

NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS

DAILY HANSARD

FIRST MEETING – EIGHTH SESSION

TUESDAY 9TH MAY 2006

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

Prayers.

ATTENDANCE

At prayers all members were present with the exception of the Ministers for Police & National Security, Home Affairs, National Reform & Aid Coordination, Culture & Tourism, Health & Medical Services, Finance & Treasury, Provincial Government & Constituency Development and members for Small Malaita, East Guadalcanal, Marovo, East Makira and North West Guadalcanal.

MOTIONS

Motion of Sine Die

Hon SOGAVARE: Mr Speaker, in accordance with Standing Orders 8(3), I beg to move “that at the adjournment of Parliament on Thursday 11th May 2006, the present meeting shall be concluded and Parliament shall then stand adjourned sine die.”

Mr Speaker, in moving the motion, I would like to take the opportunity to assure the people of this nation that they have in place a government that is made up of very capable leaders who have the concern for the people at heart and will endeavour to implement development strategies that will achieve that worthy objective.

Sir, it is not my intention at this juncture in introducing this motion to speak at length or to address the allegations levelled at the government’s broad policy direction by certain

Members of the Opposition Bench. I intend to do that when I round up this motion.

But before I proceed, Mr Speaker, I would like to do the right thing by thanking a number of people. Firstly, the God we serve who continues to impart wisdom, and guides and leads. Of course, the churches and Christians throughout the country who have tirelessly made representation and petitioning God to intervene in our time of crisis. Those prayers have been marvellously answered.

Sir, I would also like to express my sincere thanks to His Excellency, your good self, and the Attorney General for your perseverance, understanding, and personal intervention, without which we would not have been able to come through the political impasse.

Mr Speaker, it would be remiss of me if I do not take this opportunity as well to thank my honourable colleagues who amidst unfair criticisms chose to make the decisions that changed the course of political tide and avoided what could have been a disastrous situation for this country, painful though the decisions may be to some people.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to thank the Member for Marovo and former Prime Minister for making the sacrifice that was absolutely crucial to restore peace and political stability in this country. He is the greatest peacemaker of all and deserves the highest respect of his people and that of the people of Solomon Islands.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Solomon Islands for their patience and understanding. Very often we take them for granted without realizing the damage and inconvenience caused to them. Of course, the same goes to the public service. They have been kept in suspense, and it is our intention that as soon as the House goes into recess to take control and provide the

political leadership that is now badly needed to take us forward.

Mr Speaker, let me now proceed to make my very short remarks, and I would like to begin by appealing as usual to the 50 Members of this honourable House. Mr Speaker, we are at the crossroads of our destiny. In times like this, it calls for leaders and those who are concern about the future of our children and grandchildren to come forward and be counted. Let us breakdown the imaginary line that placed us in opposite camps and be united in the determination of taking this country forward.

Mr Speaker, this is the time for tough decisions and we must not be afraid to make them because if we cannot who are we expecting to make them. We have been travelling the road of complacency for too long and unless we start to realize it, we are in danger of driving this country down the path of self-destruction because of indecisiveness.

Mr Speaker, we must implement drastic changes and move out from the status quo if we are expecting to make any change to the status of this country which is classified as least developing - a status that simply does not make any sense considering the fact that we are blessed with bountiful natural resources and potentials.

We have a choice, Mr Speaker, of which road to follow: The '**narrow road**' with moral applications and a clear vision or the '**wide road**' that we have been treading for nearly 30 years that brought us to the brink of destruction. As the good Book says "My people are destroyed because of lack of knowledge" (Hos 4:6)

Mr Speaker, sustaining the current system with its resource exploitation, ecological destruction, and social problems will not be possible and we will be simply irresponsible to continue on that path. We must develop a vision of a society that is both physically and socially sustainable. A society that is able to accommodate the ethnic and cultural spectrum of humankind in all its diversity and that moreover permits change and human development 'indefinitely'.

Mr Speaker, I guess what I am saying is that sustainability has physical, natural, ecological, social, cultural, psychological and

ethical dimensions. Human society can be sustainable only if it is sustainable on these counts. But there is one more important requirement: sustainability must remain a dynamic concept.

Mr Speaker, what we need to appreciate is that societies and their environments change, technologies and cultures change, values and aspirations change. Such change in this new world order or turbo-capitalism, which on the world scale now appears unstoppable, is destroying its own foundation as it undermines democratic stability and states' ability to function.

Whether we realize it or not, but the pace of change and the redistribution of power and prosperity are eroding the old social entities more rapidly than the new order can develop. The countries that have so far enjoyed prosperity are now eating up the social substance of their cohesion even faster than they destroy the environment. In such an unfettered global capitalism, Mr Speaker, only a responsible government could push through new rules providing for greater social balance and ecological, social and economic restructuring. I would like to assure this nation that their government is taking that responsibility very, very seriously.

In terms of addressing this problem, the strategic socio economic development, the practice has been and still is to exploit resources, especially forests and marine, without any restrictions in order to support and enrich political and social elites based in Honiara. Now that is a slap on our face, but I think we deserve it. The only reinvestment to rural areas has been the support of provincial bureaucracy, the unproductive sector, most of them oscillating around Honiara as well.

Mr Speaker, this must be altered if we are to take this country forward. This government is determined to clean out the mess that has been piling up year after year, government after government. And to start with, it is important that we make the public sector effective and accountable; restructure the financial system to make funds available for the 'needy' and not just the opulent. I appreciate that this is going to be a great challenge, but unfortunately it has to be done.

Above all, Mr Speaker, we need to restructure the economic system from Ontong Java in the North to Rennell Bellona in the South, from Tikopia in the East to Mono in the West – not only Honiara and her environs. We need to make real changes, not just dreaming about changes.

Mr Speaker, in the spirit of cooperation with our benefactors and development partners, we must endeavour to pursue the path of active decentralisation. This should see the establishment of important infrastructures in geographical groupings so that people in villages may have access to health, education, and other essential services in their close vicinity, and not to depend on Honiara at great expense and suffering as at present. This calls for a total restructure and review of strategic policies to one of accommodating ideas of radical change.

The writing I guess, Mr Speaker, is on the wall, and we are not reading it. The message of the ethnic crisis is simple - the message is decentralisation and diversification, and it is just unfortunate that we are pretending to be busy addressing law and order and simply becoming careless. We have wasted four precious years.

Mr Speaker, the objective of any decentralisation and diversification program must be to enhance more balanced development throughout the country by opening up new industrial and commercial centres, and international routes like the ones proposed for Rob Roy,

(hear, hear)

Temotu, South Guadalcanal, and Bina Harbour on Malaita, which we have been singing in this House, and we are not doing them. This country is blessed with potentials. For example, we have the world famous Marovo and Roviana lagoons with their tourist potentials, the Kia/Rob Roy Archipelag' with tremendous potentials but we are not making any significant progress in the development of our tourism sector. All it needs now is for us to implement the appropriate development strategies. Such strategy must be sensitive to the need to ensure that landowners also benefit from the development of their land.

Mr Speaker, I must continue to emphasise calls for a total change in attitudes as

well by the donor community. I am saying this because right now foreign aid is not filling the 'big gap' in the economy as perceived by the donor community. Instead the gap it is filling is servicing those who are monitoring it. That is generally, donors themselves. This may sound like an unfair criticism, Mr Speaker, but it is the fact.

The greatest contribution of foreign aid in Solomon Islands is the enhancement of consumerism in Honiara thus boosting profits of shop owners, whose capital is deposited in banks and properties abroad. However, having said that and in all fairness, I think lack of workable economic policies may also contributed to the situation just described, and the government will be taking that very, very seriously and hold constructive consultations with our aid donors to see that they use the donor money and focus them in areas that will make a positive impact to the economy.

Mr Speaker, in this regard this government is taking this matter seriously. We are determined to sit down with our benefactors and design a policy that will supplement our economic progress.

Mr Speaker, like I said I do not intend to speak at length because if I do I will be pricking needles on people and they will not be very, very uncomfortable so I will need to stop now in this introduction because I will have the opportunity to do so when I wind this motion on Thursday to respond to all the allegations that have been levelled at the government's broad policy statement and of course the issues that will be raised by Members of Parliament when they debate this motion of sine die.

With that, I beg to move.

(applause)

The Motion is open for debate

Mr TOZAKA: Mr Speaker, I too would like to speak on this end of meeting motion. This motion Mr Speaker, I gather is usually referred to the dying motion of the House, following a very hard and useful days meeting of the House. However, I notice that on this particular meeting, this motion is been elevated to take the centre stage, as the only useful motion of the

House that perhaps could justify the most costly two weeks stay that sadly saw the destruction of a good deal of the city in Honiara.

Having said this, Mr Speaker, as this is my maiden speech to this Honourable House, I would like to take this opportunity as the Member of North Vella La Vella to firstly express my appreciation and thanks to the Chiefs and people of North Vella La Vella for voting me as their representative in this Honorable House in the next four years. In the same manner, I congratulate all Honorable Members of Parliament on your successful election to serve in this Honorable House on behalf of your people.

Sir, I wish to join other colleagues who later on are going to be speaking as well to acknowledge various important appointments made in this Honorable House during the meeting which did not have time to do so due to the various unprecedented interventions. To go by the sequence of appointment, Mr Speaker, may I firstly congratulate you on your re-appointment as the Speaker of the Honorable House. Sir, your re-election is a clear reflection of the qualities you posses in heading the office, especially at this most challenging time.

I also would like to congratulates my honorable colleague, the Member of Parliament for Savo/Russells, Sir Allan Kemakeza on his duly election as Deputy Speaker of Parliament. I also congratulate the MP for East Choseul on his successful election as the Prime Minister and his Grand Coalition Government.

Mr Speaker, concerning the riotous acts on 18th April that led to the destruction of properties and displacement of many innocent people, especially members of our Chinese community, I would like to express my sadness and sympathy to the people who were affected. I on behalf of the Chiefs and people of North Vella convey our heartfelt sympathy to the members of the Chinese community over their loss and traumatic experience during this time.

Sir, I would like to acknowledge the goodwill people of Honiara including churches and non-government organizations, to name a few - the Westpac Bank that has offered sympathetic lending financial assistance to the victims in the effort of rebuilding themselves and their business properties.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the respective governments of the member countries of the Forum that form the Regional Assistance Mission of Solomon Islands (RAMSI) or codename (Helpem Fren). They are New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, just to name a few headed by Australia. Their prompt response to the request of the government of the day at that point of time in providing manpower reinforcement assistance through the Royal Solomon Islands Police and PPF to quell the law and order situation in Honiara, the skillful and professional manners in which they discharge their duties is highly commendable and praiseworthy.

Mr Speaker, there were certain critics level against the increase police and military personnel through RAMSI at that particular point in time. May I make some clarifications that first of all as we are all aware the Helpem Fren first landed on our shores more than two years ago at the request of our Government. Therefore, under the partnership arrangement between the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI, it is clear that they are not here to take over our jobs and they are not here to take over country. Mr Speaker, it is also clear in our partnership agreement that this goodwill mission to our country is not to cause trouble or increase our problems.

In fact, Mr Speaker, they are here for a period of time to help us break the cycle of crime, the cycle of corruption, the cycle of greed that had plagued our country for many years. By being here and helping us they are giving us the space of time and assistance we all need to return law and order, recover our economy and restore lasting peace.

Having said this, Mr Speaker, I am very pleased with the statement by the Prime Minister affirming his support and of his government for the continued presence of RAMSI in Solomon Islands.

Mr Speaker, this side of the House has also been subjected to a lot of rumours and smears alleging that we join and support each other in this group because of some sorts of payment allegiances through unscrupulous dealings with certain people and countries. Mr Speaker, I have nothing to hide about myself

personally, and I find this claim as damaging, irresponsible and an absolute lie, to say the least.

I say this, Mr Speaker, because my joining this group is a choice I freely and openly made under no condition of bribery or corrupt practices for that matter. In fact, Mr Speaker, my election campaign was predominately centred on the universal acceptable values of good governance, transparency and accountability. And therefore as an advocator and defender of these principles, I would be lying and accepting defeat from my people of North Vella should I change to subscribe to such alleged unacceptable practices, especially given a slim majority in winning the election in defending these principles.

