday noticed to the Clerk a motion of No Confidence against the Prime Minister. Parliament, as I have said, cannot wait until 3rd December to deal with this very important motion. We cannot allow the current political uncertainty to continue for the next month or so. Our people, business houses and investors cannot be kept in suspense. Parliament has to deal with the motion of No Confidence as soon as the notice matures in order to restore political stability and confidence in our country.

Finally, I just wish to stress that we cannot afford to delay or to adjourn Parliament to Thursday 3rd December 2015, given the reasons I have highlighted - the political uncertainty and instability that we are experiencing, and the fact that we are keeping our people in suspense and therefore would be very, very irresponsible on our part if we do not allow Parliament to dispense with the Motion of No Confidence at the appropriate time. With these few remarks this side of the House does not support the Motion of Special Adjournment moved by the Prime Minister. I resume my seat.

Mr MANASSEH MAELANGA (*Leader of Independent*): I stand as the Leader of the Independent Group just to reiterate and support what the Leader of Opposition has said. I think we all know that we are leaders of this nation, Solomon Islands and we cannot prolong things. I am speaking on behalf of the Independent group that this issue must be resolved. If you look around the House right now, we are seeing the numbers game being played out and this side of the House has the number and therefore I do not see any reason why we should adjourn to Thursday, the 3rd December 2015. I stand here just to show my support to what the Leader of Opposition has said.

Hon DANNY PHILIP (*Minister for Development Planning & Aid Coordination*): I just wish to further contribute in support of the motion and just to say that I totally agree with the Leader of Opposition in the course of the conventional type of democracy we adopted from the Westminster System. But it has been the history of this country that certain people are hijacking that process. I must tell Parliament about that. And there are obviously and absolutely very unjustified reasons why Parliament has been hijacked continuously over the time we gained political independence. I stood here as a testimony to one of the governments that is very short-lived on issues I cannot refer to now and because of that the government has been sabotaged to carry out its businesses.

Obviously we do not have the number here to support the motion of special adjournment to go through, but I must remind this House that we cannot base on the selfish agenda of a few to sabotage the process of democracy in this country. And it has been continuously the case.

I am not debating the motion of no confidence but before that comes in I have to also say my piece and to warn this House that for the sake of childish politics, government policies has been sabotaged continuously over the years. And there are some people who survived on that kind of attitude, rallying the support of people who have vested interests.

The Prime Minister in his opening statement here fully justified the reasons why he called Parliament, even before people started moving out from the DCC Government, Parliament has been called for good intentions. We do not foresee a motion of no confidence. It was an opportunist's time for the agenda of a few to be surfaced and to rally support. We have explained in this House through the opening statement of Parliament; the Prime Minister has explained exactly the same issues that are continuously brought to Parliament in the form of questions repetitiously.

I am just saying my piece before we continue with Parliament because obviously we do not have the numbers to push through a very comprehensive policy of rural development. Infrastructures have been scoped and tendered out in the various parts of our country, on Malaita and Guadalcanal and I cannot understand the reason why Parliament and Government have been sabotaged, blackmailed if you like, not to continue. This is true and I must be frank about it.

There will be reasons coming out from the motion of no confidence as to why the DCCG must cease to run this country. It will be a time of mudslinging and we will expose each other's rottenness in our dealings but let it be so, so that people out there, our voters must understand

the genuine interest of the people in this Parliament whom they voted for to tell the nation why this government should not continue to rule. The motion has been moved and I think it will be right for you to put it to the vote.

Hon SAMUEL MANETOALI (*Minister for Environment, Conservation Climate Change, Disaster Management & Meteorology*): I would like to make a short contribution to this motion.

I support the motion moved by the Honourable Prime Minister. I really support the motion for Parliament to stand adjourn until the 3rd of December 2015. I really support this period of time to be given. Why I am asking this is because we have the Political Parties Integrity Act and there are provisions there that should be properly checked. The Ministers who have moved and are now sitting on the other side should be properly checked whether they have already resigned as members from their parties. That is my point and I support this adjournment so that there should be a proper check whether they have resigned from the parties they are members to and so it is good to have this adjournment.

That is the point I would like make and to say that I support this motion because if they did not resign then they are still part of the government. They are still part of the government, especially the previous ministers, the Minister for Education, the Minister for Justice, the Minister for Provincial Government, the Minister for Culture and Tourism, the Minister for Police who is sitting down comfortably over there and the former Deputy Prime Minister. These people should be properly checked. I believe they are still of the Government because they have not yet resigned from their parties because their parties were merged. That is the point I would like to raise in support of this motion and I beg to take my seat.

