

TUESDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2008

The Speaker, Mr Peter Kenilorea took the Chair at 9.30am.  
Prayers.

ATTENDANCE

At prayers all were present with exception of the Ministers for Forestry, Mines, Energy & Electrification, Rural Livelihood and Indigenous Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Member of West New Georgia.

**PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND OF REPORTS**

Bills - First Reading

The 2009 Appropriation Bill 2008

Bills – Second Reading

The Civil Aviation Bill 2008

**Mr Speaker:** Honorable Members debate on the Civil Aviation Bill 2008 continues today according to the adjournment of the debate yesterday. Before we proceed, I wish to advise the House that I have received a letter from the Honorable Member for Temotu Nende regarding his concern about the format of the Bill and lack of proposed amendments circulated to Members. I take note of that concern but on the basis that the House is only going into second reading, which by nature is the stage of a bill in which Members debate the general principles of the Bill and the policy issues underlying it.

I will allow debate to proceed and I have been informed that the government does not propose to deal with the committee stage today to allow time for amendments to be properly noticed and circulated.

Let us therefore now proceed with the debate as we have already heard from Honorable for Member for Communication and Aviation today. I will give other Members the opportunity to contribute to the debate before I call on the Honorable Minister to deliver his speech in reply. The floor is open for debate.

**Hon. SOGAVARE:** Mr. Speaker, this side of the House acknowledges your ruling on the letter written to you by the Member for Temotu Nende. We would like to concur with your ruling, and I would like to contribute to the debate on the Bill Mr. Speaker. I would like to speak in support of the motion and in that regard the Civil Aviation Bill 2008.

Mr. Speaker, at the outset I must thank the Minister, his officials and Aviation Advisor to the Ministry for all the work put into getting this Bill ready for Parliament's deliberation. I also acknowledge, I guess, the amount of patience and perseverance that went into the work. Not very often, Mr. Speaker, does Parliament gets a bill this thick and therefore it is appropriate the Parliament acknowledges the sleepless nights devoted to this task by those directly involved

in getting this Bill to Parliament. I must also acknowledge the amount of work put into getting this Bill ready for Parliament by the Parliament Secretariat responsible for the Bills Committee.

I also note with deep appreciation that the Ministry has taken the time to produce an explanatory volume that was actually submitted and tabled in Parliament with the first version of the Bill. That should be in the hands of every Member of Parliament to help us understand the various sections of the Bill and what it is intending to achieve. If you do not have that volume then you might need to start looking for it before Parliament gets to the committee stage to look at the Bill in greater detail, Mr. Speaker.

I commend the Minister for this initiative and would, I guess, encourage all Ministries to do the same for all the bills that come to Parliament, and especially the long ones so that we, lay people who come here to relate to issues of law can understand what bills are intending to achieve.

I think like all bills that come before this House all these years, in fact the present Civil Aviation Bill 2008 is not different. They are designed to address identified problems in the operation and management of our civil aviation system to be security conscious. This is very important in the setting of globalization which brings the world and its citizens with diverse interests and convictions closer to each other and with it the risks of the world community being adversely affected by the negative effects of a direct clash in these interest aspirations and may be convictions too. For example, the interest of drug traffickers, arm smugglers or terrorists are not compatible with the universal desire to make the world peaceful and its citizens free from fear of being deprived of life by the activities of people who support terrorism and make a living by commercializing associated illegal activities.

What we are saying as a nation on this Bill is that we want to make a contribution to the global or regional efforts to make the world a better place for all. Observations too, we are also committed under this Bill to empower relevant the authorities to ensure by force of law that Solomon Islands is a safe destination to travel to. We are also saying in this Bill that we will not tolerate those who carelessly or deliberately want to endanger the lives of people using our civil aviation services. We are also committed under this Bill to improve airline services into and out of Solomon Islands. This side of the House does not have any problem with these objectives. In fact we are very familiar with this Bill because it has been there since our time, and most of them are now on the other side and so all of us are very familiar with this Bill.

In expressing these views, Mr Speaker, what I am effectively saying is that this side of the House, as I've said already probably has no problem with the objectives of this Bill and we have no difficulty supporting the passage of this Bill but, I guess, not without making some observations on various aspects of the Bill as normally required of us, and maybe also other members of this House, whom I know have read this Bill and so probably we will have an exciting debate on this Bill today.

