

NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS

DAILY HANSARD

THIRD MEETING – EIGHTH SESSION

MONDAY 19TH FEBRUARY 2007

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

Prayers.

ATTENDANCE

At prayers all were present with the exception of the Ministers of Education & Human Resources, Infrastructure & Development, Mines & Energy, Communication, Aviation & Meteorology, Provincial Government & Constituency Development and the Members for West New Georgia/Vona Vona, West Guadalcanal, Savo/Russell, Small Malaita, East Are Are, North Malaita, South Vella La Vella, North Guadalcanal and Shortlands.

PRESENTATION OF REPORT

Report on “The Governors-General (Pensions) and Benefits) Bill 2007” (National Parliament Paper No. 22 of 2007)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Mr Speaker: Honorable Members before we proceed on to our question session this morning, I simply want to acknowledge the presence of the honorable Speaker of the Central Islands Provincial Assembly, Honorable John Bosamata in our presence at the public gallery this morning.

(applause)

RETURN OF ALIENATED LANDS

23. Mr KENGAVA to the Minister for Lands and Survey: Can the Minister inform this House whether alienated lands shall be returned to original landowners? If so, what will happen to public land usages owned by churches, government and registered communities under perpetual ownership?

Hon BOSETO: Mr Speaker, the first part of the question is to do with the return of alienated lands back to original landowners where they belong before these customary lands were alienated from them. The second part, what will happen to those who have been using these alienated lands as public lands under the government perpetual title?

My answer to the first half, Mr Speaker, is yes. Since the demand to return alienated lands to the original landowners have been in the agenda of the Ministry of Lands and Survey for many years, the Grand Coalition for Change Government has included in its Policy No. 9.2(f), which says; ‘Review the effectiveness of the Policy of returning alienated lands to original landowners as many returned lands have not been put to productive use’.

Mr Speaker, in order for the Government through the Ministry of Lands and Survey would formulate a comprehensive and responsible policy to guide the process of returning alienated lands, the Ministry of Lands and Survey needs proper research into how these alienated lands throughout our country had been alienated and acquired at the first place. I hope this research must

start immediately during the third quarter of this year 2007.

Mr Speaker, research should have been done during the second half of 2006 last year but because of the slowness of administration, it was impossible to be done in time as it was scheduled.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry in its research work must develop policies to deal with the various categories of alienated lands namely:

- Alienated land, the subject of purchase by traders;
- Alienated land, the subject of purchase by the crown;
- Alienated land, the subject of native leases;
- Alienated land, the subject of the Wasteland Ordinances of Great Britain;
- Alienated land, the subject of traditional and transaction made between indigenous people;
- Alienated land, the subject of the land acquisition under the Lands and Titles Act;
- Alienated land, the subject of the lands settlement schemes under the Lands and Titles Act; and now we can include
- Alienated land, under the Customary Land Recording Act 1994

Mr Speaker, the second part of the question will be answered during the process of returning perpetual titles to recognized and identified original landowners. Therefore, Mr Speaker, I have no answer to inform the Parliament at this stage.

Mr Tozaka: Some of the alienated lands have been converted to 75 Fixed Term Estate title in return for development purposes. What mechanisms does the Ministry have in checking on the development programs

of alienated lands making sure they abide by that agreement when they were converted to perpetual estate, the 75 lease agreement?

Hon Boseto: It is still in the process as some of the claims are fixed term because there are people who actually claimed the lands already developed and also fixed titles. That is still under process of discussion.

Mr Kengava: In the event that lands are returned to original landowners, will there be conditions to that?

Hon Boseto: Yes, I think so there would be some conditions. Some conditions put by the government in relation to the developers or investors. Some conditions will be put in relation to developing the area perhaps before the complete transfer of the perpetual titles. That is why I said it will involve research which I have mentioned. We have to come up with proper formulation of the policy to accommodate all these categories.

Mr Kengava: My concern is those lands currently used by Churches and Schools, what is the condition on that?

Hon Boseto: Mr Speaker, about Churches, I do not know how it was given to them but perhaps giver gave it to the Churches as a gift because of the Good News. That is why I said that research is needed to find out how the Churches acquired the land at the first place. Is it because of the people's acceptance of the Gospel or the missionaries? It is a blessing to have perpetual titles over those lands but research is needed. The agenda has been lying there for many years and so this government must be serious in addressing the various categories that I have mentioned.

Mr Kengava: Mr Speaker, before I thank the Minister, I would like to say that this is a concern because even before the government is in the process of returning alienated lands, certain landowners around the country are already claiming ownership of those lands and this is posing fear in the communities.

The government must take very serious and careful consideration before doing that, and it must be clear to the public that the process is not taking place right now because the government still needs to do some research. With that I thank the Minister for his answers.

Question No. 24 deferred

35. Mr FONO to the Minister for Home Affairs: Why has it taken too long for the re-development of the China Town after the burning down in April 2006?

Hon GHIRO: Mr Speaker, at the outset the issue of China Town Redevelopment is a matter that directly comes under the Honiara City Council and the Country Planning Committee, which of course is a portfolio function of the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Housing.

Mr Speaker, my Ministry just like every other stakeholder of the project is just eager to know when the redevelopment will start. My Ministry is interested in the China Redevelopment Project including my good honorable, the Leader of Opposition for the simple reason that the Honiara City Council for which China Town is located is a portfolio organized of the Ministry of Home Affairs, which I am the Minister.

Mr Speaker, the plan to redevelop the China town was only finally approved by the honorable Minister for Lands, Survey and Housing on 12th December 2006 and a notice of this approval was published in the

Solomon Islands Gazette on 21st December 2006.

The China Town Redevelopment plan is an approved amendment to the Plan 1676A which is a Legal Planning scheme in Solomon Islands which has been unchanged since 1977. As such, the redevelopment plan is the first approved change to the local planning scheme in Solomon Islands since independence.

My good Leader of Opposition I have nothing to say about this redevelopment because this redevelopment scheme is under my good friend, the Minister of Lands, Survey and Housing and so he would be in a good position to let us know when the development will start.

Mr Fono: Was there any consultation between your Ministry and the Ministry of Lands to find answers to this question?

Hon Ghoro: As I have said earlier on I have consulted the City Council relating to this issue but again it is not under my portfolio. So the Minister of Lands would be in a position to let us know about the redevelopment of the China town and how soon it will start.

Hon Boseto: Mr Speaker, I think it would be better if the Leader of Opposition formulates a question for me and I will give you a good response to the question later.

Mr Kengava: Supplementary question to the Minister for Home Affairs. Is finding money the problem in the rebuilding of the China town?

Hon Ghoro: I am not in a position to say something about compensation because it is a matter the Cabinet will deal with.

Hon Sogavare: Mr Speaker, the issue of compensation is a matter that will be

addressed under the Commission of Inquiry that is set up to investigate that matter.

Mr Kengava: If I may put it in another way. Is finding money the problem in helping owners of the China town to rebuild their buildings?

Hon Sogavare: Mr Speaker, the issue of money is not really the issue of the Chinese. In fact they have come to see the government that they are prepared to go ahead and work on rebuilding the China town and rebuild their buildings. We are just waiting on a program that the Ministry of Lands will come up with before work will start.

Mr Fono: Mr Speaker, before I thank the Ministers and the Prime Minister, I would have thought that if a Minister knows that a question is not within his portfolio he should liaise with the other Minister so that answers given on questions are reasonable and proper. With that Mr Speaker, I thank the Ministers and the honorable Prime Minister for their answers.

37. Mr TANEXO to the Minister for Police and National Security: Can the Minister update this House the timeframe for Lofung Police Station construction of Police residences and Station in the Shortlands Islands to start?

Hon TOSIKA: Mr Speaker, in fact this is his project as a former Minister for Police during his time. This project did not take off until now. The Government in 2006 has already sent people down to Lofung which is owned by Fisheries and there is an understanding between Fisheries and the Ministry of Police to acquire this place from them in November 2006.

Work has already started. There is allocation in the budget for about \$3.5million for Lofung in Cluten bay. So do not worry because the project is taking off the ground, people are now on site, and as soon as the budget is passed

everything should be in place. Project formulation and land acquisition was already done with the understanding between Fisheries and Police. We have already paid Fisheries to relocate them and the Police Station will be located there to look after our people at the border.

Sir Kemakeza: Mr Speaker, my question is in two parts. Since the hard working Minister confirmed to the House that \$3.5million is for the Police Station and residence for police officers, who will be manning the station?