Mr Speaker, in acknowledging the statement of the Prime Minister yesterday, which I do not have the opportunity to speak, I wish to say in general that Solomon Islands is very well known of its show of policies, program of actions in beautiful words and colours, that hardly achieve successful implementation. Mr Speaker, this is because whatever policies that we emerge with either small or big, the bottom line lies on the question of finance, manpower affordability and capacity respectively. Mr Speaker, also it has been an inherited practice in the past where incoming governments have the attitude of not accepting and appreciating the good work, amount of time and energy and money invested by previous governments on the same policies so that they could either build or review them in the best interest of the people and country.

There is no need, Mr Speaker, in my view to make any radical change of public policies to any issues just for the sake of a new government. Ministers should give themselves ample time, in my opinion, in office to sit together with their Permanent Secretaries and advisors and allow themselves to advise them on the present developments of those policies and only then to decide if or not any change of those policies are necessary, in the light of the joint guidelines of the government of the day. If people and things are working well, Mr Speaker, for the good of the country, why try change or fix them is the typical message that I wish to get across to the House.

Mr Speaker, my people of North La Vella are in urgent need of help in terms of basic services, restoration and development projects and programs such as education, medical, agriculture, fisheries, shipping, airports and so on do not require a 100 days program to implement them.

Mr Speaker, the necessary policies and programs for these things are already there in the Ministries and Provincial Governments and Departments, and they have been there for ages. What is lacking is the implementation of these policies and programs? We therefore, need to find out the practical problem that inhibits the successful implementation of these policies, such as finance, manpower and so on and address them immediately. Not coming out with the same policies and programs that would only exacerbate the problems.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, to share with my honourable colleague, the Minister of Public Service I will insist on Permanent Secretaries and subordinates to be of merit based on qualification, ability and experience irrespective of political affiliations and demographic differences. In other words, let us find the best people available in the market right now train them, pay them well with lots of rewards for high results in their performance in the Public Service.

Mr Speaker, furthermore I would like to urge the government of the day not to allow political interference in the Public Service, especially in the recruitment of Permanent Secretaries and other established posts within the Public Service.

Public Service, Mr Speaker, consists of career professional who have undergone long-term training and experience in the job, and when outside persons are appointed directly into the system without due process of procedures and regulations, automatically the Public Service system reacts defensively, causing conflicts, low morale and poor performance outputs.

Sir, we may have to allow at this point in time lots of expatriates to help in the immediate short-term on short time contracts to fill gaps. We must not afraid of this as we are part and partial of the open market while our locals are given opportunities for more training

both overseas and locally to push forward change and focus on delivery.

Mr Speaker, there is the universal view about less of the male dominance culture, and more female involvement to improve the chances of getting aid to actually reach the target people and prosper. Therefore, women and women's roles in organizations are a priority issue of Solomon Islands. The same should apply to our Youth Organizations. In fact there has been a suggestion for the establishment of a Women and Youth Ministry. I support this proposal for the government's attention.

Mr Speaker, therefore, with the various reform programs, Public Service Reform and Reconstruction has to be the top priority in my view because it has to have an efficient Public Service working properly to deliver its policies to the people.

Mr Speaker, with the country still suffering from the after effects of the ethnic tension coupled with the 18th April atrocity, what choice do we have? The fiscal situation is desperate and quality of life has crippled. Restoring and consolidating the rule of law and achieving macroeconomic stability are priorities to be tackled for the economy to recover and grow at a sustained rate.

Mr Speaker, a bit on the motion of vote of no confidence, in my view, that caused the change of Government within a matter of week was to my humble and honest feeling unacceptable, inappropriate and untimely. It was to my perception an action of very desperate people who would not accept humble defeat to be once again sitting on the same position as they were in the House during the last four years.

Mr Speaker, the philosophy of equal playing field was mentioned at one point in time. How could this be justified when we were not given the opportunity to exercise our rights to prove or disapprove ourselves in performing our responsibility to warrant moving such a motion?

Mr Speaker, on foreign affair matters, I regret to say the hands-off approach by the statement of the Prime Minister in his response to the Government of Australia's comment to the appointment of the two MPs which arouse many arguments both locally and overseas.

Mr Speaker, the ramification of this old fashioned notion of heavy hands-off approach by previous governments attributed to the lack of response from the government of Australia when we first asked them for help in 2000.

Given the Australian Government foreign policy change to our favour, and millions of dollars investment in the country through RAMSI towards helping a neighbour in crisis, and that extensive work given in forging partnership relationship with Australia and other Pacific Island countries through RAMSI, such attitudes are uncalled for at this of time. We need to be caution and we need to be sensitive on how we express ourselves on sensitive issues of this nature as a party to present developments in our relationship with our neighbours, especially Australia and also as a member of the earth's global village.

Mr Speaker, it is therefore, in our mutual interest to promote open consultation and dialogue with special preferences for a much stronger and closer relationship with our neighbours as good steadfast friends.

Mr Speaker, as implied in the statement of the honourable Prime Minister yesterday we do not have much choice to play around with luxuries of democracy in the light of our critical economic situation which was further deteriorated by recent events. Because of our own fault we are already behind schedule of work this year in rebuilding this nation so we should give all the chance to goodwill and common sense for the sake of our people to put aside our differences and petty politics and get on with the momentous task of rebuilding our nation.

I would like to plea to all Members of Parliament on both sides of the House that the present political, economic and social critical situation of our country does not warrant us continue playing political games with our people and nation, but to work together in partnership with ourselves as a united Solomon Islands, and with our friends and neighbours through a complete change of attitudes and behaviour with all respect to rebuilding Solomon Islands for the future of our people.

With these Mr Speaker, I resume my seat.

Mr HUNIEHU: Thank you Mr Speaker, for allowing me the floor of Parliament to contribute very briefly to this traditional motion of sine die moved by the honourable Prime Minister. I wish to sincerely thank him for moving this motion to allow many of us express our views and to thank voters in our constituencies who voted us into this honourable house.

In that connection, Mr Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to thank people in the East Are Are constituency for seeing it fit in voting me as their Member of Parliament for another term. I only hope that all of us will be working together for the common good and benefit of the constituency, and it is only through working together and cooperating together shall we experience progress in the constituency.

Sir, I also wish to thank the other nine candidates who have given me a hard time in the battle for who will be the chosen representative in that constituency. I hope that we will cast our differences away and work together for the common good of our people.

My contribution this morning Mr Speaker, will be quite different. It will just be a continuous of some statements I made yesterday. It is carrying out an autopsy or post-mortem on the situation after the general election in April 5th 2006.

Sir, what transpired over the last month taught us lessons and as National Leaders we should be taking stock of the various instances that have occurred. Mr Speaker, if we have not learned anything from what had happened over the last year, then I feel sorry for this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, soon after the natural death of this Parliament on the 20th December 2005, the Governor General made a proclamation and declaration for the National General Election to be held on the 5th April 2006. Mr Speaker, according to the results of the general election and according to reports by election monitors, perhaps sent in by the United Nation, the elections were conducted fairly and the results widely accepted by them and the community in Solomon Islands.

The majestic voices of people in Solomon Islands were expressed through the process of ballot boxes and there is no excuse for that. It is the voices of people throughout

Solomon Islands that elected all of us into this Parliament, not by accident but by the choice of people.

Sir, there were about 10 political parties that contested the general election namely the Independent Democratic Party, the National Party, the Liberal Party, the United Party, the Peoples Alliance Party, the Solomon Island Democratic Party, SOCRED Party, the Rural Advancement Party and many more that I forget, there are just many of them and Independent Members, all of us contested under all our policy statements.

For example, Mr Speaker, in my constituency, in the 30 villages that I visited the question commonly asked by the people was corruption and Waku Government. That question was quite spread throughout the constituency Mr Speaker, and I want to make a notable comment on one of the questions I was asked by a woman of some 80 years old in one of the villages in my constituency. This is what she said; “Do you realize that Solomon Islanders are now deprived of their rights in society? Do you realize Mr Candidate that Solomon Islanders are now feeding on the rubbish of the foreign investors and the Chinese?” This was what she asked, and I was of the opinion that this was a question implanted in this woman to ask by none other than one of the candidates of one of the respectable party in Parliament, and I believe it was the National Party candidate that implanted this question.

I told her, Mr Speaker, that if you are complaining about investors in Solomon Islands, if you are complaining about Chinese in this country, about Asians in this country, if you are complaining that we will be feeding on the rubbish because of foreign manipulation, foreign dominant investment in our country, what you must realized is that 80 to 90% of our revenue budget is derived from revenue generated by these investors. Without these revenues, Mr Speaker, there will be no services provided in education, health, police, the salaries of public servants will not be on schedule and there will be chaos in the local economy. Of the total recurrent revenue, investors contribute that much. That is what we must appreciate as a government and that is what we must appreciate as a political party. If you think you have the

right to complain about the influx of foreigners into this country, the organic laws, the subsidiary legislations enacted under the provisions of the constitution must be invoked by Members of Parliament.

If you think the influx of investors or Asians into the country is abusing yours rights then the laws can be changed, and it made a lot of sense. There is the Immigration Act, there is the Citizenship Act, there is the Investment Act and it is up to the new Minister for Commerce to make necessary adjustments and changes in order to address the situation. It is up to him and as a former Prime Minister he should know where to go from now.

What I am saying, Mr Speaker, is that some political parties during the election were already implanting hatred in the minds of Solomon Islanders. I wonder how many of us have experienced this. They have implanted hatred and jealousy.

At one stage, Mr Speaker, I highly respect the MP for East Malaita but the statements he made prior to the election in connection to non citizens' participation in politics leaves a lot to be questioned.

The same Constitution allows naturalized citizens who live here more than 10 years and who have investment here the right to vote, the right to participate in politics. If he does not like that provision then it is up to him to suggest amendment to the Citizenship Act and not complain bitterly in the press because that is not where to sort things out.

Mr Speaker, this is where this Parliament can divide and can cause division amongst our people, and this is by creating hatred amongst our people. So here we are 50 Members of Parliament elected, and by virtue of our constitution a government must be formed and so lobbying for the Prime Minister's post begins because the constitution or the 1978 Independence Order which your good self, Mr Speaker, and the MP for Simbo/Ranongga signed in 1978 did not allow a majority party winning the election to form a government. The leadership has to be decided by the votes of Members of Parliament. And in this connection it allows Members of Parliament to lobby themselves for the post of Prime Ministership.

This is where the two groups, one stationed at the Iron Bottom Sound (IBS) and another one stationed at the Honiara Hotel. Our group was stationed at the Honiara Hotel because it was our base for the last 10 to 12 years anyway. That is our base because we have been there for those many years.

Two groups, Mr Speaker, and all the small factions were lobbying to form the government. There were eliminations of four or five candidates and the current Prime Minister was eliminated in the first ballot. But he was smart in forming a breakaway group made up of Guadalcanal MPs promising them to deal with the bona fide demands, and so a station was established by another group at the Pacific Casino, a third group at the Pacific Casino.

So we have three groups lobbying for the post of Prime Minister. This was the middle group and in reality it must be the middle group that ruined things. We know the outcome of this but I am reminding this Parliament because of the intensive lobbying for the position of Prime Minister, the public in Honiara, not the public in Solomon Islands made widespread rumours of widespread corruption so much so the word corruption is a household word in the whole of the whole Honiara Community. It was corruption, Waku Government and all that.

What made it difficult, Mr Speaker, in the lobbying is that many Members of Parliament had been double crossing. Some Members of Parliament were sponsored by five political groupings, and that is what made things difficult. The Liberal sponsored them too, the National Party also sponsored them, the Rural Advancement Party sponsored them and then the Independent Democratic Party also sponsored them and so when they won they do not know which side they will go. So dishonesty must be on us Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, I always stood for one party in my whole life. I have never been sponsored, I never have double crossed at any one moment, at any one time, my friends there know that very well

(*Hon Sanga interjecting*): From National to AIMP.