Mr AUGUSTINE AUGA (*Lau/Mbaelelea*): I would like to say a few words in response to the Minister for Environment. If you think that our resignations are not according to the law, then the court is down there; take us to the court because this is not the place to talk about that. We have already resigned and we are not going to go back and sit on that side of the House so do not count on us. We do not have confidence and that is why we resigned. If we have confidence it would be difficult for us to move from the other side. We do not have confidence. Thank you.

Hon JOHN MANENIARU (*Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources*): I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Prime Minister for moving this motion of special adjournment that at the adjournment of Parliament on Thursday 22nd October 2015, the present meeting shall stand adjourned to Thursday 3rd December 2015.

I would like to pledge my support behind the motion for obvious reasons the Prime Minister has already outlined. I also joined the Minister for Planning and Aid Coordination to say that although the number is not here to support this motion, I think the intention of the motion in view of developments in the last few days as far as our politics is concerned, I think it is only fitting for us to consider what is going on. And that is the reason why I think that is the time for us to go through. I know this side of the House does not have the number, the number is on that side of the House, but do you trust the numbers, Mr Speaker? This is my second term in Parliament and those of you who go to the other side, are you going to

permanently remain there for the next three years? You promised this side that this is your government and you will remain on this side for four years but you did not. Is there a genuine reason?

What we have been promising this nation as leaders, the 50 leaders of this nation I would like to remind us again as we go into the opportunity of looking at a new government for these Happy Isles, the country we love. I would like to take us back as 50 Members of this Honourable House that we have been pledging our support behind unity and stability in this nation but here we are creating the opportunity to become unstable. I would like to remind us so that when we go into choosing a new government, which has the potential as echoed on the floor, then let us come out and take this nation forward as leaders, a government that will remain in power and complete its four-year term. That is my pledge to all of us.

I could not believe my eyes, I cannot believe what has happened. Those leaders have their own rights and have their own reasons, but I have been also sitting with them in the last four years on the other side and we all promised each other and pledged that we are going to support a government that must go forward. Politics in this country is not an easy thing to deal with. It continues to challenge both old and new leaders that we come in here to serve this country, to take this country forward with integrity in ourselves and moral ethics to lead our people.

We have been saying this and that in here, we have been making a lot of promises and we have been swearing in many times, and that to me, in my personal conviction, is a curse to this country and this Parliament. We are going to again swear in as new ministers, please let us do it properly because it is the Bible that we are holding in our hands. This is the curse that we, the 50 Members of Parliament are bringing to this honourable House and this nation as leaders.

I am very interested in the statement put across by the Minister for Development Planning and Aid Coordination – personal agendas. We claim ourselves to be Christians but how many times are we required to forgive and we ask for forgiveness for the sake of this sovereign country that we dearly love. The Bible says we must forgive 70 times 7. We pray every time we come into this chamber but our personalities have overtaken everything.

I would just like to sound out in this motion of special adjournment that we must now do things in the right way. Otherwise it is the personal agendas of only a few and even new Members have fallen into the trap. What are you going to be called now? The nation has been having problems with grasshoppers and now we have new grasshoppers, political grasshoppers. We do not like it, unfortunately, it is happening and we cannot escape it.

Let us remember our promises made to our people and this nation. We want stability so that investors can come into the country, however, they will never come; investors will never come because this House is creating the problem of instability. I will pray that if a new government is formed it will last for the three remaining years. I will pray for the new government because I fully support political stability for this nation. I continue to sacrifice despite of things not working right. We need to sacrifice for this nation. But we are not because our own personality and personal agendas comes first before the interest of this country.

I want to say this so that we can start to reflect on ourselves as leaders. And who is going to do it for this nation if we are talking about stability? It is us. Now that some of us are

jumping to the other side, I can guarantee you that there may be two or more jumps before the end of this term.

Thank you for the opportunity given to me to comment on this motion of special adjournment and I support the motion and I resume my seat.

Mr BRADLEY TOVOSIA (*East Guadalcanal*): God puts up a government and God also takes down a government. That is a biblical concept that all of us understand as a Christian country.

This Government is sick and that is why these people are now sitting on this side. I do not know but these people have their own inner convictions as to why they resigned and come to this side.

Today we talked about a lot of issues that we, the 50 Members of Parliament may have caused. The Minister for Planning was saying that these MPs will say a lot of things. That is a good thing! Let us say those things so that the people of this country can hear them. I am willing to testify too on what I know. I am very much willing to tell the truth to this country. Let us come out and say them so that the good people out there can hear who the true 50 Members of Parliament are. I like that! I like this kind of attitude! I like it! Let us do it in the next motion.