Hon Tosika: As it is. We cannot send Police Officers to live in the station. It is quite uncommon for any Police Station outside especially in a place like Cluten bay where there is no other place. So the sensible thing is for the project to cover residences for the officers.

Mr Taneko: Mr Speaker, the Minister in his answer said the Station will be shifted to the Fisheries area rather than at Lofung. Before the Lofung Station will move to Fisheries, was there consultation made to really ascertain whether the place is suitable for the Police Station and for the future development of Shortlands as well. Is it the right place? Who confirmed it is the right place?

Hon Tosika: Mr Speaker, I am surprised because this project is the project of the person asking the question when he was the Minister of Police. During his time the site was identified, negotiations and conclusion was done prior to this government coming into power. When we came into power we renegotiated the project with Fisheries because at this point in time Fisheries is in Cluten Bay.

Now we are asking Fisheries to move out so that the Police Station will be set up there. I have been in the Shortlands for a year as a Customs Officer looking after the border and Lofung is a place where I usually walked around shooting doves and so I know that place very well. It has more space to accommodate the station and for expansion as well. The locality is safe as it is inside a bay and so it has safe surroundings. It is properly sheltered and is an ideal place and locality for a police station.

Mr Taneko: Mr Speaker, before I thank the Minister for answering the question, you have rightly mentioned that you have been there in Lofung. Lofung is a very open place and previously it was a PPF station. But now it is going to be shifted to Cluten, which is true that a wharf can be built and the patrol boat can be based there. But family-wise I do not think it is really suitable because of the mountain near by. The way I see it Mr Speaker it is a bit too close to the mountain, not enough space for children to play. As a Member of Parliament I think I should be consulted after the feasibility study was done, and when that did not happen, and it is our project, the previous government, I was not really impressed.

I was thinking that the station will be still stationed at Lofung where there is enough space to build a school, sports field, a big area and any future development for Shortlands for my people, that place should be the right place for a growth centre. Since donor's money is going to be used, I think the government of the day should really consider the right place to build the station. Thank you for answering the question.

Question No.39

Mr Gukuna: Mr Speaker, since this question was put on notice, I have obtained some information which I need to strengthen my position on the question and so I wish to withdraw the question at the moment.

HOSPITAL – GUADALCANAL PROVINCE

38. Mr KOLI to the Minister for Health and Medical Services: Can the Minister inform Parliament of any plans by the Government to build a hospital specifically for the people of Guadalcanal Province who currently rely on the services of the National Referral Hospital?

Hon SOALAOI: Mr Speaker, I rise to respond to the question by the Member for East Guadalcanal and I also wish to thank the MP for asking that very important question.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry is currently looking at the Grove Area Health Center as the first mini Hospital for Guadalcanal Province. This is located on the Guadalcanal Plains and is currently being constructed by Don Bosco.

The Ministry has given the go ahead to Don Bosco in 2006 to construct the hospital and it should be ready for use by the Guadalcanal Province by mid 2008. Mr Speaker, the Guadalcanal Province like all other provinces will still rely on the National Referral Hospital for referrals with regards to higher specialist care.

Mr Koli: You mentioned the newly constructed mini hospital in the Guadalcanal Plains. In terms of location, the Guadalcanal Plains is just close to Honiara. Why can't the Ministry and the Guadalcanal Province look at locating that mini hospital in some of the isolated areas in Guadalcanal.

Hon Soalaoi: Mr Speaker, the approval given by the Ministry to construct the infrastructure is based on the utilization benchmark used by the Ministry to determine upgrading of lower levels of medical centres to another stage, in this case to become a mini hospital. There are other area health centres around Guadalcanal Province, thus we still maintain that the National Referral Hospital can still be used by the Province for referrals especially in terms of higher specialist care.

Like I said earlier on, the Ministry is still waiting to know where the headquarters of the Guadalcanal Province will be located because a hospital is always attached to a provincial centre.

Mr Koli: Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for his answers. Thank you.

LEGAL DRAFTSMAN – SALARY AND ENTITLEMENTS

Mr Gukuna: Point of order Mr Speaker. Last week when we discussed the salaries of the political appointees, the Government issued a statement saying it is unethical to talk about it. I just wonder whether this question will

contravene the Government's statement of last week.

Mr Speaker: I think it is a matter of publication of the salaries before they were authorized that was discussed last week.

Mr Zama: Mr Speaker, I think that point of order is out of order.

41. Mr ZAMA to the Minister for Finance and Treasury: What is the annual salary and other entitlements of the Legal Draftsman in the Attorney General's Chambers?

Hon DARCY: Mr Speaker, I am just wondering whether under Standing Order 22(k) the information that is required in this question can be obtained in documents that are easily accessible from the public office.

Mr Speaker: I suppose the honorable Member finds it hard to have access to this information. In terms of salaries in budget documents, for example, only statutory salaries are actually specified and not all public offices. In that case, that kind of information is not readily available, and so he can ask the question. If it was the statutory salaries then your point would be taken to this effect.

Hon Darcy: Mr Speaker, with your ruling I further seek your guidance whether this question should be addressed to the Minister of Finance or to the Public Service because the contract was really signed by the Public Service Division with the holder of the position.

Mr Speaker: Minister of Public Service, do you have information now.

Hon SANGA: Mr Speaker, I would like to go back again to the point raised by the Minister of Finance. I have the documents available with me right now - the contract that was signed by the Legal Draftsman and the copy of the salary structures that was given the okay by the Cabinet - that was the last exercise in the re-leveling of the Public Service salaries, and also information regarding the re-grading salary which can be found in the Establishment

Register of the Public Service. I have the documents with me now, and if it is okay with you I could provide the information to the questioner.

Mr Speaker: It is up to the questioner whether he wants to accept it or he wants to hear you. Do you want a physical presentation or answer in writing to you?

Mr Zama: Mr Speaker, I did not quite get what the two Ministers are trying to say - the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Public Service, and then somebody interjected in which made me confused. But if it has been the way that Parliament has been presenting information on paper, and if it is for public consumption, why should we be so conscious as this will be the first time we are holding things up.

I think this question is in the interest of the public and is also in the interest of the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. This needs to be brought to the surface so that we are all accountable and transparent in every things.

Mr Speaker, I just want to know the issue of the engagement of this officer, and whether he is a public officer and is paid by public funds we need to know. I have almost 10 supplementary questions on this question and that is why I would like if I could talk with the two Ministers so that they are properly prepared with good answers which I would like them to find.

I want the Parliament to know and for budget purposes for 2008, we need to get proper information on this kind of funding arrangement and in terms of appointment, localization programs for the Attorney General's Office, all these things is what I want to ask on the floor of Parliament so that we are all aware. But Mr Speaker, I give them time, and if you can assure me that this will appear again on the order paper tomorrow then I will defer it today so that I talk with them and they prepare some good answers for Parliament.

Thank you Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: The Minister is ready to answer your question.

Hon SANGA Mr Speaker, the answer I have before me is as follows. The position of the Legal Draftsman at the time when the contract was signed in 2005 was Level 10 in the Public Service Salary Scale.

The current incumbent is paid under that Agreement around the level of 10.5 on the normal Public Service Salary scale but under a contract so the contract specifically spelt out that his basic salary is \$48,848.86. That position has changed since the re-leveling of the Public Service Salary Structure so that his basic salary is now graded at SS2, and in terms of the award according to the salary points, it is at SS2.10.

Since the current incumbent Legal Draftsman is an expatriate, his salary is supplemented under the Local Supplementation Scheme, which brings the total package of the Legal Draftsman under that contract and it was signed at \$766,000 per annum. If the basic salary is excluded from the local supplementation component, the supplementation could be at \$717,151.14. However, Mr Speaker it is very important to note that under the contract, the sum paid as local supplementation includes the cost of accommodation, vehicle maintenance, traveling, cost of utilities - that is water, gas and electricity and wages payable to domestic staff, gratuity and terminal grant. That is the answer I have.

Mr Zama: Mr Speaker, supplementary question. What are the duties of the Legal Draftsman?

Hon Sanga: Mr Speaker, a Legal Draftsman by the terminology is a person who drafts legal documents and other instruments. That basically is his role as a draftsman.

Mr Zama: Mr Speaker, I know that the current incumbent has been on the position for some times. How many Solomon Islanders have been trained for this position? How many Solomon Islanders have been trained during the time this incumbent is in position?

Hon Sanga: There is shortage of expertise of a legal draftsman and women. We as a government including the last government have attempted to try and train our own legal

draftsman. We have actually sent two officers who have been qualified as draftsman but they have since left the government service and we have another person who is working with the current Legal Draftsman.