Mr Huniehu: Mr Speaker, these are the revealing truths about how futile, complicated and useless the negotiations for the position of the Prime Minister had been.

Mr Speaker, it so happened that this side of the House successfully lobbied and won it. We must win the Prime Ministership because we win the majority of votes in the country. If judged by the election results, our Party had more Members of Parliament elected. How can we lobby ourselves as the public perceive when we were just trying to reform the same government? The Independent Democratic Party, the Peoples Alliance Party and Lafari were the same partners in the last government and we only negotiated in-house arrangements. Where is all the corruption coming from Mr Speaker, may I ask? That is the question for my good friend the Prime Minister to answer.

For myself I am very hurt because since I entered Parliament in 1993 I was never lobbied by anyone and I never slept in hotels. I have a house in Honiara where I live and nobody visited me at night and I lived for my principles in politics.

The Member for Marovo was constitutionally elected as Prime Minister. Unfortunately when I went outside of Parliament I can smell something of people standing outside in the crowd had posters already printed, and so they must have known the outcome of the election, and this must be pre-planned.

The very moment the Prime Minister elect wanted to address the people you can see people chanting with their posters. When did they write the posters? One of the Members of Parliament went outside and said “We lost and so you go ahead”. What is this, “We lost and so you go ahead”? It only suggests that what everybody believed that it was all planned and the government side should know about this.

Some of you leaders in the government side have been in Parliament for 24 years, 30 years and 20 years, and I do not want to believe that they knew nothing about it. No, Mr Speaker, and that is why I asked them yesterday to honourably resign from this Parliament if they have that guilty conscience.

We must be honest about ourself and our integrity. Why did we allow the burning down of the private sector, the Chinese

Community? We national leaders should be emphasising the unity of people as this is a multi-racial country. Whatever you may say, how many business houses you will burn in the future, this country will remain a multi-racial country. There is no country in the world that is not multi-racial and multi-cultural, and Solomon Islands will remain like this for the next million years..

The group, like in the days of the forced resignation of the MP for Aoke/Langa Langa, were demanding the resignation of the Prime Minister elect. Their demand was that if the Prime Minister does not resign today the rioting will go from here to town and into Chinatown. If they had not said this in their election campaigns I will doubt. But some of the candidates, like the East and Central Honiara, were already provoking and advocating that to happen. ‘Chase the Chinese away’. This is not responsible leadership. This is not responsible leadership and it must be blamed squarely on all of us. Noway and I cannot accept this.

Mr Speaker: Honourable Member, I just want to remind you that statements made in this House can be demanded to be substantiated. Just be reminded of that.

Mr Huniehu: Thank you, and since there is no request for substantiation I will continue.

Mr Speaker, the demand for the resignation of the Prime Minister elect can be substantiated by shouts outside such as ‘resign, resign now, resign’. All of us heard it and SIBC broadcasted this.

(**Mr Kemakeza** interjecting): SIBC broadcasted it and so that is evidence.

(**Hon Ulufa’alu**): So then take SIBC to court as SIBC inciting)

Mr Huniehu: Mr Speaker, SIBC for that matter was only broadcasting what it saw and heard so its reporting was totally precise. In addition to that, all cameras were opened, satellite cameras from helicopters and all video cameras around Parliament had taken record of those incidences. We have all evidences to prove this. Also in

addition to that two Members of the Government are already in custody for questioning and who knows many more will follow. I hope not.

Mr Speaker, what else can be said? The vehicles of some Members of Parliament were used to supply logistics such as bread, water and you name it. The statement “you go ahead” can be heard. These are facts. There were also some MPs with the crowds chanting ‘you go ahead, you go ahead’, and even lost candidates in the election were shouting.

I also saw one of the lost candidates in the East Are Are Constituency shouting and chanting “get them down, get them down”. Mr Speaker, how can you aspire for national leadership when you have so much hatred for the winning candidate and for an ethnic group in the country? This is not leadership. I denounce this in the highest term possible. This is aspiring for national leadership but having hatred for innocent people.

So the Chinese Community was a victim of a pre-planned episode. It is all pre-planned. But why target the Chinese Community? Most of them or if not all of them are innocent. I always saw that most of the lobbying in this country was supported by loggers and not the Chinese Community. The Chinese Community whose properties were destroyed are retailers, and so what sort of vested interested would they have in supporting the government to win. Most of their businesses were operating on marginal profits. They do not have any interest in politics. This must be properly clarified.

In providing national leadership, Mr Speaker, we must not create acrimony and hatred amongst our community. If the influx of people in our country is unacceptable then use the law to deal with it and not take the law into our own hands. I hope my good friend the Minister for Justice is listening and the Minister for Trade and Commerce is also listening because they have to deal with this effectively.

Mr Speaker, may I say this. If there is public perception that the government side is involved in the burning down of the Chinatown then I do not see how on earth can it re-establish the confidence lost in the investment climate? How can the Minister for Commerce do it? It is almost like chasing somebody away and say please come back. In life it is not like that. I

can assure him that he will find it very difficult to convince those who left to come back. They have nothing.

Unfortunately the Prime Minister’s statement made no mention of how he will be helping the victims to re-establish their enterprises. What sort of help would be forthcoming? One would expect in the maiden speech of the Prime Minister to address that because it is the problem of the hour.

Mr Speaker, the strategy used by the government side as ‘a vote of no confidence.’ May I subscribe to the views by the MP for North Vella La Vella that in my humble view, that motion should be unconstitutionally premature. Mr Speaker, it is a grey area in law which can be argued.

Section 63 is very clear and I will read it once again. *“No member of Parliament shall be permitted to take part in the proceedings of Parliament (other than proceedings necessary for the purpose of this section) until he has made before Parliament an oath of allegiance in the form set out in Schedule 1 to the Constitution.”*

This is very clear although in other sections of the Constitution the declaration of a Member of Parliament qualifies him as a MP, this section in the Constitution is very specific. One cannot participate in any parliamentary proceedings until sworn in to do that.

Mr Speaker, you made the ruling that it is quite legal and constitutional. I hope you are not using the provisions in the Standing Order which gave you the finality in making such a judgement because in law this is a grey area and is disputable. This was merely a political ploy Mr Speaker. I am wondering now if the Minister can still move a motion to dissolve Parliament. The Minister of Foreign Affairs in Solomon Islands moving a motion to dissolve Parliament in which he is Foreign Affairs Minister. Incredible!

Hon OTI: Point of clarification Mr Speaker.
The MP for East Are Are
.....(inaudible).....

(Mr Fono interjecting): He was using that as a threat.

Mr Huniehu: Yes, the only thought in my mind is that he used that as a tool to frighten members of the government in the lobbying tactics that if you do not support us Parliament will dissolve.

Mr Speaker, I hope he was genuine in doing that, and we are not fools anymore. We know this. What I was merely pondering was, is he going to move the motion to dissolve himself as the Foreign Affairs Minister? He did not answer that?

Mr Speaker, I was making reference to the decisions you made and no wonder even at the swearing in of the MP for Marovo as the Prime Minister elect who was constitutionally elected, the Speaker of Parliament and the Chief Justice were not present. This is a sign of impartiality, Mr Speaker. But they were present at the swearing in of the present Prime Minister.

I am raising these points as a piece of information to all of us. It means that even the highest authority in the legal system was already condemning a democratically elected Prime Minister by not being present when he was sworn in.

Mr Speaker: Point of order. Maybe I should explain. I am not too sure whether I can speak on behalf of the honourable Chief Justice but for purposes of the Speaker, there was no notification and information of the swearing in nor was invited to it. I just want to make that clarification.

Mr Huniehu: Thank you, Mr Speaker, I fully accept that explanation but I made mention of it because I was present in both of the swearing-ins and I saw something different, and I was only raising that.

The burning of shops and rioting in Chinatown is another strategy used by the then opposition. It is a very costly exercise. It is a very costly strategy that created hatred and fear, which affected investor confidence in this country. Sad to say it all happened.

Mr Speaker, threats went beyond burning of properties. Ministers of the government, in particular the Members of Parliament from Malaita Province had threats on their properties and threats on their lives. I have never received any threat in my life at anytime

before until the aspiration of this government to take on leadership in this country.

Mr Speaker, if those making threats to me killed me what are they going to do with my coffin? I will be buried but they will achieve nothing. Virtually nothing! An innocent man true to his principles and beliefs in politics killed because he cannot associate himself with a government or with a group who have an illegal army behind them to carry out their hidden agendas. It is a matter of principles - that is the only reason. Otherwise record shows that I am more on that side than this side.

I was a founder member of the Liberal Party, a founder member of the National Party. I and the Prime Minister now were founder members of the national Party. And when you talk about SIAC I am sitting on the wrong side because I should be on the other side. Is this true? Mr Speaker, I hope this explains some of the things.

The strategy used even went further to campaign managers coming to members on this side of the House to switch side. Even losing candidates were lobbying us to switch sides. There were letters and signatories by thousands of people signing, appealing and demanding that we switch side. These tactics used throughout the lobbying exercise is uncalled for, uncivilized, provocative and demeaning.

All members on the government side now were allocated two or three securities. Their camp at the Iron Bottom Sound was locked away from public but all of us are public properties. Members of Parliament are public properties. We should have free movement, free access, and our people should have free access to us. But that was the first time in history Members were locked away from public, and this is not good enough. I hope it does not happen in the next election.

Mr Speaker, may I speak now on the election of the new Prime Minister, and it must have something to do with the Governor General's intervention. In my humble view, whilst the Governor General has the right of finality in Schedule 2 of the Constitution, I also wish to inform this House that such rights interfered with the powers of the Judiciary. The separation of powers are very clear. The Judiciary's power is very clear. There should

not be any interfere with the Judiciary the same as there should not be interference with the executive government. Our powers are defined under law. Unfortunately the Governor General may see the finality of his decisions by invoking that section.

Also Schedule 2 of the Constitution does not allow for proxy voting. There was a proxy voting conducted. Schedule 2 of the Constitution denominated by the order issued by your good self and the Clerk that the place of meeting would be National Parliament and this is where the vote must be cast.

Mr Speaker, I also wish to cite instances where a Prime Minister was elected minus four members of Parliament. There was no total presence of Members of Parliament, and that was in year 2000 when the same Prime Minister was elected in the absence of four Members of Parliament. Precedence has been set. Why is this so particular? That is why I am starting to question the independence, neutrality and impartiality of the authorities concerned.

Mr Speaker: Point of order. I want to remind the honourable Member of section 36 subparagraph 8 that “the conduct of the Governor General, Ministers and Members and Judges or other persons performing Judicial functions shall not be raised in Parliament”. Again this is for the notice of Members please.

Mr Huniehu: Thank you for your clarification, may I continue?

Mr Speaker: Please continue.

Mr Huniehu: Mr Speaker, I wish to comment on the formation of the new government. With the announcement of the ministerial line up and with due regards to the fact that many experienced Members of Parliament have been appointed Ministers, two former Prime Ministers and well experienced Members of Parliament, it is regrettable that two members still under question in custody have been given ministerial portfolios. Does this mean the Governor General will have to swear them in the prison camp? Will he allow them to come here or to go down dress up like an army to swear them in, may I ask?

You yourself made some remarks of adulation to the newly elected Prime Minister that when he was elected there were shouts of jubilation, people singing the National Anthem ‘God save the Solomon Islands from shore to shore.’ Mr Speaker, I heard it differently. ‘God save the Solomon Islands from store to store.’ That is what I heard and is underpinning what had happened Mr Speaker?

Someone also said, Mr Speaker, that there are songs of jubilation ‘Wakabaoti long Chinatown.’ It is no longer that. It is ‘Wakabaoti bonem Chinatown’. Yes. This is very negative. The most popular and famous song had been turned into a nightmare. ‘Wakabaoti long Chinatown, wakabaot bonen Chinatown.’