In fact, Mr Speaker, as stated by the Minister this Bill is a direct response by the sovereign state of Solomon Islands. We need to look at that way rather than the government. If you look very closely at this Bill, and reading from what the Minister has said, it is the response of the sovereign state of Solomon Islands to the aviation security audit conducted by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in March 2007.

This side of the House too understands, Mr Speaker, that the aviation security audit comes up with many major recommendations. In my counting of the recommendations there are more than 50 and the same number of sub recommendations that cover legislative, organizational, operational, aircraft security & safety, technical and other areas of weaknesses that requires the government's urgent attention as agent, as custodian of the system of behalf of the people of Solomon Islands.

The Bill, as I mentioned earlier, and I fully agree with how the Minister puts it, is the country's response to the recommendations. Note the term 'country' or 'sovereign state of Solomon Islands' is used here. That is not a mistake because the Bill has a national response to the weaknesses and in competency identified under that particular audit. As such the ownership of this Bill rests on the people of Solomon Islands. In other words, Mr Speaker, the government is merely an agent to ensure that Solomon Islands as a sovereign state and a member of the International Civil Aviation Organization complies with international requirements for the safety and security of both international and domestic passengers who travel through and in Solomon Islands on locally owned international and domestic carriers, and of course, foreign owned international carriers that come through Solomon Islands.

One can therefore see that a lot hangs on the obligation of this Parliament to ensure the passage of this Bill. Firstly, in terms of our continual membership of the International Civil Aviation Organization and maybe PASO too, the Pacific Aviation Safety Office, which depends very much on Solomon Islands implementing the findings of the security audit. There is also the issue of making effective, maybe the word to use our international obligations that is carried in the various conventions that we are party to.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, it ensures our qualification as a member country to the benefits that will accrue to the country when we assume the world that our airports are safe simply due to the fact that we comply with a standard of safety that is pitched very high according to international standard.

Sir, I guess what I am effectively saying here is that this House is required as a matter of obligation to pass this legislation. Failing that, we will not meet the international standards of safety required. Thee flow-on negative consequences of such a position can isolate Solomon Islands from the rest of the world. That is exactly what we don't want, and I also understand that all airline operators in here are already operating in anticipation of the coming into force of this Bill. They have structured their operations already in line with the way this Bill is setting the legal framework in managing aviation services in Solomon Islands.

Talking about flow-on benefits, Mr Speaker, or the negative consequences, for example, there will certainly be a direct impact on growing our tourism industry, and the Minister for Tourism is probably listening out, and of course the country's ongoing endeavor to improve our human capital as a very important input in our development endeavors because we are full of human resources that we can actually utilize in this country to get our big thinking going. We really need the input of foreign human capital inside Solomon Islands.

I think there is also the implication on the growth of high quality investments in the country when potential investors have the perception that Solomon Islands is unsafe. We only have to look at the effects of the recent ethnic unrest and how it affected our reputation, is a perfect example of what we are concerned about here.

Sir, as intimated earlier there is also the issue of our duty as corporate citizens of this Planet Earth to contribute effectively in the global warfare against terrorism. Solomon Islands does not have the capacity to contribute our soldiers and logistics to physically confront terrorists in open combat, but we can do a lot in ensuring that Solomon Islands is not used as an avenue where people with ulterior motives can just walk in and out of this country undetected. That is our little contribution to the world effort in making this world a better place to live in.

Having said that, however, Mr Speaker, we have a duty to ensure that the Bill fairly and honestly addresses the problems highlighted and do no more than fulfilling the responsibility of Solomon Islands as a member country of ICAO to achieve regional harmonization of aviation laws and practices on the Pacific Region to address the concerns we have been expressing since then. Anything more would be viewed as more than is necessary. I just want to put up that view and let it hang loose like that.

Sir, I have only 5 issues to raise here. My first concern, Mr Speaker, and this is a substantive issue I would like to raise here, is the cost of implementing the requirements of this Bill, which would be an additional, almost mandatory pressure on the meager financial resources of this country. Once you legislate something and say this is what is needed to be done, it is an obligation to the Solomon Islands Government to provide the logistics, to provide budgetary support to the authorities responsible in managing and implementing the law.