Mr DAUSABEA: Mr Speaker, upon hearing the figure announced by the Minister for Public Service, can you confirm that this officer is the highest paid officer within the Government Service?

Hon Sanga: Mr Speaker, this officer plus other officers whose skills and expertise are not available in the country, one of those officers was paid under local supplementation. And local supplementation scheme is rarely used. It is only used when we feel that we do not have local expertise available.

Mr Zama: Mr Speaker, is the government having any localization program for this position? Mr Speaker, the current incumbent has been on the position for sometimes and from normal practice, when someone is in a position and they are expatriates or from outside, there is always the understanding that somebody has to understudy to take up the position.

But what I understand is that a few of our people have not been able to take that position and so we need to know the government's localization program of this position. If this person is just too indispensable then it is a problem of the government. What is the localization program of the government?

Hon Sanga: Mr Speaker, this position like every other position within the Service filled by expatriate officers is subject to review all the time. Now in this case when this government came in, there is already a standing contract with the officer and I think the concerns that are raised in the House are very important and we will take note of them.

Mr Zama: Mr Speaker, before I thank the government and the Ministers, in my view and from what I heard from the answers, this office is one of the highly paid offices in the Public Service, and at the rate the government is taking in outsourcing its work, there is now the need

that if we continue to outsource our work is not good enough because our local people who can do the job are readily available.

In my view, with that kind of level of salary we can engage 10 legal officer posts in the Public Service. But what I want to raise is that there is real need for the government to look at this position and further review the contract because it is becoming expensive. Talking about affordability and sustainability in our programs and positions, this is one position, in my view, that needs to be seriously looked into in terms of government's affordability.

The question of localization also needs to be seriously looked into as well and if the current incumbent is an impediment to the progress and development of this office, then that also needs to come under the spotlight. But that said, I would like to thank the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Public Service and any other Ministers who have in one way or the other contributed their thoughts in putting together the answers and the officers who have assisted their Ministers on this question. I would like to thank them from the bottom of my heart for making that effort. Thank you very much.

BILLS

Bills – First Reading

The Statistics (Amendment) Bill 2007
The Income Tax (Amendment) Bill 2007

Bills – Committee Stage

The 2007 Appropriation Bill 2007

(Committee of Supply continues)

Head 285 – Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey

Mr Kengava: Mr Chairman, accounting code 4070. Can the Minister enlighten me on what Retirement LSB is?

Hon Boseto: Mr Chairman, that is for those who have not yet been paid their retirement.

Hon Sogavare: Mr Chairman, that is long service benefits for some employees.

Sir Kemakeza: Mr Chairman, accounting code 6089 – land acquisition. There is a big reduction here than the last budget. I want to know what projects would this \$2.7million go for. If they are ongoing projects and were also reduced then he should also inform Parliament.

Hon Boseto: Mr Chairman, the Budget Division made the reduction because what has been budgeted for last year has not been spent. We wanted to spend it but there were some disputes and so it slowed it down. It was reduced to enable us spend it this year.

Mr Lonamei: Mr Chairman, subhead 6095 – site development fund. Are they going down to the provinces too or who is going to be funded under this?

Hon Boseto: Mr Chairman, that is fund for Solomon Islands for development and program of acquired land. Mr Chairman, this is going to increase. It is very important because we have to plan ahead on the use of land for housing and people coming in to build houses. This is only a small amount. We hope that once we establish the Land Reform Division we will take it up as very important. Planning ahead before housing is established in an area.

Mr Tozaka: Mr Chairman, page 345 1010 - civil service salaries. Just a general question referring to the Establishment Register. I noticed that there are outstanding vacancies to be filled especially in the accounts cadre. What is the Ministry's effort in filling these positions?

Hon Sogavare: Mr Chairman, normal government recruitment will happen. The vacant posts are indicated there and we will recruit officers, and there is a pool of resources under the Public Service of \$10 million to cater for vacant posts to be filled.

Mr Kwanairara: Mr Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister about the establishment and the non establishment register too on page 137. It

says under the Tribal Lands Recording all those posts have been transferred or deployed to the Land Reform Unit. Does that mean there will be no work done under Tribal Land Recording?

Hon Boseto: Mr Chairman, our plan is that land recording will be deployed to the newly established Land Reform Division. It will be taken care of there.

Mr Tozaka: Mr Chairman, on page 137 of the establishment register in relation to the Registrar General's post. That post has been vacant for quite a while, and it is a very important post being acted upon at the moment by administrative convenience. May be the Minister for Public Service would help here on the time this important post would be filled.

Hon Boseto: Mr Chairman, the information I have here is that the Judiciary will be involved in the appointment of the Registrar General, and that is why the delay.

Mr Tozaka: Mr Chairman, can the Honourable Minister repeat his answer? I did not hear what he said in filling in this post on the Registrar General's post?

Hon Boseto: Mr Chairman, the Judiciary and Legal Services Commission will appoint the Registrar General because it is a legal position.

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, what the Minister is saying is that we are still in the process of making the appointment of the position of the Registrar General, and it will be done through the Judicial and Legal Services Commission.

Sir Kemakeza: Mr Chairman, there is a big reduction on income. What is the cause of this big reduction on income? the Minister of Finance wants money and the Minister must collect all the dues he can collect? Is it because the actuals of last year dropped or activities are no longer there as they have been taken over by private firms or is it because of non collection? Which ones of these is the cause of this reduction in income Mr Chairman?

Hon Boseto: Mr Chairman, we have not increased our charges but we have increased the estimates as the fees are not collected. Cheques are not accepted by bank. I am sorry about this but we are not well prepared.

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, income on lands for last year. What is provided for this year is real income for the previous year. In fact, for sometime there has been some over-estimation of the arrears on land rentals and premiums when in fact the real income that is due to the government on this particular item is just what has been provided for in the 2007 budget. We are basically budgeting for the realistic income that we would expect to collect from this particular Ministry.

Sir Kemakeza: Mr Chairman, I did not get the proper answers from the two Ministers because reduction in revenue can be in three areas. The first is when services provided for by the Department are no longer there as they are now carried out by the private sector. The second is that the collection of last year, the performance of collection is not as expected and therefore it decreased. The last one is when officers did not collect money last year. There is somebody who is supposed to pay the dues to the government but officers did not collect the most needed revenues. Which of these three is the cause of this reduction? It is a simple thing, Mr Chairman.

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, I have already said what that reduction is. It is based on what was really collected in 2007, which means that may be the figures for 2006 have been over-estimated as income when in fact it was not supposed to be the figure that was estimated in the previous years.

In relation to whether or not we have actually subcontracted the collection of income, you cannot do that in the Ministry of Lands because payment has to be made to the government. It cannot be subcontracted or outsourced to any other revenue collecting agents to collect the fees. It is not income of that nature.

The real reason for this reduction is that this is the real income that has been collected in

2006, and therefore we do not want to over estimate the figures for 2007 otherwise we will bring false expectations to the public and also in the way this budget is assembled.

Mr Riumana: Mr Chairman, my question is again on income. Does the Ministry have any mechanism or systems put in place to monitor and coordinate the collection of incomes?

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, the whole framework of financial management of the government is to consolidate the collection of revenue. I do not really understand what the Member is talking about but if you look at the whole framework of financial management, it provides for a very tight process of payment of revenue to the government. There is no room for outsourcing unless of course in the areas of tax where you believe you can outsource it to other agents to collect it. But it is very tightly put together in an established system.

Mr Chairman, in terms of the overall financial management framework the government has, as provided for under the Financial Instructions, it is a very, very consolidated process of collection of government revenue.

Mr Fono: Mr Chairman, the Minister's answer is not quite acceptable because if you look at the income actuals in 2005 it is \$1.3 million. It means that is what was actually collected. The revised estimate for 2006 was even over a million dollar. But this year we only estimated \$375,000. In relation to the question of the Deputy Speaker, the MP for Savo/Russells, that explanation is not straight. It would only mean that you have reduced the fees?

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, no. In fact the situation of 2005 and 2006 are the remaining arrears that have been collected and therefore it makes that difference. All the arrears that have been previously assessed have been collected in the fiscal years of 2005 and 2006, which means that there are no arrears, unless of course there are arrears in previous years, which can be easily adjusted in the current year. There is no real difference in the way this revenue is put together.