Mr Speaker, this is very degrading of a society we would like to call a moral and Christian society, law abiding citizens, the happy isles. Is this what we expect to see in the new millennium for Solomon Islands to be Mr Speaker? The new millennium which should be seen as providing hope and tranquillity for the people of Solomon Islands, for our own people to be composing songs sarcastically to the message of unity to this country? No sir. This Parliament must honour its respectability and dignity.

Mr Speaker, it is sad for the present Prime Minister to be Prime Minister because he associated himself in a divide and rule tactic. He came and joined this side and gunned down a Western leader and divorced this side to gun down another Western leader on the other side. This speaks poorly of the credibility of this Parliament.

Sir, all of us should be working as a united grouping. All of us should be demanding a better future for our people and not involve in divisive politics. However, that is what we are practicing. I never regretted landing in the Opposition. No. I wish to say that the leadership structure for unity of our nation does not exist in the present grouping. Two people from the Western Province, one as Prime Minister and one as Deputy Prime Minister is showing a wrong signal in the leadership of unity, in leadership of cooperation, in leadership of national reconciliation and unity.

I am making this point because many fellow Solomon Islanders are also making the same point. Or may be is it because of political stability and naivety that the Prime Minister with only one party man with him is pulled by the nose by the parties with more number and numerical strength in the government side? Is he subjecting himself to the demands of those in whose interest must be serviced? That is those responsible in the burning down of the Chinatown, may I ask Mr Speaker?

These are serious questions that one needs to ask which are very fundamental and serious, Mr Speaker, by appointing two Members of Parliament still in custody for questioning had damaged the image of Solomon Islands internationally. We can say this is a sovereign country but we must realise that our sovereignty is not a stand alone issue Mr Speaker. One hundred percent (100%) of our development budget is provided by development aid. Even now Mr Speaker, some of our recurrent budget is also funded by budget support from donors. We have investors investing millions and millions of dollars in this country and so we must not over emphasise the sovereignty of this country because we are not an island in the sky. No!

Mr Speaker, at the same time I wish to congratulate the Prime Minister for clearing misrepresentation of his government's policy in particular our diplomatic ties with the Republic of China. The shift to Communist China as propagated by many members in the government is the wrong choice for this country. Our relationship with the Republic of China was established on the principles of promoting democracy and justice, the principles of mutual trust, benefit and cooperation between the two countries. Not only that, Mr Speaker, but they have been a friend in need and a friend indeed exemplified on the active participation during the social ethnic tension when all else did not come our way ROC came and provided us budgetary support and even to pay for public servants' wages those days. I am glad that the misreporting has been adequately addressed by the Prime Minister, and I hope he will continue to maintain a strong relationship with the Republic of China. Any idea of deviating from

that very important policy must be forgotten right now.

Mr Speaker, we do not want to repeat the incidents of last month and therefore I am calling on this government to carry out necessary reforms on the political system in this country, on the Parliament system. And I am pleased the Prime Minister had made the commitment that these issues will be addressed during his tenure in office.

Mr Speaker, Parliament is all about integrity, honorability and respectability. All of us can either make Solomon Islands or break Solomon Islands.

Mr Speaker, I am saddened that the actions of Members of Parliament have landed hundreds and hundreds of youths in Rove. These are actions not of their own making Mr Speaker. We must be fair because instead of providing employment for those poor youths we provoked acrimony and hatred in them. They acted on our advice and instruction and they were arrested for this.

If there is need to change a government we must always remember doing it in a non violent resolution is the best option for us. A non violent resolution Mr Speaker! Martin Luther King, the Great Black American did it through non violent activity. He had a dream for America. He had a dream for black Americans that one day they will be treated equally like the fellow white Americans. He did not call an army from Africa to go and fight the US Army. He did it through non violence but peaceful demonstration. Yes, Mr Speaker, why can't that happen here I wonder? Mahatma Ghandi, the Great Indian leader did it through non violence.

In conclusion I want to talk about these two important characters. Solomon Islanders who want positive change have all the rights to do it through non violent means, and not like the MP for Aoke/Langa Langa when the people were marching and chanting told them that it is their rights and so when those people walked down the hill they said it is our right and so let us go and burn down Chinatown. That is their rights. You provoked and said it. This is not good enough as national leaders.

I would like to once again thank you for allowing me to participate in Parliament and I would like to think that we in this Parliament

must all put our heads together in these trying times to unite our people and together we shall move.

Thank you Mr Speaker.

(applause)

Mr TOSIKA: Thank you Mr Speaker, for allowing me this privilege to speak on the floor of this honourable Parliament House.

Mr Speaker, as a new Member of Parliament for West Honiara Constituency, I wish to thank all the 3075 electors or voters who had demonstrated their democratic rights in casting their votes on the 5th April 2006. Moreover the voters who entrusted their confidence on me, by casting their votes in my support in winning the National General Election for West Honiara Constituency. I convey my sincere appreciation for their overwhelming support and commitment.

Simultaneously, Mr Speaker, I wish to express my gratitude to all the residents in West Honiara Constituency, especially the youths for not taking part in the recent uprising, looting and burning on Tuesday 18th April 2006.

Mr Speaker, I wish to express my sincere appreciation particularly to young men in West Honiara Constituency who had demonstrated their respect for law and order in providing security for business houses in West Honiara and other parts of Honiara including shops and business houses in Central Honiara and in particular the Honiara Hotel.

Mr Speaker, West Honiara, especially White Honiara, in the past years has been seen and thought of as a lawless community. Mr Speaker, I wish to assure you and this honourable Chamber that the community is now a new community which encourages respect, oneness and unity among each other. We are working seriously in fostering peaceful and harmonious coexistence in certain areas in West Honiara Constituency for lasting peace in our community.

At this juncture, Mr Speaker, I wish to register my concern and I believe many Solomon Islanders do have the same concern that Solomon Islands is a sovereign nation, the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force is a discipline force under the Constitution and the

Disciplinary Law established under the same should have its own armoury.

Mr Speaker, this is to ensure that the protection of fundamental rights set out in Chapter 2 – rights and freedom of the individual under the Constitution is preserved and respected.

Mr Speaker, the events of Tuesday April 18th gave rise to this concern. It is a sad and desperate situation our police officers were in, in that on that day all our local police officers were armless and were not able even to protect themselves and the ordinary citizens of the country whom they on behalf of the law seeks to protect.

Mr Speaker, had the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force were properly armed they would have contained the rioting and the mob rule that devastated business houses and infrastructure in Honiara. I therefore suggest, Mr Speaker, that something must be done immediately to assist in restoring the ability or the capacity of the Police Force to curb and contain future uprisings.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I wish to convey my sincere thanks and support to the Prime Minister, the Honourable Manasseh Sogavare, the MP for East Choiseul for his successful election to the highest political post of the land. I wish also to thank honourable colleagues of the Cabinet for their successful appointments to the various ministerial portfolios entrusted to them. I render my support to you all as you carry the task of making policies and vital decisions to steer our country to a safe economic and political ground.

Mr Speaker, at this juncture I wish to convey my sincere congratulations to members of the Opposition for the role they will be playing in actively guiding the government to ensure that laws, policies and decisions made at this level truly reflect the desires of our people for the next four years.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I wish to thank you for your successful election to the post of Speaker in this Honourable Parliament House. I wish also to thank your staff for their tireless work of ensuring that Parliament businesses are conducted in an orderly manner despite the constitutional crisis we have experienced recently in our country.

With these few remarks, Mr Speaker, I wish to thank all our people who are listening to the sine die motion throughout the country for your attention. I support the motion and beg to resume my seat.

(applause)

Mr NUAIASI: Thank you Mr Speaker, for allowing me to speak to this motion of sine die. Before I do so, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank my people of West Are Are for putting me in Parliament as their representative.

Mr Speaker, as I am a new person to this Parliament I came across a lot of good experiences which in the past days taught me a lot of things to think about.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to congratulate the former Prime Minister, the MP for Marovo for being elected and at the same time having the courage to resign and accept the behaviours unknown to many of us what caused those behaviours as experienced in past days.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to congratulate Members of Parliament who have been elected to present our constituencies in Solomon Islands. Also I would like to congratulate the new Prime Minister for his election and wish him well in delivering services to all our people.

Mr Speaker, having said the above statements, I wish to declare my disappointment on what has been seen as people outside controlling the Parliament in trying to make decisions especially when the government of the MP for Marovo was elected and was forced out through unwarranted actions.

Being a new Member of Parliament, Mr Speaker, it was surprising to me. I have never seen this happening since I have been in the Public Service. I have also not witnessed such actions since the establishment of Parliament and at elections of Prime Ministers throughout the years.

Mr Speaker, it is sad to note that leaders have come to Parliament in order to pursue their own interests. I for one think that my people of West Are Are do not want such actions to happen in the National Parliament. We are all elected Members and what I was expecting is for all of us to work together. Let the government

that would lead us to develop this so called Solomon Islands.

Mr Speaker, I have come across a lot of difficulties in the days I have been here in Honiara in order to form a government. I have been approached by various people asking me to join them. I have also received threats on myself and my family. I think I should be asking for compensation for these threats as far as my culture is concerned.

Mr Speaker, it has been a very bad experience to see all of us national leaders not working together, not deciding together and not agreeing together to form a government that would lead us to develop Solomon Islands, that would lead us to address the real needs of our people as we have been talking about economic development of our nation.

I for one did not accept the situation that happened in Honiara because a lot of our people in the provinces were not aware of the minority in Honiara who looted and burning shops belonging to many Chinese who have been here since day one of their arrival have served the government for so many years.

This in itself, Mr Speaker, is a selfish attitude. I was really ashamed that this has happened in Honiara. I am glad to say that there has never been anyone from my constituency involved in the looting and burning of shops in Honiara. I give credit to my people of West Are Are.

Mr Speaker, my people of West Are Are are only interested in development and are not interested in political wrangling or political differences. They put me in Parliament so that I can represent them to pursue developments that have not been delivered to West Honiara which was supposed to be delivered to us.

Mr Speaker, West Are Are is a resourceful Constituency and so far there has never been any development done in West Are Are. Mr Speaker, if the government is serious about decentralising developments to the constituencies, I would like to see it giving priority to West Are Are as well.

West Are Are needs to be developed in order to exploit the resources that we have. We have a lot of resources, but none of them have been exploited so as to reap maximum benefit because the government has turned a blind eye

to my constituency. I would ask the government if it is serious enough to forward funds to develop the West Are Are Constituency. Since one of its priority is land reform, I would ask the government to give funds to the chiefs in West Are Are to register and carry out land reform in West Are Are.

Mr Speaker, I think the chiefs of West Are Are are experts themselves and do not need any outside consultant to register their land. What they need from the government is to have finance made available to them. They can do it even better than any other consultant the government would employ for this task.

Mr Speaker, being in the Opposition does not mean there is nothing I can voice out. It is in fact, as I see that we are part and parcel of the group in serving the country. I for one would like to see that if there is any plan or if the government is talking about decentralisation, we would like to see budget provisions for development in West Are Are. West Are Are is lacking in hospital services. The distance we are taking to Auki for medical services is quite tremendous and costs a lot of money.

There has never been any good clinic established in West Are Are. The amount of money spent for that service alone is quite huge. I am asking the Minister for Provincial Government if he sees fit to plough back funds to the provincial government system so that they can establish those infrastructures for us.

Mr Speaker, tourism is one good attraction in West Are Are, and I would want to see the Minister of Tourism to also consider developing the area in West Are Are so that we too can have developments in West Are Are that could help the nation to prosper and enjoy the resources that we have.

Also Mr Speaker, we have a lot of sea resources in our area. I must say that these sea resources have never been tapped and never been exploited. I for one would like to see in the development plan of the government that it puts emphasis in trying to exploit or carry forward developments that would address the sea resources of West Are Are so that we too may help in contributing to the development of Solomon Islands as a whole.

Mr Speaker, before I take my seat I was also alarmed by the way which the 50 Members

have divided themselves the initial stage in trying to lobby each other for the formation of the government. I was also one of the Members who was said to have been corrupt. Mr Speaker, I must say here that I am innocent. I am not a corrupt Member as far as I am concerned. This is a very challenging word and not easy to use, but it has become a common word use in the streets of Honiara that certain members or even the Opposition Camp is corrupt. Mr Speaker, I must say that this needs to be proved or otherwise that allegation withdrawn from this camp.