We need to remember that what is required of the country here is to improve the international and domestic passengers and both in-flight when they disembark in our airports both domestic and international to a standard acceptable to ICAO, and that must be compatible with international standards. It pitches very, very high.

The concern here is that that responsibility is required of us without the financial and logistic ability of Solomon Islands as a country to comply with the requirements. It's not clear whether they are going to give us money. If we do not see that problem then something is really wrong with us.

There would certainly be a need to upgrade the international and domestic airports and the associated facilities to a standard acceptable to ICAO - nothing less than that. There would be a need to upgrade the machines and instruments used to detect undesirable imports and individuals that come in through our airport. There would certainly be need for more professional trainings of people who will be responsible in implementing those requirements, and the list goes on and on. In fact the audit report highlighted a list of deficiencies that require immediate government attention. And it would be very interesting to hear from the Minister on the related capital and the recurrent costs associated with the requirements for us to put right those things and comply with the standards set by ICAO in that report, Mr. Speaker.

It has been noted that the concern for safety conscious airport extends beyond the need to just keeping the grass short around the restricted areas. It also includes the country's ability to respond to a situation professionally and at the shortest possible time. So it is not just the issue of cutting grass around the airport making it clean. No, there are more serious obligations on the Solomon Islands Government.

Mr. Speaker, this means our airport must be fully resourced with the basic logistics. For example, in the case of fire engines, if the requirement is for airports to have a minimum number of engines to satisfy minimum safety requirement, the government will have to invest

in fire engines. Because borrowing fire engines just to meet the minimum number of engine requirement at one time when a plane lands is not acceptable. It is not. The government must invest in fire engines. In fact right now what they are doing is that if a situation arises at the airport and the standard requires that there must two fire engines there, they borrow one fire engine from the police. That is not acceptable. That shows a very temporary position. The airport must have enough number of fire engines. And that is just on fire engines.

Likewise, the Police backup support for airport security must be developed to a standard that is capable of containing any adverse situation in our airport. Right now we do not have that capacity. No, Mr. Speaker. If something happens tomorrow where a plane is hijacked right there at the airport, we are basically incapable of addressing that. And that is below the standard required by ICAO.

In fact, the police authority came before the Bills Committee and we asked these questions to them, and the current arrangement is deploying of routine offices. That arrangement is also unacceptable. Solomon Islands, under this scenario is really a sitting duck. I believe that the review of this arrangement inevitable in light of the added responsibilities and the need for Solomon Islands to improve its preparedness to extend and compatible with other countries.

The problem here is that any progress in this area is controlled by the present legal framework of RAMSI. I believe that the Solomon Islands Commissioner of Police who effectively has the final say in the rearmament of the police and the security arrangements of the country cannot continue to be indecisive over the issue of establishment and training of special units within the Force that must have specialized training on incidents like hijacking and counterterrorism maneuvers through the professional use of specialized weapons including firearms.

I believe that time has come. The Solomon Islands Police Force must advance from its current status as a dependent force in terms of firepower and specialized skills in handling special situations to an independent force that can confidently call on its specialized skills and logistics support to handle the country's internal security.

My point here, Sir, is that we can be carried away and bogged down with our over exaggerated need to bring discipline into the Police Force which we have been doing for the last five years and forget the need to improve the skills and ability of the Force to provide the security needs of the country. That is what the Police Force is established to do.

That problem will be compounded when we must also invest in the improvement of our domestic airports because this Bill also covers international and domestic airports to a standard that is acceptable by ICAO. What we have here is something big and we should start looking at the resources of government to be able to support this kind of system is something that is beyond the thinking now, and we must really need to seriously think about it.

The question is whether, as I said, we would be able to cope with the cost implications associated with the requirement to live up to ICAO standard. I think the related question, as I mentioned earlier, is what support arrangement in terms of may be logistics and financial there is to member countries to cope with the added compliance related budgetary pressure. Those are things we really need to seriously think about as policy and decision makers in this Parliament.