Sir Kemakeza: Mr Chairman, I was also waiting for the Leader of the Opposition because I was not happy with the Minister's answers. The answers are not straight and do not make sense. Even if activities are taken over by the private sector, which he also gave a wrong explanation because I did not ask subcontracting of the collection of revenue. For example, take one of the items there, Mr Chairman, valuation. A lot of people are now doing valuation work and so people go to them and therefore they do not go to the government for this service. That is what I meant and therefore, the reason for this reduction in revenue. If that is the explanation then it makes sense to me because the first explanation does not justify the actuals. If arrears of 2005 are collected and therefore the actual is there then it might make some sense. But I am still not satisfied with the answers by the Minister of Finance. I think the Minister of Lands might have a good answer because the Minister of Finance is starting to guess.

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, valuation is a service that can be outsourced. But when the valuation work is carried out the fees must be paid to the government. The fee is not paid to the person that has been outsourced to carry out the valuation service. The service can be outsourced but the fees for engaging that service, as if it is done by government officers but done by a private sector, must be paid to the government. Do not confuse us on this thing.

Mr Gukuna: Mr Chairman, can I suggest that the money was lost because no one is working in that Division. There is no salary there as it appeared and so there is no one working in that division.

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, there cannot be other reasons except the fact that arrears of previous years have been collected, and arrears can be dated back some three, four years prior to 2006 or 2005.

What we are saying is that by 2005 and 2006 those areas have been paid by those who owed the government the money. When it comes to 2007 we feel that the realistic estimate for revenue on these particular items is what is

reflected in 2007. There may be some adjustments on previous years, and that is the immediate previous year or 2006 which can change the amount slightly but not substantially as what may have been perceived by all the questioners.

Mr Kwanairara: Mr Chairman, accounting code 3225 - protective clothing and safety equipment. Are people in provincial towns and the Country Planning Boards going to use protective clothing and safety equipments?

Hon Boseto: Mr Chairman, this is provision for the uniforms of surveyors.

Mr Tozaka: Mr Chairman, just a clarification from the Honorable Minister on physical planners for the provinces. Do we provide planners for provinces as well?

Hon Boseto: Yes, Mr Chairman, I think is provision for the overall approach to physical planning. The information I have is that we are going to have a workshop on overall planning. .

Mr Rini: Accounting code 0060 on page 356 and also accounting code 0238. The first one is premiums on estates, which increases to \$1,152,834. What is this increase? Premium is related to new lands that people apply for. I know that government land in Honiara is almost used up or already used up. Which land is the government going to acquire now so that it attracts a high premium on the estates. That is my first question. My second question is on land rent. Why is land rent reduced this year as compared to last year.

Hon Boseto: The reduction is because of land acquisition, and so this estimate is reduced in relation to that one. What is the other question?

Mr Rini: The first question is on increase on estates. An increase premium fee depends on the availability of lands. Government lands in Honiara are used up. Which land in Honiara is the government thinking to develop so that it is expecting an increase on premium estates?

Hon Boseto: This is not new land but those who have not been paying their land rents. That is what we are going to collect.

What should be done is that we are going to collect the arrears which should bring us to normal and that is what that increase is for.

Mr Gukuna: Page 355, accounting code 2030 - tribal land recording. The commitment this year is the same as last year. In the budget speech there is intention by the government to move towards speeding up land recording and using land as collaterals for the credit schemes he promised. However, it appears to me now that there is no commitment according to the budget. Can the Minister confirm whether there is going to be land recording or will it be the same as last year?

Hon Boseto: After this budget is passed we are going to look at it holistically with the collaborative approach of the newly established Land Reform Unit.

The Land Reform Bill will come probably in mid this year but we are working towards that which involve the legal framework of the nine provinces to participate in land recording as they are much closure to customary land than the Ministry. But there would be more and more information coming through between now and the mid of this year.

The provinces, Members of the Parliament and provincial members will take part in the whole process of land recording.

Mr Taneko: Still on the same question, can the Minister confirm if tribal recording is legal now, can it be used for collateral?

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, what we are planning to do is to start off with the drafting of the legislation first which we hope to table in July, the middle of this year. For the time being it does not require or there may not be a need to put in any provision here, but after the passage of the Bill, we can look into other budgetary requirements to enforce the implementation of that legislation when it comes into force.

Mr Gukuna: Mr Chairman, the question is similar to the questions we have already asked. I note there is a significant increase on income

on accounting code 0060 - premium on estates. Do we have more estates now so that we are increasing the premiums? How does that big increase come about? It is good news that we will get more income, but how does that come about?

Mr Boseto: Mr Chairman what page is that please?

Mr Gukuna: Page 356 accounting code 0060.

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, I think the Minister has already explained that we would expect to speed up the registration of some of the land known as Tasahe II. I think you would be aware of Tashahe II. Also if you look at the Development Budget we have made allocation for the registration of all unauthorized public land in Honiara. So that means when the registrations are all done, we would expect an increase on premium on new estates that would be allocated to those that are currently illegally occupying those land but when they are legally registered. That is why the increase.

Mr Gukuna: The registration process can take very long. Can the Minister confirm that there is a high chance this amount will remain unfunded this year. Because depending on registration sometimes can take very long.

Hon Darcy: On the question of funding, if we do not believe that the budget will not have the revenue strength to fund it then we would not have put it in the budget.

We are confident to ensure the affordability of this budget is funded and that is why we put it there. We are confident that whatever provision of expenditure put in there can be easily matched by the revenue strength of the budget in the current year.

Mr Rini: I am still on those pages. I would just like to ask the Minister about these two departments - the Western Region Lands Centre and also the Northern Region Lands Centre. According to the establishment the Western Region covers Choiseul and Western Province and the Northern Region covers Malaita, which means only three provinces are covered. Why is

that in the Establishment or in the Recurrent Budget it covers other provinces since only three provinces are covered here.

Hon Boseto: Mr Chairman, what I have been saying is that the establishment of the Land Reform Unit is going to be looked into. I said that we have to work through legal framework to establish it so that all the provinces are involved. I am not quite sure about the title Western Region because I know that we use 'provincial' so we have to look into that one.

Let the budget pass and when we come to realigning the approach to the normal single framework of each province, all the constituencies that are going to participate in this reform. This is not going to be fragmented but done in an integrated approach.

Mr Tozaka: Mr Chairman, my question is in relation to the vacancies, the posts. I am quite worried that the sight here is not very good.

I am generally talking about the Establishment Register on pages 137 and 138 where you can see many vacant posts in this department, and they have been there for quite a long time, I gather and these posts are specialized posts in the Lands Division.

Is the Minister saying that he is going to advertise these posts in the open market or is he going to appoint people because these are special cadres? The practice in the past is to fill the posts and then send the people for in service training to PNG or to the USP. Can he explain?

Hon Boseto: Mr Chairman, can we discuss the budget and ask questions on the budget. Is that a budget question?

Mr Tozaka: It is part of the budget.

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, those posts have been there for some time. We understand that there may be the need to upgrade the levels of some of these posts so that we can attract qualified people to man these positions.

I think there has been some significant improvement in the way the grading of these posts have been provided for in the budget, and we do not see any reason as to why the current grading would discourage good qualified people to man these positions.

But if we go through the year and find that it has been a disincentive to officers then obviously the process is there for review and upgrading of these positions and can be reflected in future budgets.

Mr Fono: Mr Chairman, page 362, can the Minister explain why is there no estimate for rental charges as income under Housing, accounting code 0218. Are we not going to collect any rental charges this year? We have been \$400,000 plus over the last years and the actuals for 2005 was \$449,000.00. Why is that we do not have any estimates for it this.

Hon Darcy: Those figures have been posted to other charges. It has been incorporated in other fees and charges. The Government even does not have any houses that being rented out in the open market. All houses are fully occupied by government employees and government ministries. But may be figures of that kind have been posted to other charges. So it would be reflected on pages 356 and 352.

Mr Fono: What other charges is the Minister of Finance referring to? The other charges I can see here are on page 356 and it is even lower than what was actually collected under rental charges revised estimates in 2005.

Can you be specific as to which accounting code does rental charges come under, under different divisions that we have just gone through?

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, other charges on Page 352. I think one thing we must also note is that we have gone through the process of cleaning up all revenue heads in the last six months of 2006, so that where appropriate, revenues are supposed to be charged to a particular head in the budget. That is what you see in the budget.

Even though you see zero provisions there may be through the posting exercise and cleaning up of the revenue subheads, those revenues have been allocated to the appropriate heads rather than what we have seen in the past.