Mr Speaker, it is very difficult and it has been very difficult for me to read the politics of Solomon Islands. Because when I came in I was expecting something different. When the reality came to me in the initial stage, I was very surprised to see the politics of Solomon Islands full of dirt, if I may say so, Mr Speaker. It does involve a lot of dirty tactics, I should say in that people who approached me did so with money. Besides that, Mr Speaker, they have approached me with threats, which to me is not the way to forming a government.

Mr Speaker, as a person from Are Are I believe I have my own principles and for you to convince or lobby me would not be in the best interest of my people. We have avenues in our chiefly system that there must be consultation, there must be discussion on the issue needing discussion and there must be a compromise or there must be a solution that both of us have to agree upon.

It is no use, Mr Speaker, for me to sell the right of my people through earning money. It is the wish of the people that I represent them as their leader, and not for me to sell them for my own benefit. This is a great experience for me which I am asking all parliamentarians that if there is to be another election of a Prime Minister let us lobby in a manner acceptable to our people and not to play on things that would hinder the authority vested on us by our people.

Mr Speaker, having said all this, I should say that the people of West Are Are also sympathize with the Chinese Community that have lost their properties and belongings of many years. As their leader I extend to the Chinese Community our sympathy. We will try our best in any way possible to help or

encourage them to continue with developments in helping Solomon Islands to grow economically.

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you for your great experience in commanding us. Also I would like to thank the Clerk for her patience with us. I would also like to thank the Deputy Speaker for being elected to that position and for his acceptance in taking this challenging job.

May I also wish the government of the day and congratulate Ministers of the Crown and Backbenchers. I wish them all the best in their endeavour to serve the nation after all I know they is a lot of task ahead to carry on their shoulders for the people of Solomon Islands.

With these few words, Mr Speaker, I resume my seat.

Hon KAU A: Honourable Speaker, thank you for giving me the floor to speak on this very important motion of sine die.

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to say on behalf of myself, my people and chiefs of Mbäegu/Asifola that what had transpired over the past days is a tragedy, and I would like to offer our sympathy to those affected as a result of the public unrest, particularly the Chinese Community. The people who are seriously affected through the loss of their homes and properties are in our hearts.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, the unfortunate occurrences after myths on Tuesday of last month has taken everyone by surprise and hence no one should be blamed for what had happened. Had this been prearranged, as others would have us believe, no doubt with the effective justice system that is in place, the Police would have known and taken necessary precautions to contain the situation. Therefore, Mr Speaker, this would preclude that this side of the House for being blamed for such a political impasse, for to do so is a gross misrepresentation by the other side of the House and could be misconstrued by the general public.

Mr Speaker, as referred to by previous speakers what transpired was a result of much civil campaigns and the “winds of change” that were conducted prior to the General Election. These were funded by AusAID who see the

importance of people being educated about their rights and the importance of good governance, transparency and accountability expected of leaders in performing their duties. This includes leaders, Mr Speaker, who make up the members of this legislature, the supreme law making body of this land.

Mr Speaker, it would seem that such a high expectation by the public for change was not fulfilled on Tuesday, when the Prime Minister then was announced. Disappointment manifested itself in an uproar by the general public who were dissatisfied by the fact that previous regimes have not lived up to the nation’s expectations in performing their duties as leaders of Parliament in managing the affairs of this country.

Mr Speaker, it is unfortunate to say the least that this is the result of the kind of leaders who have been elected to this Parliament by none other than the people themselves, the voters ever since the country gained independence.

As a long time serving public officer and someone who has worked closely with Members of Parliament and Cabinet throughout the years, I have observed and witnessed the performances and behaviours of leaders some of whom should not have been elected at all as Members of parliament. Obviously, this should not be perceived as a sweeping statement for there are many who have had the needs of the country at heart.

The quality and existence of good leaders is crucial and there is expectation that the situation will improve rapidly now that the public have been educated and begin to realize the importance of choosing the right people to put into Parliament. These are those who are able to serve and fully participate in this high institution of the land, whose decisions are made with the present and future aspirations of our people and the country at large in their minds.

Mr Speaker, it would be remiss of me to pinpoint any particular individual as being at fault here. Nor would it be proper to point a finger at the newly elected Prime Minister then who has gracefully resigned for the situation that has arisen has been the result of accumulation of years of what seemed to be mismanagement, and has now surfaced.

As we saw on Tuesday 18th of April, the public themselves expressed their dissatisfaction and resorted to taking the law into their own hands. The effect of this is that certain people have now been badly affected by losing their properties and goods.

Mr Speaker, this is indeed a tragic incident that should not have occurred if the symptoms identified earlier and appropriate actions taken there and then it would not have happened. No doubt these concerns must have been realized by some but what can any responsible government do when the country is not fully independent economically and socially and a conducive environment to determine the affairs and its destiny.

Mr Speaker, our economy is still aid driven, and the power of money is the very essence of everything be it development or just a share of life. No wonder we are vulnerable to bribery and corruption. We do not have the power to control it. The power is in the hands of different people and not Solomon Islanders.

In confronting this situation what can we really do? I believe that until the power to control the economy, our affairs and destiny is in the hands of indigenous Solomon Islanders and Solomon Islanders are allowed to manage and not to be influenced by outside forces through complex dealings, we will not be able to determine our destiny and the future of our people and our country.

If the legacy of outside interference is to continue to persist and the country continues to be subjective to outside forces of manipulation and remote control then there is no room for the progress and prosperity of indigenous Solomon Islanders. Mr Speaker, we will continue to be slaves in our own land.

Mr Speaker, I therefore challenge the 50 Members of Parliament here to ensure that the future of our people and country is retuned to us. The decision we make will affect us, our children and their children in years to come. You are here, not by accident but by your choice to stand for election as a Member of Parliament and I believe, as a result of God's intervention and the wishes of our people through prayers, churches and civil education.

The choosing of right leaders to run the country now is the chose of those subscribing to

that expectation. The expectation is that we members are here for the people and to serve the people as our National Motto portraits, "To Lead is to Serve"!

If, on the other hand, Mr Speaker, one thinks that this is a place for anyone to accumulate individual wealth, to have prestige and status or to gain self esteem then you are in the wrong profession. This is a place where all of us are supposed to be of service to our people and country and to put ourselves LAST and not the other way round.

Mr Speaker, unfortunately these good practices and expectations do not seem to happen because of "party politics" which tend to erode and prevent the freedom of members to exercise their free will in electing and choosing good quality members to govern. Members of Parliament should not be subject to the lobbying of outside forces having huge sums of money and giving promises of having a portfolio in the next Cabinet.

Mr Speaker, there should be mechanisms in place to prevent Members of Parliament acting in this way and to protect their vulnerability so that they are not subject to these practices. An environment should exist in this place to ensure that an incoming member can freely choose a government with quality leaders to govern our people and country.

Mr Speaker, the motion before us is a testimony to the situation which the country has now finds itself in. We are to perform right now to represent a moment whereby each and everyone of us has to decide, not because of individual gain or the thought of a nice portfolio, but rather for the good of our country. We must keep in our minds our convictions as good leaders representing our people, our constituencies and the country as a whole. The life of our children and their children is in our hands. Honourable colleagues the choice is ours. Make no mistake. Do the right thing. Mr Speaker, people have realized the need for change after what they have gone through and experienced during the darkest moments in our history.

The years of ethnic tension and the recent political impasse are events not occurred by accident but I believe that through intervention that required of any nation growth

in order to fully achieve maturity. Solomon Islands is no exception. One can only look at the media to witness what had happened to many countries in the world today. Be it Middle East, Europe, Africa or Asia or even nations of Pacific people have resorted to different names in expressing their dissatisfaction one way or another in the quest of seeking truth and enjoy life in its fullness.

Mr Speaker, if this nation is to prosper for better, we must start now to face the challenges, and not just the leaders but every Solomon Islander alike. We must be prepared to work hard than ever before and not to be complacent. The attitude of handouts must change! Mr Speaker, no one is going to do this for us. Such changes must come from within by none other but us who profess to be Solomon Islanders.

Mr Speaker, this country has been geographically divided and fragmented and creating an environment that would further integrate our society is the least that any government can do. We must put away our differences and learn the past to build on for a better future, a united Solomon Islands, with one people rich with diverse culture and tradition, respecting one another living in harmony with progress and prosperity for our children and their children in the future to come.

Mr Speaker, with those remarks I wish to thank you sincerely for your able leadership and forbearing in having to put up with the political turmoils the country has been experiencing. It is with your immeasurable experience and mature approach to the situation that enabled Parliament to come this far.

Finally, but not the least may I wish to take this opportunity to thank the people, chiefs and every voter of Mbaegu/Asifola constituency for their support and confidence accorded to me as their Member of Parliament for the next four years. I also wish to thank my fellow candidates who have contested as candidacy for the Mbaegu/Asifola Parliament seat. I wish them all success in whatever the future holds for them.

With those few remarks, Mr Speaker, I resume my seat.

(applause)

The House suspends for lunch break

Mr KWANAIRARA: Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me the floor of Parliament to contribute to this very important motion the sine die motion. Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to thank people in my constituency of North Malaita especially the Chiefs and Church Leaders, Women's groups and voters in North Malaita for putting me in this House as your representative for the next four years. I thank every one of you for your great support and trust for putting me as your representative in Parliament.

Today I would like to say a few words, Mr Speaker, with regards to what has transpired in the past couple of days.

Sir, what concerns me the most is our Constitution in that I feel it is important for us to look again at our Constitution to try and correct a few areas that we are now starting to have difficulties on. This is very important because as every one of us knows the Parliament must continue to function and I think a review of the Constitution in the various grey areas already identified is important to be addressed.

I say this because what has happened is due to some of the anomalies within our Constitution that was not adequately addressed. Such grey areas of the Constitution are bended to suit the interests and thinking of those interpreting it to apply to situations that arises. That is what I have seen and therefore would like us to start looking at our Constitution and address some grey areas already identified.

Mr Speaker, I strongly agree with the idea to review the Constitution and where appropriate make amendments to some of the sections to enable Parliament function properly in our country.

Today, Mr Speaker, we have seen that as the process of politics is going on in our country, things have changed, a lot of things have happened, new people coming in with new bright ideas in politics, and so politics is a growing thing in our country Solomon Islands.

Mr Speaker, in my view today there is the outer circle and the inner circle, which is the executive arm attracting a lot of attention. Mr Speaker, the executive arm of the government is one very important area, and I see it as one of

the main areas within the government system that a lot of people are giving it a lot of attention.

The problem happening with our Constitution in regards to politics is the inner circle of the formation of a government, which is one big area that a lot of people have interest in, and not only Solomon Islanders but a lot of foreigners are also interested in the inner circle, the executive arm of our government.

This is an area of great interest by every one and that is why I said it needs to be addressed very carefully in the immediate future. As can be seen in the past that this happened in 2000 when the executive arm at that time caused stability in the government that is in power at that time.

Therefore, this is a very interesting and very important area that needs to be considered in Parliament for our democracy to work and for our government to be able to function and the executive arm to be strong, this area must be protected. It depends on which angle you look at it, maybe you look at it from outside or from inside out, this area I am talking about is the core area in government which must be preserved as it is very important. If we do not preserve this and allow foreigners to take interest in it, I know it will affect the operation or the running of any government.

When I listen to the statement by the Prime Minister yesterday, the youths in my constituency welcome many of the things the Prime Minister made in his statement. One thing he specifically mentioned that the government would be doing is finding the root cause of the coup which led to the downfall of the government in 2000. That is a big undertaking, which draws my mind back to the events that occurred in June 5th 2000. That is a date to remember because something phenomenal happened to our country.

In considering the events that occurred that time in year 2000, I seem to like to relate it to the situation that has just happened in our country, again in this Parliament at this time.