So much for that. I think the other question is the preparedness of the government's owned international and domestic airlines. Solomon Airlines is a bit special in that the government owns the airlines. The concern here is the preparedness of that organization both international and domestic airlines to compete effectively with new competitors. One of the objectives of this new arrangement is to promote open competition. For example, many of the new rules of this Bill apply equally to both international airports and flights and domestic airports and flights. The issue for locally incorporated service providers is whether they have the necessary capacity to meet the required standards as service providers.

The Solomon Islands Government would have a direct concern over this matter because it is a service provider; the government is a direct service provider by virtue of its direct ownership of the Solomon Airlines. The ability of the Solomon Airlines to compete is an ongoing concern, even under the present framework and the limited number of competitors we have in the market. The scenario we are looking at here will obviously be different when the improved security environment in Solomon Islands encourages more international carriers to include Solomon Islands in the sphere of their operations.

The issue for the Solomon Islands Government on this one is the contingent liability that will always be there arising from the fact that the government as observed earlier is by virtue of its ownership of the Airlines is the final guarantor against any adverse financial situation that is beyond the company's ability to make good the system. The government must always step in, and we've done it several times, we've bailed out Solomon Airlines when it meets financial problems. Now, that is a standing contingency liability on the budget. With the level of competition that we now have, the Solomon Islands owning an airline, it always has problems. But my fear is that when many more competitors come in, we could be in for some serious problems. I guess when that happens I'll leave the policy aspects of it to the government, but in my view, when that happens the government will just have to face the reality that in order to continue in business there must be competition. Otherwise I do not see any harm in Solomon Islands bowing out of the competition in favor of a more acceptable arrangement to ensure that Solomon Islands continues to enjoy reliable airline services, which is the underlying issue in all of these.

Mr Speaker, a very important concern as well is the capacity of our Civil Aviation Authority to administer a civil aviation system that is pitched through international standards. This concern is based on the current experience of our service providers who are expressing some serious concerns that they did not get the best of service from our Civil Aviation Authority on many occasions. This is serious, and I guess a revelation that we cannot afford to disregard, especially when we are trying to improve the system and take on more responsibilities, and international standard responsibilities.

The point here is that we can come up with the best of legislation, systems but if we cannot administer it effectively then it will not make any difference at all, even if we are to adopt international standards. I think the message here is that we cannot afford to disregard importance of having a trained workforce that is committed to work in an organizational environment that is conducive to effective service delivery. We have been hearing that many times, and so it is an old story. But I think it is important that we continue to remind ourselves on that.

Sir, the concern here is that if the Civil Aviation Authority cannot cope with the demands of the existing framework, then logically anyone is entitled to be concerned about the ability of the Authority to cope with the new system. The question we might ask is, is this to do with lack of training, inappropriate organizational structure or simply slackness by officers entrusted with those responsibilities. Those are very important questions.

In terms of organizational structure, Mr Speaker, I am fairly comforted by the Ministry's acknowledgement of that fact that in order to cope with the new system, the Civil Aviation Authority must be reorganized. The Ministry actually came up with a structure to show how the Ministry will be organized to cope with the demands of the new system. But as you know, Mr Speaker, restructuring the organization without the service of qualified and trained workforce will not make any difference to the outcomes too. In other words, you will still have an ineffective system. If it might help the government to know where to start, the service providers are of the view that much of what contributes to ineffectiveness in the system has to do with general slackness of public officers who are authorized to man important service centres. That is coming straight from service providers and so it is something probably that we need to take seriously. This is what probably is referred to as the public service syndrome.

The point here, Mr Speaker, is that the management of new system needs, as I have already said a committed workforce that is properly trained. I will leave that to the government to think about.

My last point, Mr Speaker, is to do with the process, I guess, adopted by our Civil Aviation Authority to establish which aspects of New Zealand Civil Aviation Regulations are relevant to the needs of the country, including any changes based on the review that would be carried out by New Zealand Civil Aviation Authority, at no cost to the Solomon Islands Government, we are happy with that. They are doing the review because they have competent people to do that, but I just want to raise a concern here maybe an issue that the government should think about, and these changes will be automatically taken up in our laws and the laws will be revised continually and updated. Every time there is a change in New Zealand that system is adopted, upgraded and automatically upgraded here too.