Mr Gukuna: I notice that the housing development provision do not appear in 2005

and 2006 and then it comes up again this year. I interpret this as a new department that has just been established. Can the Minister explain the rationale behind this?

Hon Boseto: Mr Chairman, as far as I know this is a newly established unit since last year.

Mr Gukuna: Mr Chairman, I am not happy with that answer because this new division will cost more than half a million dollars, and just to say it is a new department is not enough.

Of course, I can interpret it as explained as a new department but I want a bit more, the rationale behind it. Why did the Ministry see it fit that it should come in this year?

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, the whole intention of this new policy is to take stock of all government properties. If you look at what is intended to be spent here it is only half a million dollars but if you look at the overall valuation of all government properties, it is more than half a million, it could \$10 or \$20million.

The whole idea is for the government to take stock of all its properties and then properly manage and develop them to improve government services. That is the whole intention. It is a matter that has been neglected for some time, and I am sure we will all appreciate the fact that government assets have not been properly accounted and managed and therefore have given rise to a very huge depreciation in terms of asset management. Mr Chairman, that is really the intention of this policy. We believe it is a good approach so that the government can actually see what is really there for the government to deliver its services to the public.

Mr Gukuna: Just a follow up question, and I accept the explanation by the Minister. Is this division going to deal only with agriculture houses? I understand that the Department of Infrastructure also deals with housing. Is this specifically for the Department of Agriculture or for every houses.

Hon Darcy: No, it is for the entire properties of the government, the housing properties of the government, and not only for one ministry. As

you know the function of property valuation is vested in the Ministry of Lands and therefore it is better placed with the responsibility of managing government assets.

Mr Tozaka: Page 362 accounting code 2002 - Repair of Government Housing. In the Ministry of Infrastructure & Development there is also repair of government housing, and so there is a duplication of two subheads. What is the difference between this one here and the one under the Ministry of Infrastructure? I would have thought that repairing of government houses comes under the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development.

Hon Darcy: The entire budgetary heads have subheads labeled as repair of government housing. So it is not only specific to this particular head here. If you look at other ministries, they also have subheads which says repair of government housing. This is only a standby provision. It is a new division and if the capacity of this division is built up and we see there is justification to boost this particular provision we will decide at that time.

Head 285 - \$12,088,977 agreed to

Head 286 - Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination

Mr Fono: I notice that there is no longer allocation for national planning, national reform. I understand that it is a policy decision to relocate national planning function to the Prime Minister's Office. Can the Minister explain the justification for that relocation of the national planning function to the Prime Minister's Office?

Hon Abana: This component has been moved to the Prime Minister's Office in line with the policy of the government.

Mr Gukuna: Page 367 – Under headquarters, only salary costs appear here but there are no costs to take care of their work. What will these people do? Just pay them without doing any work?

Hon Abana: This is because the new arrangement for headquarter and admin has moved to the Ministry of Planning.

Mr Fono: Page 370 – Office Rent is \$244,724.00. Can the Minister confirm that the current office occupied by the Ministry of Planning at the Panatina Plaza is subsidized by funds from the European Union NAO, and what is its current cost per month?

Hon Abana: This year we anticipate an increase in rental for that office, and that is the reason why there is a slight increase of \$7,000. I do not have the actual figures on what the Leader of Opposition is asking concerning EU assistance on rental but I will make that available to the honorable Leader of Opposition.

Mr Hilly: Mr Chairman, just an explanation of the format of this division where under expenditure is Civil Service Salaries and further down are the other common charges. I take it that those charges are for those people working inside the office are using.

On page 367 we have under expenditure civil service salaries, housing allowances and so on, but there is no money voted for administration people in the Headquarters and Administration. When we come to page 368, under National Reform, I understand this has been transferred to the Prime Minister's Office. When we come to page 369 there is the civil service salaries but there are no common subheads that officers will use in their work in the office. I just want to get clarification from the Minister as to why we have this format that common provisions are given to the various subheads for the people we are voting money for?

Hon Abana: The Ministry of Planning is just a small Ministry and therefore all those charges come under one head - Administration.

Mr Fono: PDU Monitoring Grant. Can the Minister confirm whether the Ministry continues to monitor the PDU funded projects? And if so, how many projects still exist under PDU may be in the late 80's or early 90's? There is still

allocation for this under accounting code 4116 amounting to \$33,238.

Hon Abana: A slight correction here. It is supposed to be the Monitoring grants for the provinces. The PDU grant is no longer there.

Mr Chairman: Just delete the letters 'PDU' and so it should be just 'monitoring grant'.

Mr Kwanairara: Page 370 accounting code 2024 – Entertainment, which has a slight increase. What kind of entertainment is this?

Hon Abana: As you might have heard that we are increasing the length of time for dialogue with aid donors, and so we must entertain them. That is the reason for the slight increase.

Mr Gukuna: I understand that before the budget is drawn up they will have to hold meetings with aid donors. I might have missed it but I do not see any provision to meet the cost of this meeting.

Hon Abana: At the beginning of this year we organized the first meeting with donors at the Iron Bottom Sound Hotel and the second one to follow suit should be one week from now and it is accommodated under that head.

Mr Fono: Just a general question. Planning is very important in terms of the Government's strategies. I notice quite a lot of vacant posts in the Establishment. What guarantee does the Minister have from the Public Service that these posts will be filled? Most of these posts have been vacant since 2005 and 2006 period and they appear again under the Establishment this year.

Hon Abana: The Leader of Opposition would know during his time that it is not easy to recruit the right officers. It is very challenging to recruit new officers. Last year we made progress by recruiting at least nine officers. This year we will continue to recruit and fill the vacant posts under the Establishment. I can assure the Leader of Opposition that certainly we will try our best to recruit so that the

Ministry can come up with the expected performance this year.

Mr Hilly: Mr Chairman, I notice that National Planning is on page 370 and also page 371 but then we skip to page 373. I just want to ask the wisdom of the Minister because it is causing confusion to some of us. Are the expenditures on page 373 especially on civil service salaries that should be on page 370? What is the wisdom here?

Hon Abana: It is the same one based on the understanding that Planning component moved to the Prime Minister's Office and the staffing at present, because of the difficulty in recruitment will still be there.

Head 286- \$1,682,637 agreed to

Head 287: Ministry of Culture and Tourism

Mr Boyers: Page 378 Accounting Code 2013 - telephones and faxes. I note throughout the Ministry's heads that there is absolutely no provision for telephone and faxes. Telephone numbers are in the phone book, IT replacement and computers are there and the email is there, but why did the Ministry not budget for telephone and faxes for communication?

Hon Rogosomani: I think it is include under the water provision. They are all under that provision.

Mr Fono: Page 378, looking through the budget itself I fail to see the payroll cost for headquarters and admin under pages 378 and 379. Is there any explanation for that?

Hon Rogosomani: At this point in time they are all absorbed under the various divisions.

Mr Fono: Do you mean to say that there is no provision for payroll for under secretaries and the admin staff in your establishment? The posts are there in the establishment for Under Secretary, Executive Personal Secretary on page 146 in the Establishment. Why did they not appear in the recurrent budget under Headquarters and Admin? I fail to see it in other

different departments too because they have their own civil salaries but I do not see the salaries for Admin and Headquarters and that is why I am asking whether the Minister can inform us where the Admin Staff Civil Service salaries are absorbed under?

Hon Darcy: They are all incorporated under the Tourism Division on page 384. You will see a slight improvement for salary provision in there.

Mr Rini: Page 382 Accounting Code 6076 - Artifacts and Display. Can the Ministry explain what this allocation is for?

Hon Rogosomani: It is for the artifacts that are on display in the Museum.

Mr Rini: On page 384 – Head 4094 - Eco-tourism Development Grants. I want the Minister to explain what is the procedure for people in the rural areas to access this fund?

Hon Rogosomani: This allocation is for the officers and is not for projects.

Mr Hilly: Subvention to Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau has no provision. We understand that the Visitors Bureau is a very important office trying to attract visitors into this country. Is the Visitors Bureau able now to finance its own work?

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, the Government's policy on subventions to statutory bodies has already been announced. It is not that they will not be given subventions. The statutory bodies must first show good governance and proper auditing of their accounts before the government will consider the costs that it can subvent and subsidize.

It is not right to say that it has been excluded from the provisions. There is a zero provision there which means that it can be supplemented. So a zero provision is still there because it has to start from zero, one, two, and going up, so it is still there.

Mr Gukuna: Mr Chairman, page 384 accounting code 2018 - Publicity and Promotion. Tourism is all about promotion and publicity.