I can see that this country is being run by true interests but when we run the government, it is not happening and that is why I said there is sickness in the government and people cannot live happily because they are suspicious of each other. Something is not right within the government and I am sad that it has to happen this way.

When I came in as a Member of Parliament, I stood by the honourable Prime Minister all along. Even though I was on this side I voted for him because I believe in him. But as time goes by, things begin to change. I have come to know a lot of things in this current government that I will die with. I have a story to tell.

I think we, the 50 Members of Parliament have to be men enough in our talking here. Do not hide yourselves. Do not say something in here and then do something else. I am not that kind of person. I support the Leader of Opposition that we have to go for the motion of no confidence next week. If they win then let them run the country but it is not good to put the country in limbo. I think we should go for the motion next week. I fully support the Leader of Opposition by debating the motion next week. I resume my seat.

Mr RICK HOUENIPWELA (*Small Malaita*): Thank you Mr Speaker for allowing me to talk on this motion. It seems like we are debating the motion of no confidence but this is not a motion of no confidence but a motion of special adjournment. Therefore, what I would like to ask you Mr Speaker is for us to decide on this by taking a vote or whichever way you decide on.

I think the situation, unfortunately, is very precarious and unsustainable. The Prime Minister has stated very clearly that there are ministerial portfolios that are vacant and therefore would be very difficult to bring a government together when these vacancies are not filled. And I do not know whether the vacancies have been filled already and so it is hard to take anything forward. And of course, for the reasons the Leader of Opposition has outlined – instability and uncertainty will definitely be the situation. That is what I am afraid of. I think for us to just sit down like that for a month is not good. It is for that very reason I support the

Leader of Opposition not to support the motion that the House adjourns to the 3rd of December but we have to deal with the situation now. Dealing with it now is to face it and let it go. Of course, apart from the instability and uncertainty this situation has created, it has degenerated so let us deal with it as the Leader of Opposition said. The way is to deal with it now. With those few remarks I oppose the motion for the special adjournment to the 3rd of December.

Hon PETER SHANEL AGOVAKA (*Minister for Civil Aviation and Communication*): I would like to contribute to this motion of adjournment. There is really nothing for us to argue about. As some people have said, governments come and go. What the Prime Minister was simply saying is that he wants to adjourn Parliament to enable the Government continue with its business.

As we have already observed, the Government does not have the number to observe here in this House. I would just like to raise one point and that is we are causing instability very much to our government and our country. And this is going to cause fear to our investors, those that want to come and invest. If there is any allegation against anyone or the head of government or the head of anybody, we have institutions that we can raise issues through. It is only through those institutions that we can see fairness and justice. When we move motions of no confidence, it is not fair and just to whomever the allegations are raised against and not fair and just to our people as well when we continue to hold our people and our country in suspense all the time.

Governments come and go, so if there are any allegations raised against the head of the government, then they should be raised through the proper channels such as the Ombudsman's Commission, the Leadership Code Commission and the courts, which the Member for Lau Mbaelelea mentioned are there too. The court system is there where we can raise issues so that true justice is done and served rather than us coming here speculating on allegations, throwing mud at each other and destroying each other. That is not good. And I am very saddened at what we are doing at each other here. We are Members of Parliament of this country, elected to govern our country, lead and serve our people.

My point here is if there is an allegation, we have an institution which is the court to justify that allegation. With this I support the Prime Minister's motion and I support the motion.

Mr Speaker: As I have said, we have debated enough on this particular motion so I will now call on the honourable Prime Minister to wind up the debate.

Hon Manasseh Sogavare: Thank you very much Mr Speaker for allowing both sides of the House to talk on this motion. It is just a simple motion that does not delve yet into the issues we are raising in here but we are starting to heat up already. The time for that will come.

The motion is just for us to adjourn today, on the 22nd of October 2015 to Thursday 3rd December 2015 to allow the Government do its work. Unfortunately, the other side of the House was saying it does not support the reasons for the adjournment but said it wanted your head; it wanted your head.

The reason for the opposition to the motion is clearly to allow Parliament to debate the motion of no confidence when it matures in seven days' time, which is next Friday. Motions of

no confidence are very interesting. I have been through one of them already and went down with it; just by two votes. It is very interesting that the prime minister did not go down because of those issues. If I can recall very carefully, those who listened to the debate in 2007 would know that the Government won all the arguments of that motion of no confidence. All the reasons stated by the mover against the Prime Minister at that time were all responded to and won. But people were already fixed in their decision – we want your head. Even though we might explain things in here people's minds are already fixed. There is no motion of confidence moved in here has any weight on the way people vote. To bank on it as an institutional arrangement of changing the government is something that did not work throughout the 37 years of this country's existence.