Mr Speaker, while I look at this carefully I can see that the move was planned or architected in 2000 to put down the Prime Minister at that time. Mr Speaker, at that time the barrel of the gun was used asking the Prime

Minister to step down within 48 hours. That was what happened in 2000 when we were in government.

The recent incident which Hon Rini's Government was put down can be seen as the same strategies and moves being applied but applied in the name of constitutional process as the people's power, which subsequently led to the downfall of the government as well. Those two incidents look similar to me.

What happened in 2000 is that in the early hours of 5th June 2000 the same thing happened in here when a motion of no confidence was tried to be moved here in the name of constitutional process with people's power. That is a big concern because youths in my constituency are still suffering from that happening in 2000. Some of my youths are still in prison and some are still struggling to get out of prison. But only after six years a second thing happened again.

Sir, in my view it is important to look at strategies and ways in improving the constitution to stop this kind of thing happening again. If this is carefully looked into, it happened about six years ago when the government was put down with the barrel of the gun when the then Prime Minister who is none other than the current Minister of Finance was put under house arrest. Mr Speaker, a similar incident was repeated again in April 2006.

Mr Speaker, as a parliamentarian representing my people of North Malaita, I can see a lot of my youths involved again in this sad event. I would like to kindly ask us politicians who would like to engage in political games that suit our political ends to please stop using innocent people and innocent youths to carry out your agendas of overthrowing governments or taking over political power. I think that must come to a stop.

Sir, I as a Malaitan man in here do not want to see anyone doing this again. If you want to use that kind of system again then use people in your constituency but stop influencing people from other constituencies to help you meet your own ends. Your use of my people has led to many of them now suffering in the prisons. Their parents have come to see me expressing the same feelings they have about this kind of

system that is currently going on inside the government today.

Mr Speaker, politicians and Members of Parliament must realize and come to our senses to see that what we are doing is not an easy thing because it causes suffering to people especially the youths and the unemployed who suffer the most today.

Sir, the events of 2000 has led to some of our boys still behind the bars today. Mr Speaker, this shows that some politicians are very smart in doing that. They are very smart in the divide and rule sort of attitude. They want to divide people whom they know to be aggressive to fulfil their political desires and do not care whether those people suffer or put in prison as that is not their concern because their concern has already been achieved.

Mr Speaker, I speak strongly against such attitude. Youths in my constituency have first hand information of the events that occurred in the early morning hours of 5th June 2000. My youths are ready to deliver what they know about those events if we really want to find out what caused that particular government to go down in 2000. They have information on who were the instigators and planners of the downfall of that government. Everything is very clear. It is not something to hide. It is a matter of just providing the information and then we would know what is going to happen later on.

Sir, I want this kind of attitude to be stopped by Parliament. If you are hungry for power or whatever please do not use our innocent people, the innocent youths to fulfil your political desires.

Sir, this is one very big concern I would like to stress because it is one big area of our political history. This problem has now happened two times and we cannot allow this to continue the third time, and that is why I am stressing it here so that we bring an end to it or try to accommodate it within the Constitution to do something to stop this kind of attitude.

I am surprised, Mr Speaker, that in the past when I was a boy working for the government for many years, the party that wins most seats or majority seats in Parliament is the one that puts the Prime Minister. However, in the process of our democracy we have now changed. Nowadays a person with only one or

two support becomes the Prime Minister. What sort of law is this, Mr Speaker, I would like to question? That kind of attitude must be stopped. If we want this country Solomon Islands to progress in prosperity we must go by what our Constitution says.

The past events are now history and in ashes. If you go to China Town you will see it in ashes of fire. That is already past and so I am talking about the future. I do not want the same thing repeated in the next four to six years because this is becoming like a usual event.

Today it would seem that if anyone does not accept a government he/she can march protesting against it. What is this? We are setting precedence. This time if we do not accept a government, we can march against it and the government will go down. We no longer follow our Constitution. Mr Speaker, I would like us as parliamentarians or whoever responsible to please look into this concern for tightening up.

Mr Speaker, the events of 5 June 2000 are sad and as I have already said has brought a lot of families into disarray and made a lot of youths still struggling today to rehabilitate. Furthermore, it is still a big burden to a lot of parents, and they just do not want to see this thing repeated because it ruined families and ruined the lives of young people. But I am glad that as responsible people in Parliament we are going to work together to try and make things right and go by the rule of democracy and the Constitution.

That is why I have said that the grey areas of our constitution need to be changed. I think responsible offices and authorities must take note and do something about this so that our country is able to progress as we expected.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to touch on another issue mentioned in the Statement of the Prime Minister, and this is the bottom up approach. We have always heard the word 'bottom up approach' but where is the bottom? I would like to know where the bottom we are talking about here is. Take for example a tree, when we look at a tree we can see its branches and trunk but not the roots because they are under the ground. It is the hidden part that is more important.

In our policy statements or whatever we may do in our planning, please do not forget the hidden parts under the ground - the roots. That is where the stability of a tree lies. That is what we must once again consider very carefully that whatever policies put in place and whatever plans and strategies are in place whether it be economic, social or whatever do not forget the root of the tree is where stability is because the roots determine the strength of a tree to stand.

Sir, I am saying that when we address things let us address the roots as well. Let us address resources owners, let us address owners down there who own the resources. This is very important. Put in place policies that tie up the public sector, the private sector and resource owners, grassroots people or people holding the tree to stand. That is very important. Failing to do that means pleasing people outside, and that is not addressing what we are supposed to be addressing.

Sir, my view of this bottom up approach is that we must have a bottom so that we start from there and then come up. If we start on top in the air then there is no bottom. Whatever policies or plans we might have, do not forget that the people holding the tree up are those at the bottom. Sometimes we do not see them but they exist. They feed the tree, hold the tree up, and that is important. This country needs people like that. It needs the grassroots people. It needs people upholding our country because they own the resources.

Sir, looking at the world and also what is going on in Solomon Islands today, we can only see the private sector and the public sector at play. So what is happening to 80% of the population? They are just sitting down doing nothing because we do not recognize them, but they are the people owning resources.

Sir, if we can have a policy that addresses the 80% of our people in rural areas and those owning the resources, then I think we are addressing the hearts of the people of Solomon Islands.

Mr Speaker, these are my concerns. As a Christian nation whoever may have plans or your plans may have already been achieved, remember this country is suffering because of that plan. This country is suffering, people are

crying, people are suffering today because of our selfish and greedy attitudes.

Sir, I would like to ask us that next time do things with your own resources and stop using innocent people to achieve your political agendas. Mr Speaker, my contribution is short, and here I would like to thank you, Mr Speaker for your election again as the Speaker of Parliament. I also would like to thank the Deputy Speaker, the former Prime Minister of the former government for taking up that very responsible role in Parliament in the organizing and administering of Parliament meetings.

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

Mr SOFU: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing the Minister for Infrastructure and the Member of Parliament for East Kwaio to join other members of Parliament to contribute to this very important motion of sine die.

In so doing, Mr Speaker, I wish to sincerely record my thanks to the chiefs, church leaders, and people of East Kwaio for their trust and confidence in me to represent them in this Parliament for the next four years or beyond. Thank you for understanding and to my best we will work together to address pressing issues of paramount importance in East Kwaio Constituency.

Sir, I would also like to thank the outgoing Member of Parliament for East Kwaio for his leadership and developments achieved during his two terms in Parliament.

Sir, I on behalf of the people of East Kwaio want to congratulate you Mr Speaker for the unopposed victory to the position of Speaker. No doubt your wide experience in conducting parliamentary sitting has and will continue give confidence to all parliamentarians especially, we the new ones in this Chamber. I wish to also congratulate the Member of Parliament for Savo and Russells for being elected as Deputy Speaker of Parliament.

I also congratulate the newly elected Prime Minister for his election to that position to lead the nation at this period when the country is struggling to recover from the aftermath of the ethnic tension. Mr Speaker, the people of Solomon Islands have placed their trust on us to lead the nation forward regardless of criticisms

labelled against us from inside and outside of Parliament.

Sir, I wish also to congratulate other Members of Parliament that we are sitting right now in this Chamber being elected to represent our good people in this Parliament. The events of 18th April 2006 mark a turning point in the history of politics in Solomon Islands, and as leaders of this nation we must be mindful when making decisions affecting our own people.

Sir, may I register my words of thanks to the Christian Churches in Solomon Islands for their prayers of the election on 5th April 2006 for this nation to have good leaders. I have no doubt that all of us who won the election are good leaders.

Why, Mr Speaker, some Members of Parliament are said to be corrupt? No, Mr Speaker, because all of us sitting in this Chamber right now are the answers to the prayers of Christian Churches in Solomon Islands.

Sir, I believe that East Kwaio people did not vote in a corrupt leader. They made the right choice in putting me in here. Mr Speaker, if I am corrupt I should not have been here. But my people voted me in. Mr Speaker, labelling national leaders as corrupt is not right. We are national leaders, and this is very important for us to take note of.

Mr Speaker, we parliamentarians must listen to our people and show quality leadership in the jurisdiction of our responsibilities as we carry out our assigned duties not forgetting national unity as the key to the nation's stability.

As a new Member of Parliament, I am not happy to see senior Members of Parliament pointing fingers at each other in this Chamber. We are mandated by our people for one primary goal and that is to work together to serve them. Why do we come here bringing our differences, talk about the past or talk about something that another person has done? Is that what we are mandated for? No Mr Speaker.

This Parliament belongs to the people of Solomon Islands and they want to hear their leaders talking about development activities that would create opportunities for their participation.

Mr Speaker, the incidences of looting, burning of business houses, residences and

action of disorder against law enforcement officers was reflective of people's response to decisions we make in Parliament. As I have said, this Parliament is for the people of Solomon Islands and Members of Parliament must be independent in their decision making.

Mr Speaker, during the last week of lobbying for the election of the Prime Minister there were phone calls made to us new Members of Parliament asking the question 'iu hao' and 'iu kam nao?' Why are you asking us to come? We were elected by our people. We are national leaders and we know what to say. We know our decisions.

Mr Speaker, I also want to inform this Parliament that the people of Solomon Islands are good people and there would not be any civil disorder if we Members of Parliament take account of people's wishes and address them in an amicable manner.

Mr Speaker, the people of Solomon Islands for so long have assessed the politics of this country and undoubtedly believe that the politics of Solomon Islands is influenced by outsiders and certain people with indifferent motives and interests resulting in the well being of Solomon Islands being undermined.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I wish to extend my thanks to Christians throughout the country for their prayers for Members of Parliament, and also those who have helped our Chinese Community who have lost their properties during the civil disorder.

Once again, Mr Speaker, I thank you for your wisdom in guiding the deliberations of Members of Parliament. I would also like to acknowledge the Clerk and officers of the National Parliament for making necessary arrangements for us to attend this First Sitting of Parliament.

I wish every one of us God's guidance and safe journey home to join our good families. With that, Mr Speaker, I support the motion and resume my seat. Thank you.

Mr KEMAKEZA: Mr Speaker, since nobody wants to take part in the debate, perhaps still writing their speeches and points and so they will have their turn tomorrow.

First of all, I want to thank the mover of this motion, the honourable Prime Minister for

seeing it fit in moving this motion as we go towards the conclusion of the First Meeting of this Parliament. Therefore, it is the right time for all of us who have been elected to give our appreciation and thanks to our people, especially our voters.

Before I give my appreciation to all of you, let me on behalf of my people of Savo/Russells join others to share our sympathy with the Chinese Community in Solomon Islands. In fact some of them have been here before many of us were born and so are great people in the building of our nation, only sad that people are seeing them in different perspectives. You as the father of the Nation, Mr Speaker, do not want that to happen again. And so I join other colleagues, other organisations and other governments, and at the same time thank and congratulate those who have contributed in one way or the other in helping the Chinese Community during this very sad time.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to join other colleagues who have already spoken, to thank and congratulate you and your family for a well deserved re-election or reappointment to this high post. You have my full support and my confidence is in you.

When I was the Minister for Peace you were the first citizen, or father of the nation or statesman whom I appointed to be the Chairman of the Peace and Monitoring Council, which subsequently became the National Peace Council when you demonstrate your confidence in me.