Do you think this amount is enough or are you going to increase it?

Hon Rogosomani: Mr Chairman, this allocation as you can see is not enough. But at least we have something to start with.

Mr Fono: Mr Chairman, I will go back to the item the Member for Marovo has asked on eco-tourism development grant. The Minister said that this is for projects but for officers. If so why use the word 'grants'? Or is it only officers that are entitled to build eco-tourisms? That is my first question.

The second question is on general grants of \$540,000. What procedures do people need to follow in order to get assistance under this general grant?

Hon Rogosomani: Mr Chairman, I think that is a mistake or error in account coding.

Mr Speaker: But should there be a proper figure?

Mr Fono: Mr Chairman, this eco-tourism development, if the word 'grant' is removed why is it for officers? Touring and traveling is there.

Hon Rogosomani: This provision is to assist officers when they go for tours and visits.

Mr Gukuna: Mr Chairman, I come again on general grant. My understanding is that some officers in the Ministry have some good connections with only a few operators and they have been drawing this fund years and years. When some good ones applied they were rejected but when their friends applied the grant just flowed.

Can the Minister and his officers ensure that these funds are not used by these people because there are some genuine people who have been excluded? Can the Minister confirm that they are doing something to try and keep track on this important fund?

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, we will take note of that concern but we are not aware of any scheme like that going on with operators and officers.

Mr Hilly: Mr Chairman, culture promotion - code 6159. Can the Minister explain what they are going to do here?

Hon Rogosomani: Mr Chairman, as time goes on things change and so are our traditions and cultures because of influences from outside at this present time we are living in. Therefore, my Ministry is looking at promoting our cultures so that at least we can maintain the values of our cultures which are starting lose their value at this time.

Mr Hilly: Very nice, but my simple question is, how are you going to do it?

Hon Rogosomani: Mr Chairman, this should enable setups within our villages which will help our old people to be involved and with the elders in the communities to promote and maintain our cultures.

Head 287- \$3,046,975 agreed to

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, I beg to move that further proceedings of the committee of supply be suspended until 2.00 p.m?

Committee of Supply suspended until 2.00 p.m.

Head 288: - Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Employment

Mr Hilly: Mr Chairman, I noticed on page 395 trade facilitation and trade mission. Is trade still part of the department or has it moved?

Hon Agovaka: Mr Chairman, internal trade is still with Commerce and external trade is with Foreign Affairs.

Mr Hilly: Mr Chairman, I would have thought that trade mission implies external trade.

Hon Agovaka: Yes, Mr Chairman.

Mr Hilly: If it is yes, why is it still with the Department when it is now under Foreign Affairs?

Hon Agovaka: Mr Chairman, the Ministry still assists on trade missions in consultation with the Foreign Affairs Ministry. We still consult with trade missions through Foreign Affairs.

Mr Kwanairara: Mr Chairman, accounting code 6151 - provincial trade fairs. How many provinces will benefit from this allocation under this head? Is this only for Honiara or other provinces?

Hon Agovaka: Mr Chairman, this is to cater for provincial trade fairs during provinces' Second Appointed days for those that apply seeking this fund.

Mr Hilly: Mr Chairman, is this a new initiative?

Hon Agovaka: Mr Chairman, it is a newly created vote for 2007.

Mr Hilly: Internal marketing, what are you going to market? Can the Minister explain?

Hon Agovaka: Mr Chairman, internal marketing is to assist SMEs to cater for outsourcing of technical assistance in areas like processing of various products. For example, cassava, kava and also training in areas of marketing and preservation and also to assist in marketing and promoting of local products especially by provinces and also to cater for product analysis and testing and assessments.

Mr Hilly: Mr Chairman, if people in the rural areas come up with a commodity that they would want to find a market for whether in Honiara or overseas, can this vote help them finance such undertakings?

Hon Agovaka: Yes, Mr Chairman.

Mr Kwanairara: Mr Chairman, accounting code 4091 and 4092. I fail to see any provision for these two items in the 2007 budget. Have they been transferred elsewhere?

Hon Agovaka: Mr Chairman, assistance to small businesses has been scrapped off. The

government has initiated the loan guarantee scheme in replacement of these.

Mr Hilly: Page 398 – cooperative reform administration. Are we going to strengthen this department again?

Hon Agovaka: Yes, Mr Chairman.

Mr Kwanairara: Mr Chairman, just for clarification purposes under income - work permit application fees. I think this is collected by the Treasury because the procedure is such that the fees are paid at the Treasury.

Hon Agovaka: Mr Chairman, work permit as income caters for work permit approvals and it is under the Labor Division.

Mr Hilly: Mr Chairman, I can see here the Department also doing training. There is a subhead for training - local in-service and training – SICHE fees. How do you award this training to students? Is it for students leaving schools or for working people? How do you identify the students to be trained?

Hon Agovaka: Mr Chairman, I think this particular item comes under Labour, and it is to cater for in-service fees for our Labour staff that have been selected to do in-service training not only at the SICHE but the USP as well.

Mr Hilly: Mr Chairman, before I understand that the Labor Division organizes training and at the end of the trainings they were awarded certificates either in electrician, plumbing or whatever. Is this part of that or is it an old system that is no longer in operation?

Hon Agovaka: This caters for college fees for our sponsored students. Accounting code 4009 is provision for fees of all our sponsored students at the SICHE.

Mr Hilly: Mr Chairman, item 2082 - sitting allowances attracts \$60,000. What is this sitting allowance for?

Hon Agovaka: The item sitting allowance has been catered for elsewhere.

Mr Hilly: So is there a provision for sitting allowance. If it is for a board or corporation because they would hold meetings then I can see some sense in here but sitting allowance for a common subhead of the department is what I do not understand.

Hon Agovaka: The sitting allowance here is for the Trade Disputes Panel Committee.

Mr Kwanairara: Mr Chairman, provincial accommodation renovations. Is this for renovating of houses in the provinces?

Hon Agovaka: This is to renovate provincial accommodations, the tied houses that we have in the provinces.

Mr Hilly: Mr Chairman, page 406 - assistance to consumer group. Is this the price control unit that used to control the price of goods and also check the sources of some of the foods that come into the country? Is this accounting code 4093 to help consumers and also help the division to check on the price of goods?

Hon Agovaka: Mr Chairman, assistance to consumer group is mainly to assist interested consumer groups.

Mr Gukuna: One of the complaints of the Price Control Unit is that they do not have a vehicle to go around checking the price of goods in shops, and I can see here that there is no provision to cater for that complaint. This is the persistent complain of this division. They always complain when queries are put to them that they do not have a vehicle. I agree with them, and this needs to be strengthened, and one of these measures that should be taken is to give them a vehicle. Is there any possibility of attending to this important complaint?

Hon Agovaka: Mr Chairman, we have noted deficiencies in the division in terms of logistic and we will assist by providing vehicle to this particular division. We have already purchased vehicles for our Labor Division and the Administration and we are going to assist this

unit by getting a vehicle for the unit that you mentioned.

Head 288 - \$10,852,705 agreed to

Head 289: Ministry of Communication, Aviation and Meteorology

Hon Vahoe: Mr Chairman, I beg to move that head 289 be reduced by \$11 million in respect of subhead 0511 item 8200. The reason for this amendment is simply that it is a statutory expenditure and it was included in my Ministry budget by mistake. Mr Chairman, with that I beg to move.

Mr Chairman: An amendment has been moved by the Honourable Minister for Communication, Aviation and Meteorology that head 289 be reduced by \$11million in respect of subhead 0511 item 8200.

Amendment to Head 289 was carried

Mr Gukuna: Mr Chairman, the same question keeps coming up. Water has a provision of nearly half a million dollars. Last year there was only a provision of \$36,000, but this year it is \$442,000. There needs to be some clarification as to why this big increase in water.

Hon Vahoe: Mr Chairman, there is increase on water charges here because of the high consumption of water at the international airport which has been centralized too at headquarters.

Mr Gukuna: Mr Chairman, same question. Is it the same with electricity and gas too?

Hon Vahoe: Mr Chairman, yes, it also applies to electricity and gas.

Mr Rini: Mr Chairman, Telekom license fees. Is Telekom paying this to the government now because in the past Telekom did not pay this to the government but it just offset it with the Government's bills? Is Telekom now paying this revenue to the consolidated fund?

Hon Darcy: Yes, Mr Chairman, it did pay directly to the consolidated fund.