Governments fall on the agendas of a very, very people, not even on national issues too. It would be very interesting when that motion will be eventually debated on the floor of this Parliament and then we will debate those issues. I have already heard that the reason why some of those colleagues resigned is because they are not happy with the reshuffle. Reshuffling is made so that the government can reorganize in moving its programs forward. It is a tool available to the government under the democratic process we have adopted.

It would appear when the time comes and we discuss the motion we will come to know that some people would like to remain permanently in certain ministries. They are in effect saying "Do not reshuffle us because these ministries belong to us". That is one issue that came up. And I would like when the time comes for the motion to be debated that those ministers inform us of the reasons why they want to continue to remain in those ministries and I will explain the reasons why I reshuffled them to other ministries from the ministries they used to be in. We have to tender documents to justify the reasons for the reshuffling. One is nonperformance; some of the colleagues I am still waiting for the policies of their ministries. It is now nine months but nothing is coming from them and yet we are saying we are not implementing. But who is responsible of implementing? It is ministers, ministers are placed with the responsibility of implement their programs.

I have started to address some of the questions that came to light in the media as to the reasons why ministers, especially the former Deputy Prime Minister resigned. Maybe that day we will hear from the Member for Lau/Mbaelelea, North East Guadalcanal, North West Guadalcanal, East Central Guadalcanal, Temotu Nende and East Honiara the reasons as to why they left the Government and moved to the other side. That is the way things are moving.

We all know very well the politics of this country. Some were saying "I have been cornered and find it hard to run away". Goodness me, you are not a little child. If you a small child, yes, we can understand that your neck has been strangled and so you cannot move. But you are an adult, a leader elected to Parliament. Those are admissions to me, for the others I am not sure tell, but we will debate this. But I want to reiterate again the point that motions of confidence of this House after 37 years of existence is not on issues tendered on the floor. No matter how much we may try to explain and answer all the questions, people are still locked up. That explains the reason why this country cannot move forward because people are still locked up in their heads and cannot reason things out. We are fixed. At 37 years and we are still listed below other countries which have moved ahead because they have political stability, they care about their country, they act rationally when it comes to national issues.

The way we conduct business in Parliament is about numbers to move motions; we debate by way of motions and if we vote in support or we vote against if we not want to support it. That is how it works here so it bolts down to number. And as rightly stated by the Member for Small Malaita it is a precarious situation now and it looks like the other side does not see the way we wanted to address this precarious situation, because there is a serious political agenda attached to it – we have to change the government. This is a disease that started many years that have gone by already. Governments come and if we do not want it, at the drop of a heart, we moved a motion of no confidence and we start to pull up our sleeves politically and we want to overthrow the government. That has been the attitude.

I am disappointed that this is going 20 years of my life in this House and I have seen it. During the election time leaders present themselves as a person that can be relied on as I cannot jump, I am a person of integrity but when we come in here, our legs start to become wobbly and we fall flat to this new culture called politics. Our eyes too start to wobble when things like this are waved before our eyes and we just follow them. Or that group offers this much and so if you give me more I will remain but if you do not then I will go. That is the sickness that continues to affect this country over the years. We are going 38 years and we have not changed yet. People in this country are looking at us and saying this bunch of people sitting in the round house is making a total fool of themselves.

This Parliament is about numbers. And I need to make it clear here that no one owns anyone in this House. There is an imaginary line that divides us here; the Government and Opposition Group. And if we allow Parliament and the way the debate process works, then it will be alright. We can say we own the numbers here and that side has its own number. But it is not about that. It is never, never about issues. It is about what the former Member for Aoke/Langalanga used to say '*the power of mammon*'. He stood here and makes that statement several times. It is the power of mammon. So let us be honest about ourselves. If honesty is what we are talking about then let us be honest about some of these things. We know it. You stepped out of the car and people start winking at you. One of them used to be sitting down on this side last time when we came in here on the first day. Very interesting that they were winking at him and so he went out and when he came in he went and sit on the other side. He went inside one of the dark cars outside there before he came inside. These are very interesting observations. He came in here but he seemed to be already wobbling.

What I am reiterating are real facts, it is what actually happens in this country. And it will continue to happen until we become mature in politics. We assured each other that if you have issues, come and discuss it with me. That did not happen. Little things like that basically tell us that people already have fixed agendas. Therefore, no matter how much we debate and argue issues here, it would not affect one bit of the vote in Parliament. That is the sad reality, and I know exactly that is what is going to happen today when we vote on this motion.