Also as a very strong Christian, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the churches and all denominations in Solomon Islands, for your prayers during these difficult times in our country, and not only this time but for the last four to six years.

These have been difficult times for this nation especially going through this new millennium. This is perhaps not surprising because many things are happening around the world like the tsunami, El Nino, wars and many things and so it is a bad time for this world. However, I think without divine intervention, Mr Speaker, we would have fallen flat on our feet. I thank all Christians throughout the

country and abroad for their prayers for Solomon Islands.

On the same token I would like to join others Mr Speaker, in thanking RAMSI, the Royal Solomon Islands Police, SICA and many law abiding citizens of Solomon Islands for their understanding and cooperation during these difficult times, not only after the election but even before the election and during the uprising in our country. Without the support of our friends and our neighbours, as the Member for North Vella rightly said this morning, Mr Speaker, it is very important that we maintain relationship with our neighbours like Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and other Forum Countries.

The Biketawa Declaration was not made by accident by successive governments or those with the vision in those days by having a mechanism in place in case any member country gets into trouble, like Solomon Islands then that is the mechanism to be used. Therefore, we must not take this wrongly.

We must understand that we are part and parcel of the region and the world. When we talk we should not talk like we are in our homes. We should not talk because we think we are somebody. I can still remember your words when you became the first Prime Minister, Mr Speaker, “inter interdependence”. That was the word you used and I learn that from you. We rely on each others even in our little set ups, our little organisations and in the offices. The one sweeping the office is important like the Speaker and the Minister. All of us are important.

If you look at our association in the region and the world, we must broaden our thinking and have vision in how far we should we go because we need each other. I will touch later on this when I come to sovereignty and dignity that we talk so much about. Sir, we must not lose sight of this. If it is a slip of the tongue or if your mouth is faster than your brains then you must think again.

Sir, I must thank all Members on this side of the House for their understanding, and similarly to my colleagues on the government side. In fact as I alluded to yesterday, many of them are my good friends. The Deputy Prime Minister was the Leader of Opposition when I was the Deputy Leader of Opposition, and so I know him very well because I worked with him

except that he has to come to office not twice a month.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to thank the former Prime Minister, the chief and Member of Parliament for Marovo. He is a man of standing except that we have other views about him and his people. Being a father I do not know what his family might be thinking about him. Anyway we cannot help it because politics is politics. But had we thought about it properly we should have given him a bit more time, but only time will tell.

Sir, this point drives me to the point raised by the MP for East Are Are. If this move was planned then I do not want to put it where the MP for East Are Are puts it. I want it to go as far as to the Commission of Inquiry. Some form of inquiry has to be taken on this because it is a very, very serious situation. I think this side of the House should put a case to court to challenge this. I would agree to that suggestion. I am not hesitant to say the least.

Several options can be taken to test the decisions. As you know, Mr Speaker, a decision is not like mathematics where $2 + 2$ equals 4. A decision is not that $2 + 2$ equals to 10. We always take wrong to the far and close to the right. Any decision taken during this situation is not 100% wrong and let the courts decide otherwise. Those are some options worth looking at.

Sir, before I touch on some of the issues raised by the mover of the motion, as I alluded to yesterday, the Member for Savo Russells, the former Prime Minister, and I want to correct a few information first because this is an opportunity for me to talk because if I talk in the media I will be taken differently. If I give my statement to the media they will not bother about it. And so I must say it here for people in this country to hear it.

Sir, I was labelled the most corrupt and most dishonest person in Solomon Islands. I was said to be one of the mafias in Solomon Islands as well.

Mr Speaker, I was brought up in a very simple family in my home with nine brothers and two sisters, eleven of us. It so happened that I and my younger brother find ourselves in this Parliament. We are very peace loving people

and that is why I continue to win my seat in Parliament. I am from the commoners'.

Sir, after school I joined the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force. You, Mr Speaker, were the D.O, D.C. and a Magistrate. I prosecuted cases before you, and I hope you can remember that Mr Speaker. My profession is police officer. The highest rank I achieved in the Police Force was Director of Criminal Investigations in Solomon Islands. That was my position.

If a former Director of Criminal Investigations knows very well an offence but goes ahead to commit the offence then he must be a man who is not in his right sense.

I joined the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force from the 1960's and in 1989 I came into politics. At first I became the Minister for Police and Justice and later on I was Minister for Housing and Government Services when the Prime Minister now was my Commissioner of Income Tax. He was my staff at that time as the Commissioner of Income Tax. After that we lost the Government, and you know this Mr Speaker, because you were the Minister for Foreign Affairs at that time. We lost the government in 1993 to the Member of Parliament for Ranongga/Simbo. We lost the government at that time and we accepted it, and that was when the Deputy Prime Minister now was the leader of opposition and I served under him. In 1994 we took the government and I joined and became the Minister for Forests. In 1997 we again lost the government and the present MP for Langa Langa, the Minister of Finance now was the Prime Minister at that time and we became Opposition again and nothing happened, it was very good. And then 2000 came, but I leave that as history because somebody has already talked about it otherwise I might bore Parliament with it.

Then we came in 2000, Mr Speaker, trying to bring about peace. I am proud to say here, Mr Speaker, that you and I achieved the Townsville Peace Agreement. I must congratulate you for your wisdom in assisting me as Minister responsible for Peace at that time. We also achieved the Marau Peace Agreement. What a great leader I have worked with who is none other than yourself, Mr Speaker.

In 2001 I became the Prime Minister of this country, and I am very proud to say also that I am the first Prime Minister who reigned four years on this floor of Parliament.

(hear, hear)

Is that corruption and dishonesty? Lining up here are the Exim Bank, the Sol-Law case and the 10 Kwaio people. I would like to say to my colleague, the Minister for Infrastructure and Member for East Kwaio that the Member for Savo/Russells has nothing to do with that. You can find this out. I am a very clear person, Mr Speaker, in this episode. Let me say this. This is from my heart and there is nothing to hide.

Why would the Prime Minister send these people when he has the Royal Solomon Islands Police to send because it is their job? Even if they go and die that is their job. Have a bit of sense and logic here.

Sir, I was also accused as being involved in the burning down of the Finance Building, and that is where the word 'big fish' came from by none other than a Member of Parliament who is still sitting on this floor of Parliament. Prove it!

I was even speculated as owning a house in Australia, and accused of not allowing people to surrender their guns. I was also blamed for withholding funds of the Family Charity Fund. I tell you that the initiators of these things are already behind the bars. Let me repeat once again that there are no funds of the Family Charity Fund in any of the commercial banks or in any institutions in Solomon Islands. Mr Speaker, I want the new government to take it on from there and prove this.

Mr Speaker, I must make myself very clear here first of all. This is not the end. Nobody is perfect. Even Judas Iscariot was the first corrupt person, a disciple of Jesus, according to the Bible, who sold his Master for 30 pieces of silver. Is this true? Who are you to say you are perfect then you must be an angel?

Mr Speaker, I am also the Chairman of the Savo House of Chiefs. I have that standing from my own people, and for you Members of Parliament or those on the other side to label me in that manner is not good enough, and that is

why I challenged them yesterday. These allegations came out from their very mouths and went down to my constituency before the general elections. That was the challenge I met during my campaign. The Liberal Party, Labour Party, National Party and SOCRED Party put their candidates to challenge me in the elections.

I want to challenge the Prime Minister, Mr Speaker, who is not here, but if he is listening or he can check the Hansard Reports. He is now the Prime Minister and so he must go and pay my wantoks who paid \$10 to receive \$30,000. They filled in forms, Mr Speaker. The policy of SOCRED is to pay \$10 and receive \$30,000. Now that he is the Prime Minister he must make the payment. I will go back to Savo and find out how many of my people have filled in the form to come and claim their \$30,000.

I thank the MP for East Are Are for mentioning the SOCRED Party's policy of removing every function of the Central Bank down to the Treasury and changing everything, especially the financial institutions. I challenge the Prime Minister to do that. He is my best friend, and as I said I was his Deputy Prime Minister at one time. But how he put his candidate in my constituency was just too much making some of us as men with no standing. The word used against me was corruption.

Mr Speaker, whenever we are in power, especially in the running of the government, which also happened to you, Mr Speaker, I hope you remember the Rara issue. That was by the former late Member of Parliament for West Makira, a former Prime Minister. Even my colleague MP for Aoke/Langa Langa had his name on the World Bank and seven airfields. My colleague MP for Gizo/Kolombangara's name was on the Komarindi issue. The Prime Minister now had the billionaire dealing in Malaysia when I was the Minister there. Everybody has something somehow somewhere to clear. Sometimes talks must be proven. This is in Solomon language called the 'coconut news'

Mr Speaker, you were once a magistrate and you know that spreading false rumours can amount to defamation of character. You know this, Mr Speaker, because you judged a lot of cases in the past.

Befriending ex militants, Mr Speaker, yes they are my friends because they are human beings. The present Minister for Provincial Government said yesterday that he messed up the peace process at that time. Now I would like to tell him the right way of doing it. Why is it that you only talked with the Premiers of Malaita, Guadalcanal, Western Province, the Central Islands, Makira, Temotu and Choiseul? You talked with them for what? Are they involved in the fighting? Are they the ones bitten by mosquitoes and soaked by rain? Mr Speaker, no. The people who hold the guns and bitten by mosquitos and soaked with rain are the ones you should talk with. Is that true Mr Speaker? They are the ones you should talk with and not the Premiers.

You talked with the Premiers but the Premier of Guadalcanal finds it hard to talk with the militants of Guadalcanal. In fact the same day he was shot at. That is the price. No, we should get down and talk with the militants. Talk to them like your sons telling them to come together and leave their guns and let us talk. If there is anything that makes them very angry then explain things to them. If you think we cannot settle this then say so, so that we go and inform the now Minister for Education and the Minister for Justice to come and do it if you do not want it. Fortunately they accepted it and that is why we succeeded. We talked with those holding the guns and fighting in the rain. Because they are the ones to agree before it is safe. If not then do not waste your time, even how many Members of Parliament in here.

It is true, it happened, Mr Speaker, that all you Members of Parliament were not there. Most of you runaway, some even run away to Australia. Only you, Mr Speaker, and I take the risk, and that is why I am at risk until today because I take the risk on behalf of those who caused it and run away to their homes hiding away in crab holes. I am not ashamed to say this because I have suffered enough. My brother was kidnapped, my properties all burnt down and even my mother was gun pointed at. My mother was still crying in her rotten kitchen thinking about his son in the bushes of Guadalcanal and the borders here. What a mother! Just think about how our mothers

would feel and think in such a situation. And the price I get is what I am receiving today.

I do not want this place. No, it is rubbish and you have experienced it, Mr Speaker. It is not easy and anyone who wants to become Prime Minister can go and take over. Now that he won it let him handle it. The time will come when his records will be revealed. You are the one who ruined it.

Hon Ulufa'alu: I am tired of hearing that story.

Mr Kemakeza: I am telling this to you because you messed it up. You create problems that you cannot solve.

Mr Speaker, who has been doing all these every time? Who is causing this problem since 1997? It is none other than the MP for Aoke/Langa Langa, the now Finance Minister because he created the Malaita block and then come in here because he wanted to be the Prime Minister. He said “we are new members”. New ‘member lelebet’, he was a member since 1976. He was a member since 1976. I am much younger than him but he has been around for a much longer time.

Mr Speaker, you know it and when you went to England for the Independence Order he was the one boycotting the Order. Mr Speaker, do you forget history?

(Mr Ulufa'alu interjecting): Barrel of the gun Prime Minister. The barrel of the gun made you become the Prime Minister.

Mr Kemakeza: You prove that. If it is barrel of the gun Mr Speaker, why did RAMSI came in? Why? I brought RAMSI in because I want people with guns to surrender their arms so that the country can become peaceful again. That is the reason behind it Mr Speaker. How many times we gave amnesty to them yet no guns were surrendered. Do you know why? It is because people have no confidence on each other. That is what the MP for Aoke/Langa Langa is still dreaming about it. You hang on, I will give it to you because there is no barrier in a sine dice motion.