Mr Rini: Mr Chairman, maintenance of airfields – provincial with an allocation of \$1.2 million. Can the Minister identify the airfields in the provinces that you are going to be maintenance?

Hon Vahoe: Mr Chairman, this maintenance covers airfields that the government is taking care of.

Mr Hilly: Mr Chairman, accounting code 8200 that the Minister has just moved amendment on. I just want the Minister to explain more civil aviation special fund - statutory expenditure. Is this special fund established under the Public Finance and Audit Act? How do we vote money on it?

Hon Darcy: This special fund, as I am sure Members in the last term would recall is a special fund that is established by an act of Parliament within the Civil Aviation Act pursuant to Section 100 of the Constitution which provides for Parliament to make provision for special funds. That is where this fund is being established. It is not established under the Public Finance and Audit Act. It is established through an act of Parliament within the Civil Aviation Act.

The expenditure of this fund is not something for Parliament to vote on but for purposes of managing expenditures of government resources, we have included this as information in the development budget. Where it will be expended is detailed in the development budget.

Mr Zama: Page 147 accounting code 6151 - Munda Airport maintenance has no provision in 2007. Is there any explanation?

Hon Vahoe: It has been reallocated to maintenance of airfields - provincial under accounting code 2159.

Mr Zama: This is a concern because last year it appeared as a separate item and the other item on maintenance of provincial airfields is an ongoing separate line item. I just want to be absolutely sure that the maintenance of Munda

airport must continue otherwise it is being tucked into that item and then forgotten.

Hon Vahoe: Munda is classified as a provincial airport.

Mr Kwanairara: Can we go back to page 418 accounting codes 3090 and 3091 – consumables - upper Air and consumables - surface?

Hon Vahoe: Consumables is funded under the US Global Climate observing system. This is a funded project that funded the renovation of the upper air station that is completed. Part of the funding is to meet the cost of consumables include weather balloons.

Mr Rini: Page 418 accounting code 3500 Automatic Weather Station. These stations are very, very important for weather condition in Solomon Islands. Why is there a big reduction by \$5,000 on this very, very important weather station?

Hon Vahoe: That item was underutilized last year.

Head 289 - \$10,135,956 agreed to

Head 290: Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources -

Mr Rini: Page 426 – Income - Fisheries Licenses (Overseas). There is a very big increase here. Can the Minister explain where that extra revenue will come from?

Hon Leni: We have a new bilateral fisheries agreement signed last year and also from the European Union. We are expecting an increase in revenue that will come into Fisheries because of this new bilateral agreement.

Mr Zama: On this bilateral income, otherwise we just put in figures that would unnecessarily inflate the numbers. Is the Government absolutely sure and does it have any confirmation from our bilateral partners to think that, that is what will be received by government? Is there any confirmation on the bilateral treaties?

Hon Leni: Every bilateral agreement deals with boats, and so each specific bilateral agreement tells us how many vessels they will employ. Based on those vessels we have fixed rates on the licenses.

Calculation is based on the number of vessels tied up with each bilateral agreement. What we have here in front of us is not very far from the true information that we need to collect in revenue this year. If some Members are not really sure I can photocopy the documents and put it in your pigeon holes.

Mr Zama: I want the Minister to just give us a little indication otherwise it will take your time photocopying it. Just announce it to us so that we all can hear it in the Chamber.

Hon Leni: The time to announce it should be during question time. If you want this information then put it as a question and I will read everyone to you. But if you want it I can read it to you. Japan we have 35 purseiners - 25 long line, total revenue expected is \$173,000yen and in terms of Solomon Dollar it is about \$11million, Taiwanese 33% purseiners, 7 long line, total expected revenue is SI\$5 million, Korea has 27 purseiners with expected revenue of \$3 million and New Zealand has 4 purseiners and we are expecting half a million dollars. From European Union we are expecting \$4 million, the USA Bilateral Treaty we are expecting \$..... and FSM Arrangement we are expecting \$6 million except for others. Our local fishing companies like Mako, Global Investment, NFD and Soltai vessels also form part of the revenue that will be coming in.

All in all our expectation is that we think the sum of \$48 million will be coming in as revenue this year. But not forgetting as well that other revenues will come after calculation of what is inside our agreement that anything over and above US\$8,000 per metric ton, 6% of that will also be paid to us but we did not include this because if that comes in it will be counted as a bonus. What we have here is really the right figure we expect to collect this year. I hope the Member is satisfied with the answers, but if not I will give him a copy.

Mr Gukuna: Accounting code 0111 - FFA Receipts. Is this a new income item or what is it?

Hon Leni: What normally happens is that the bilateral agreements that come under Japan, Taiwan, Korea have to be paid to our account through the FFA. As soon as the funds come the FFA transfers the funds to the government when requested otherwise it is paid directly to the consolidated fund.

Mr Rini: This is just a general question on the Department. If you look into this Department, the Fisheries Management Policy it is a very, very important part in the Ministry. It is this Ministry that collects this \$53 million. But when you look at other expenditures, especially other charges, there is a reduction of \$1.6 million. Can the Minister explain as to why there is a big reduction on other charges in this particular Department?

Mr Rini: If you look at this budget under this division - Fisheries Management Policy. This division of the Ministry is very, very important because it is this division that is going to collect \$53million in this year's budget under Fisheries.

My question is, why is there a reduction on other charges. For instance, the money that those people are supposed to use is reduced by \$1.6 million.

Hon Leni: That is not true. It is not a reduction. Actually, there is a restructure in the Ministry. We have separated the Management Policy and have come up with two new divisions that will share the responsibility.

Mr Tozaka: Just a general question to the Minister. It is almost the same situation as the Ministry of Lands on specialized manpower requirement for the Fisheries Department that looks as though nearly half of the posts here are vacant. I know that you might also find it difficult to fill them but may be with the reform program you are now embarking you have may plans to fill these posts. You might want to explain how you are going to fill these important posts especially in the provinces as well.

Hon Leni: The Ministry had already had an interview for recruitment in December last year. We are now going to get people in to fill the vacant posts. In terms of funds provided for the vacant posts, it is with the Public Service already.

Mr Koli: Mr Chairman, just a general question on provincial fisheries. As you know some of the fisheries centres are dormant, they are no longer operating. Does the Ministry any plans to reactivate such fisheries centres?

Hon Leni: Fisheries Centres Rehabilitation Program is ongoing. Our usual friend, the Japanese Program continues to upgrade the Fisheries Centres. But we are also asking for cooperation from the communities concerned where some fisheries centres especially on Guadalcanal were damaged during the crisis. We are still waiting for engines to be returned but so far none has been returned to us. This is a problem that we are yet solve. But the government has ongoing plans to rehabilitate all fisheries centres. About six or seven fisheries centre have already been rehabilitated by the end of last year and we hope this year all the other remaining fisheries centres will be done under this rehabilitation program.

Mr Riumana: Still on provincial fisheries centres. Is there any allocation for improvement of the centres? I have not seen it in the Budget.

Hon Leni: Like I said it is an ongoing project. This project continues from the previous years.

Mr Kengava: I want to go back to page 431 on accounting code 6096 – Community Education of about \$180,000. I just want the Minister to give us some idea how will he carry out this community education.

Hon Leni: Fisheries is about performing sustainable management in the harvesting of our marine resources. The basic thing is for people in the village to understand this very well so that they do not over harvest the resources. To do this, the Ministry needs to educate people through workshops, demonstration and also printing of leaflets to be given to the

communities. This funding may be is not adequate but we also have funds that will help this allocation through the PDF. PDF for your information is the money paid from bilateral aids into the FFA account. When we need the money, we would ask for it and it will be given to us. May be the amount is not enough but it will be supplemented by PDF and its work is to educate the rural communities.

Mr Riumana: Accounting Code 4193 – Community Based Management Program. Can the Minister explain to us what this management program is?

Hon Leni: I think this is also for the same reason. To use community leaders and people to work with fisheries officials in the Ministry to train the local communities in the rural areas especially the resource owners where operation is taking place in their area. We are trying to put this in place now with this restructure in the Ministry. To start, may be this allocation is small but we are hoping that the result of this year's budget will help us improve and develop the areas that needs improvement in the future.

Mr Gukuna: On page 433 is a new division. I just wonder what exactly is this Inshore Fisheries Management. It sounds like it has good potentials but I just want to know what is this.

Hon Leni: Fisheries is to do with harvesting of marine resources that are not in our deep waters. Looking at this, not every community lives along the seaside. Some of our people do not live close to the seaside. Anything to do with coastal or may be in land will be taken care of by this group. All our approaches have only been looking at deep sea harvesting of tuna and so forth. This time we are trying to bring them much closer so that local people can have the ability to extend their hands in harvesting their marine resources.