But since resolutions to any issues brought before Parliament is about numbers, I will respect the wish of this Parliament to question the integrity of this Prime Minister comes the vote of no confidence. I want us to tell the truth on the floor. Because the way the motion of no confidence is worded is very interesting 'that this Parliament does not have confidence on the Prime Minister', and that is me. Because obviously when the prime minister goes down the government also goes down with it and that is why ministers would have to defend.

When the motion is debated, please talk openly those of you that went over to the other side. I want you guys to talk when we debate the motion – the prime minister is really a bad person, you are this, this and that. Not because we try to console with one another and the other one misinform another one by saying you will be sacked. Wow, we have become very, very childish in this House. No consultations can happen and because they are afraid of being sack and so they run away. These are not really national issues but just petty, petty politics advanced by people who are very childish and their brains do not really mature politically.

I want to face that vote of no confidence so bring it on at its right time. And for that reason if we are going to put this motion to the vote, we are just wasting our time to vote when you guys are already predetermined that you are going to vote in favour no matter how much argument, for that reason I withdraw this motion and I want to face the vote of no confidence and please be direct with me. Sir, I withdraw this motion.

Mr Speaker: I now call on the Prime Minister to adjourn Parliament.

Hon Manasseh Sogavare: No, Mr Speaker, I think you need to allow the Leader of Opposition to move a motion without notice so that we deal with this matter next week.

Hon Jeremiah Manele: Mr Speaker, I seek your consent to move a suspension of Standing Order 11(2) in accordance with Standing Order 81.

Sitting suspended at 12.34 pm for lunch break

Sitting resumed at 2.38pm

Mr Speaker: Honourable Members, before the break the Leader of Opposition sought leave to move suspension of Standing Orders. I therefore grant leave to the Leader of Opposition's request.

Hon JEREMIAH MANELE (*Leader of Opposition*): Before I move the motion to suspend Standing Order 11(2) in accordance with Standing Order 81, I would like to thank the Honourable Prime Minister for his maturity and understanding in facilitating this process by withdrawing the special adjournment motion earlier on today.

I move that Standing Order 11(2) be suspended in accordance with Standing Order 81 to permit a member who is not a minister to move a motion notwithstanding Standing Order 11(2). The reason for this motion is to seek your leave to allow the House to make a decision to suspend Standing Order 11(2) in order for a non-minister like the Leader of the Opposition to adjourn Parliament. For the time being, Standing Order 11 prohibits anybody other than a minister to adjourn Parliament. This motion is therefore seeking the support of the House to have Standing Order 11 suspended.

The effect of such suspension is to give allowance to me as the Leader of Opposition to be able to adjourn Parliament. I thank you.

Hon MANASSEH SOGAVARE (*Prime Minister*): This side of the House has no problem with the request made by the Leader of Opposition for the relevant Standing Orders to be suspended.

Question agreed to.

Standing 11(2) is suspended accordingly

Hon Jeremiah Manele: I move that at its adjournment on Thursday 22nd October 2015, the present meeting shall then stand adjourned to Friday 30th October 2015.

The reason for this is as I have alluded to earlier to enable Parliament to dispense with the motion of no confidence that has been noticed a couple of days ago. This is the main reason for this motion. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: I will allow a few comments on this motion before I put the question. But before any comments, I wish to remind the House that when speaking to this motion, Members must speak to this motion only and refrain from speaking to the motion as if it is a motion of no confidence. Members will have that opportunity when the appropriate time comes.

Hon Manasseh Sogavare: The motion and the reason stated by the Leader of Opposition are very clear. The only reason for the request for this special adjournment to the 30th of October is to dispense with a motion of no confidence that has been noticed by the Leader of Opposition and so we cannot talk about it. Let that motion come so that we discuss the reasons why Parliament does not have confidence in the current Prime Minister. Thank you and I support the motion.

Question agreed to.

(Motion is carried)

Hon Manasseh Sogavare: I beg to move that Parliament do now adjourn.

Mr Matthew Wale: *Point of Order*. This comes as a separation motion to adjourn for today. The motion has been moved and has been carried and that should just be the end of the business. You get up and wave us goodbye and we wave goodbye to us and we all go out. But if it is going to be moved as another motion to adjourn for today, then it is additional to that other motion and creates a bit of confusion.

Hon Manasseh Sogavare: The Member for Aoke/Langalanga has a point. I was just saying that this is the end of the meeting and we meet again on the date you have requested. That is what we are saying.

Point of Order!

Mr Matthew Wale: So it is not a question to be put, he is not moving a motion of adjournment, he is just saying we are going out but since you are still sitting down Mr Speaker and that is why the confusion.

The House adjourned at 2.49pm