(Mr Ulufa'alu interjecting): Okay you wait for it too because I am going to give it back to you.

Mr Kemakeza: You give it. Do you think you are the only one? You take it up this time I will take it up next time. You are a Member of Parliament and so am I. This is my time to speak and so nobody will stop me. I am elected to speak on this floor, and so who can stop me except upon your ruling, Mr Speaker.

Let me now give some advice to the Member for Aoke/Langa Langa, my good friend the Minister. I am going to give you advice.

Mr Speaker, my advice to the new Government is first look at some of the good policies that I have put in place. Some of them are good ones, not everyone is bad, not like SIAC's last time which many are bad and only three are good ones. Many of the policies of the Kemakeza Government are good ones.

The Minister for Mines talked very much this morning. He said people wanted change. But change for what? You were the SPM of most governments and you should change things.

Mr Speaker, this man seems to not know the past. He has been the advisor of most Prime Ministers and yet is complaining over spilt milk. I have everything for respect him. He is to learn his school first time in politics Mr Speaker. He is my in-law but I would like to tell him because last time we two respect each other on the floor of Parliament. This is politics and when we go outside my in-law is hard to talk to.

My first advice to the government is to look at the good policies the last government started my Ministers. The Prime Minister is not here, and so the Deputy you take note. Not only the policies of the Rural Advancement are good, some of ours are good ones.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, do not make a lot of promises because our time is very short. What are you making too many promises for? Get a few things and move on. Last time SIAC made promises and did not fulfil it when our money was put to the Central Bank, which is a new policy, a new change that eventually did not work.

Do the right thing, we must do the right think. Do not start by doing the wrong thing. Goodness sake, what sort of change is this. Do the right things my colleagues, you and me, all of us. That is my advice to you. If you want it

get it, it is up to you and then make some differences. Nobody knows everything. Some people pretend to know everything. If you know everything MP for Aoke/Langa Langa, go and fly the plane. You would not be able to.

(Mr Ulufa'alu interjecting): Who is arguing with you? Talk to yourself.

Mr Kemakeza: Do not ever make enemy with our friends. You can do international diplomacy that even though you are angry with him, tap him on the back. Tell him you are good, but your mind is still there. This way of talking out first is not good.

Another of my advice, Mr Speaker, is that remember this side of the House is also part and partial of the organization. If there is anything we can do, give it to us so that we offer our services.

The Solomon Islands does not only belong to the government side. It belongs to all of us 50 Members of Parliament. Because if you do not involve us where will people on this side of the House go to? Are we not part of the Solomon Islands?

Remember that in politics there are no permanent friends and no permanent enemies. I can tell you. If it is not history then it remains history that last time many of you on the opposition side became my ministers. The Leader of the Opposition last time in fact became my very good Minister of Economic Planning and so was the former Member for East Honiara, the former Member for East Kwaio, your predecessor Minister for Infrastructure. The now Foreign Affairs Minister, the MP for Temotu Nende was my minister in the last government. He moved two motions of no confidence against me.

Remember that if you mess up your time don't think this side will just sit down and watch you. We are going to come and take over, and that is if you mess it up. If you do a good work, and you cannot beat the records because this government has three Prime Ministers, but if you mess it up we are ready to come over.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I must also thank the Clerk and your staff for preparation of two weeks of meeting which we have seen the election of two Prime Ministers. It has not been

easy it has been the busiest time because even if we had meet for three weeks, it has been a busiest time for you Sir.

I also would like to thank the Governor General for his understanding and tolerance although some people including myself questioned his decision but the boss is boss and has the final say.

Mr Speaker, I must also thank our development partners. We must work closely with them. We must work with every Solomon Islander, every business friends especially our Chinese community.

I also do not forget all of you my other colleagues, the 49 Members of Parliament. I wish you well when you go to visit your constituencies. In fact if this meeting continues I am ready to go home tomorrow to see my people first.

Sir, I give my full blessing to the new government to settle down, put your programs properly and go ahead to lead our country and people. But as I said, this side of the House would like to participate, subject to the approval of its Leader, in any tasks that the MP for Aoke/Langa Langa may want us to do. Last time the MP for Aoke/Langa Langa gave me a task to review the Provincial Government system, which I handed the report on that to the now Minister for Provincial Government, the same Minister I handed to him the best report on how the Solomon Islands Provincial Governments should work. The wisdom contained in that report should be implemented. I was not able to do that during my time because the cry was for the federal system and now that the federal system is in Parliament go ahead and complete it. That is your baby and so you take it on from there.

Mr Speaker, with these very brief remarks, I support the motion and resume my seat. Thank you.

Hon SOALAOI: Mr Speaker, before I say anything in this honourable House I would like to first of all acknowledge the Almighty in my election victory. I know that without Him all of us can do nothing. I think we are all Christians and we know this country is a Christian country and I would like to thank our God for my victory in this election.

As one of the new Members in Parliament it was not an easy task and I also know that it is not going to be easy.

Secondly, I would like to thank the chiefs, church leaders, community leaders, young people, mothers, children and people of Temotu VATTU constituency for having confidence in me by voting me into Parliament as their leader for the next four years. I am hoping to do my best so that I will continue to be their leader into the future.

Mr Speaker, at this very important time of nation-building, the events of the past two weeks do not give us a good picture of where we want to go. I would like to explain my position as a young leader who crossed the floor in my first week in Parliament and also in my first term in Parliament.

Sir, I would like to say that there have been rumours about my changing position from the former government to the Opposition. People thought that I was going after money. Mr Speaker, as an honest leader, I would like to say that I have had to seriously consider my position after assessing what has happened over the past two weeks beginning from Tuesday. I thought that if our leaders cannot listen to their people when they talk to them, the people will choose other ways of talking to us leaders.

What happened to my understanding, Mr Speaker is just unavoidable. It has to happen in order to communicate the people's wish for a new government which could not be heard by our leaders when communicated in words.

Mr Speaker, Honiara is the heart of Solomon Islands and during those difficult weeks we thought it was only the minority not representing the views of the people of Solomon Islands. Sir, knowing that Honiara is the heart of Solomon Islands and that if something goes wrong in Honiara nothing is going to reach the provinces. I think all of us will have to appreciate the fact that we must make sure that Honiara is at peace.

Sir, I have to put my integrity, dignity and principles aside for the sake of peace on behalf of my people of Temotu VATTU Constituency and the people of Solomon Islands at large. After weighing the law and order and peace for the peace loving people of Solomon Islands on one side of the scale with my dignity

and integrity and principles on the other side, I genuinely thought and humbly decided to sacrifice my side of the scale for the sake of peace and unity of our beloved Solomon Islands.

I simply surrendered to peace, Mr Speaker, when I decided to cross the floor with the hat of Justice and Legal Affairs Minister on my head, and I would like to clear the air of rumours surrounding my actions.

Sir, I personally believe that I made a quality decision on behalf of my people as a leader and a national leader. As a result of what happened on Wednesday the curfew was immediately lifted the same day and our good peace loving people of Solomon Islands were able to move around and conduct their normal lives freely once again.

Tuesday will remained to be called the ‘Black Tuesday’ as somebody wrote in the media and I also thought before I move that Wednesday was going to be another black Wednesday.

As a responsible leader I thought that I do not have to put my people at risk again, and so I had to make the sacrifice on what I had mentioned earlier. Regardless of our principles when you make yourself stiff with your principles and your integrity as a leader then that is what we can see as to what has happened last Tuesday.

Honourable colleagues, I just would like to explain to this honourable House that having thought seriously about what could happen the next day, I acted accordingly during that point in time.

Also on Wednesday during the election of a new Prime Minister I thought about it before I came into parliament for the voting. I also thought that something even more serious could happen if nothing changes. I would like to give credit to the honourable MP for Marovo for taking that honourable step. I think we need leaders like that.

I finally realize that the issue is no longer the captain but the ship. Given the fact that our people want a new government, we do not only want to change the captain of the ship but I also realize that we want to change the ship. Sometimes the ship may be painted with different colours but it is still the same ship.

Mr Speaker, in thinking about the affairs of our peace loving people, I would like to say here that, that is the reason why I acted according to what happened on Wednesday. The fact that my constituency has seen nothing during the last four years also caused me to think very seriously about joining or becoming a passenger of the same boat.

Sir, I believe that my people of VATTU Constituency are satisfied with me joining a new government, even as the new Minister for Health and Medical Services, an area which has been overlooked in the last four years.

As far as my constituency is concerned, in terms of health and education, which are the two most essential services in Solomon Islands, my people have suffered for the past four years.

Coming from the rural area, we were promised free education and we had to pay even what is called school contribution which to me is still school fees at the primary school level. It would seem to me that it is still the same pig with a different colour. I fail to see anything on what the last government said about ‘free education’. Those reasons justify the reason why I opted to join a new government.

Mr Speaker, let me mention something about my new Ministry. In terms of health and medical services, when I was a child the first thing I heard about was a clinic. Today if you go home you still hear people talking about a clinic. I am wondering when that clinic will become a hospital or that so-called clinic will be much bigger. The fact that we do not have clinics since Independence until now in the rural areas is a clear evidence that there is no change or there is no development going on in our beloved Solomon Islands.

Sir, I believe the government of the day has the necessary policies to address our health issues and so as education. In our rural areas people die of very small diseases that can be easily diagnosed and treated. People living in Provincial Centres and the Capital Honiara can receive treatment for those same sicknesses. When you have diabetes in the rural areas and in the village you can hardly get treatment and you can easily die. If you have the same disease in Honiara you can be treated because there are medicines at the National Referral Hospital which are not available in the rural areas.

Sir, I started to think that the government is not fair in the way it is delivering essential services to rural areas. What is the difference between a man living in the village and a man living in town? Is a man in the village not good and a man in Honiara good? The way the Government has been providing or delivering these essential services only tells me that we are yet to deliver to our people what we promise to them during campaign times and even during the period of forming a government or even in announcing of policy statements.

As a delivering Ministry, I would like to urge all Members of Parliament to support us in terms of our budgets and bills if they come on the floor of Parliament for discussion.

The Department of Health and Medical Services delivers essential services to the people of Solomon Islands. I want to say here that if provided with adequate funds, the Department can be able to perform its functions to meet our people's health needs. We can resource our clinics and hospitals with much needed medical supplies, logistics and manpower for effective and efficient delivery of these much needed essential services.

Mr Speaker, I believe that every citizen of this nation know that they have equal rights to medical services provided by the government of the day. All of us also know that without health everything else is nothing. Therefore, I would like to call on every Solomon Islander that despite and in spite of whatever situations we are in let us respect our medical facilities and workers.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, as a new MP I would like to urge the 50 MPs to stand united in our endeavors to rebuild a united Solomon Islands. Our people can only unite if leaders are united. We cannot force them to reconcile and unite if we ourselves are not united and reconcile. If there is something wrong in the head the body will also act according to it.

As a leader I would like to urge all 50 Members of parliament to unite as we rebuild our beloved Solomon Islands and avoid it from being further fragmented. There is no other way round to true peace and unity.

Mr Speaker, I would like to say that having listened to previous speakers I think there is a lot that we have to do. We have to respect

ourselves first before others can respect us. Listening to previous speakers I do not think this is the way we should talk inside this honourable House. Having looked through the Standing Orders there are orders we are obliged to follow, and so far as I sit and listen it would seem to me that we are not following the Standing Orders when we talk in Parliament.

I just want to tell all leaders that if we can respect ourselves in this honourable House, I believe our people will respect whatever we say.

Lastly Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate the honourable Prime Minister for becoming our new Prime Minister. I also would like to congratulate the honourable MP for Central Kwara'ae for becoming the Opposition Leader. What we like to see here is not pointing fingers at each other but urge our two leaders to work together with each other. All of us in this honourable House will contribute and all of us must ensure that this nation becomes a united nation.

With that, Mr Speaker, I will have more time to talk about my Ministry during the next sitting of Parliament. That is all I have to say for now, Mr Speaker, and I resume my seat.

The House adjourned at 3.28 pm