Mr Riumana: Sir, I would just like to ask a general question on accounting code 327 – Research Equipment. There is allocation here for research equipment, but there is no allocation here for research activities. What are we going

to do with the equipments when there is no actual conduct of research activities?

Hon Leni: Research activity is already ongoing now. What we need are the equipments. This provision is specifically for some projects in our development program for purchasing of equipment to research into pearl farming, seaweed farming, and other new projects the Department is trying to accomplish during the course of this year and the future.

Some of the equipments are very expensive. I cannot further explain it because I am not a technical man. But that allocation is for those kinds of equipment to advance the projects that we have in the development projects.

Mr Kwanairara: Port sampling observers. What is this?

Hon Leni: When the fishing boats come into the country, in the Solomon harbour, our officers will go inside the boats. These officers will sample the fish and then compile a report to the Ministry for our purpose but it also helps the FFA and the other regional fisheries bodies to take into account the records. The work of the fisheries observers is to sample the fish on board the vessels. This is the provision to help them do their work. They do not only perform their work here. Suppose the boats come they board the vessels and can go to another country. When they reach another country they have to come back this is the provision that would cater for such expenses. If they drop off at Suva we can use this provision to fly them back by plane.

Mr Gukuna: All these provisions are for offshore fisheries management and it looks like it is a very important part of fisheries. These boats have anchored in Solomon Islands for many, many years but why are these costing only appear this year. What have they been doing last year or the year before? Is that work been done somewhere and that only this year you are doing it here?

Hon Leni: I think it is telling us that it was also done in previous times. This time you can see full loads of ships anchored inside the harbor. In

the past you would not see this because all the agreements that we have doing were not right. This is the first time we are being transparent about these things so that a report is compiled on the bilateral agreements. And so they are happy with those things.

In the past transshipment was done on high seas where we cannot see it. Now in this agreement transshipment must be done at a port either in Honiara or Noro or Tulagi so that observers can have access to the boats by actually boarding the vessels and see the activities.

Mr Fono: Is the Minister aware that stevedoring transshipment that used to be done by locals is now done by a foreign company. I am raising this so that the Minister investigates it. Just a general question that stevedoring on transshipment is an activity that only locals are supposed to be involved in it.

Hon Leni: I will take note of that concern and find out.

Mr Kwanairara: Have we got any fish collection vessel?

Hon Leni: This is a new one where feasibility study project is going on at this time funded by JICA. This is to help JICA to collect samples throughout the country when this feasibility study is being carried out.

Head 290 - \$6,629,961 agreed to

Head 291: Ministry of Public Service

Mr Kwanairara: Overtime seems to increase this year. Can the Minister explain?

Hon Sanga: Overtime is still an entitlement of officers.

Mr Kwanairara: Accounting code 1100 – Do not Use. Is that a typing error?

Hon Sanga: I think that is what it is.

Mr Tozaka: Page 445 Accounting Code 1113 - Local Supplementation Scheme. How many

officers are paid under this scheme at the moment apart from the ones we talked about?

Hon Sanga: This Local Supplementation Scheme is what we used to engage experts in the fields that we are not able to find locally. It is additional provision to the local salaries, and a case in point is a case of a question this morning, the Legal Draftsman.

Mr Tozaka: Apart from the Legal Draftsman, is there any one else paid under the scheme?

Hon Sanga: Yes, Mr Chairman, usually doctors are funded under this scheme.

Mr Fono: Page 447 - IPAM - Institute of Public Admin Management. With this allocation in training of \$195,000 how many training programs is the Department anticipating this year with this allocation. In my view, the amount is quite small.

Hon Sanga: We are also of the same view like the Leader of Opposition except having to deal with a tight budget, that is the allocation this year for IPAM, but we also have another allocation for general training on page 445 which we can use if there is shortage of funds in IPAM.

Mr Gukuna: Page 451 on overtime – there is a big provision for overtime. It appears that this very important division needs a lot of overtime. I would like to suggest to the Minister if he could consider employing two or three other people to lighten the work load.

Hon Sanga: Mr Chairman, that division is a current division within the Department. In relation to officers, there is a slight increase on salaries but that division deals with the services within the Public Service that is inclusive of Industrial Relations, inspections and so on.

Head 291 - \$22,824,553.00 agreed to

Head 292 - Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs - \$9,807,061 agreed to

Head 293 – Ministry of Home Affairs

Mr Tozaka: Page 476 - National Disaster Council. In relation to the Establishment Register on Provincial Disaster Coordinator posts. There are 10 new vacant posts there, can the Minister explain the National Disaster Coordinating Agent of the National Disaster Council in the Provinces? Are they reforming them?

Hon Ghiro: *(inaudible)*

Mr Dausabea: Page 477 just a general question to the Minister concern. Is there a Censorship Board now in place to censor films?

Hon Ghiro: *(inaudible)*

Mr Koli: Accounting Codes 4137 and 4141 - South Pacific Games. Are these provisions to cater for the South Pacific Games this year because there is no provision for these?

Hon Ghiro: *(inaudible)*

Mr Gukuna: People from outside especially members of the Charity Fund are saying that their money is under the budget of the Ministry of Home Affairs, which I do not see in the budget. Can the Minister confirm this so that the people will here that there is no money for them in the budget?

Hon Ghiro: What is the accounting code?

Mr Gukuna: It is just a general question. The Charity Fund Members outside are saying that if the budget is passed their money is under Ministry of Home Affairs. Can you confirm that they do not have any money in the budget?

Hon Ghiro: That question is being repeated in Parliament several times and the answer is, no. My Ministry is not responsible for that fund.

Head 293 - \$8,518,550.00 agreed to

Head 294 - Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace agree to - \$4,617,765.0000 agreed to

Head 295 – Ministry of Mines and Energy

Mr Gukuna: Mr Chairman, under income, accounting code 0065 - Petroleum Storage Fees. Where will this money come from?

Hon Usa: Mr Chairman, we have about 26 storages throughout the country, and it has been under estimated in 2006. This year I think we are looking forward to collecting revenues from these storages.

Mr Dausabea: Mr Chairman, I would just like to know if there is a time frame for the relocation of the two depots. Will they still be at the same location or are they going to be relocated?

Hon Usa: Mr Chairman, I cannot give you the real time frame but the Department is working on it at the moment. As soon as we have the time frame we will let the public know.

Mr Tozaka: Mr Chairman, accounting code 6089 - land acquisition. Is land acquisition under this division? I would have thought land acquisition is a function under the Ministry of Lands.

Hon Usa: Mr Chairman, this land acquisition is for new developments. The Gold Ridge Project is coming up and the issue of relocation is coming up as well. Because of these the Department must have provision for land allocation so that it can call meetings with landowners and also to finalise the particular area that they are going to be relocated to. That is what that allocation is for.

Mr Gukuna: Mr Chairman, the Komarindi Project at one stage is a very good project. It provides a lot of potential for supplying energy to the city. I might have missed it but I fail to see anything about it in this budget. Have we put it away or what is our intention about this important Komarindi Project?

Hon Usa: Mr Chairman, Komarindi and Lunga are in the government's policy. If we look back at the history of Komarindi, acquisition process has already completed. I believe there is an

allocation within the Department of Lands for the acquisition. What is needed for Komarindi is the completion of the survey work, and if land registration is completed the other formalities will come later on.

Mr Tozaka: Mr Chairman, just on land acquisition again. Are you saying that this provision is budgeted for by the Ministry but the actual process of acquiring land is a normal process under the Commissioner of Lands?

Hon Usa: I can understand that. Initial negotiation must be done with the Department of Mines and Energy because it is its project, before the acquisition of land will take place.

Mr Gukuna: Mr Chairman, page 506 – Seismology Costs. We have a lot of earthquakes now. Why is there no provision for seismology?

Hon Usa: Mr Chairman, if we look at the recurrent estimates, all these have been transferred to Geology.

Head 295- \$4,918,036 agreed to

Head 296 – National Judiciary - \$6,118,969 agreed to

The Schedule with the sum of \$781,379,243 being the total of the Recurrent Expenditures agreed to

The Schedule agreed to

Hon Darcy: Mr Chairman, I beg to move that further proceedings of the Committee of Supply be adjourned to Tuesday 20th February 2007.

Parliament is resumed

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

The House adjourned at 3.42 p.m.