Whilst I have no problem with such an arrangement, Mr Speaker, I would like to tend to agree with the views expressed by our service providers that they feel a mechanism need to be established to facilitate the process because it is not a one sided thing. The government is a regulating authority and there are other people who are directly affected by any decisions that we take as law makers or regulators.

What they are suggesting is that since other Pacific Island countries have also adopted the same arrangement, it would make common sense for Solomon Islands to work with, maybe countries like Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and Fiji. In the first instance, we should be setting up a permanent review committee comprising members of the Civil Aviation Authorities of these countries to facilitate this process. I do not think this is a bad idea but, of course it is something that is left to the government to think about it. We are just merely reporting what they said to us.

The other point, Mr Speaker, that is worth considering is the suggestion by our service providers of the need to establish a disaster crisis management mechanism. And this is to

address issues that are concerned with the effective implementation of the strategies determined by the Civil Aviation Authority as a response to a given situation.

That mechanism will include the involvement of all stakeholders. I also think that this is not a bad idea. We also tender that to the government for your considerations. In fact, the way it was placed before us, this approach is designed to bridge the gap that normally exists between the Civil Aviation Authority and the other important stakeholders, especially those who would be responsible in implementing the decisions of the authority. They just don't want to gobble it – open their mouths and just shove it down their throat telling them to implement it. I think they need to have a say in how some of these things happen.

I am saying this, Mr Speaker, because I think it has been proven time and again that collective decisions go a long way in getting decisions acted on because there is an element of ownership of decision by every stakeholder. I leave that to the government to think about.

The other concern that was raised is about the Solomon Airlines assets. The way the Bill seems to be structured seems to suggest that the full custody of the airport and its infrastructures under this new system will be under the Civil Aviation Authority. We need to be clear in here on what is going to happen to the assets of the Solomon Airlines, for example, the hangers belong to the Solomon Airlines and not the Civil Aviation Authority. That is an example. The Bill is not very clear on that when it comes to implementing of the Bill what is going to happen to those assets. The Solomon Airlines is a different legal entity from the CAA and so we need to be clear on that when this Bill comes into operations.

Mr Speaker, the other point that was raised is the status of licenses held by existing operators. In the absence of a clear transition provision in the law, questions are raised as to what is going to happen to them. When this new law is implemented are they going to reapply? I don't whether the General Interpretations Act 1978 has any provisions that would cater for situations like that because the law as it stands says that when the new law is implemented, the licensing responsibility goes straight to the Minister and the CAA, and it basically falls short of telling us what would happen to existing license holders. Not only license, but there are heaps of other licenses that people have to do something either to be pilots or to be whatever in the Civil Aviation Industry, Mr Speaker.

Sir, I think I have said enough on the issues that I would like to raise here, and like I said in the beginning of my presentation, this side of the House does not have any real problem supporting this Bill, but at the same time we would like the government to take note of the points we raised in this debate.

With that, Sir, I beg to support this Bill. Thank you.

**Mr FOLOTALU:** Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me this time to contribute to this very important Bill. I would like to thank the Minister for Civil Aviation for bringing this important Bill to Parliament. Mr Speaker, as we glance back across the legal journey relating to civil aviation in this nation, the journey that we have taken, perhaps we have sensed how the past and present are interwoven in the moment of destiny where we find ourselves today.

Mr Speaker, it is clear that there is a tide of change and growth in the Aviation Industry in Solomon Islands. There is a vision of great promise looming before us. This new legal structure is dealing with both risks and opportunities and offers both good news and bad news.



But my perspective has been that we have come to an unprecedented moment in our aviation history, a time when the potential for positive change has never been greater.

Despite political turmoil, ethnic discontents and economic struggles, we are seeing an awakening of business and economic incentives in the aviation industry. Mr Speaker, we have grown through our struggles and there is a new sense of maturity and a new commitment to the things that really matter. I see this as renewed faith in economic growth and renewed pride in our nation. It is my view that national prosperity can grow only when business and industry are healthy. In this global village, Solomon's business is the world's business. And by extension what is good for Solomon Islands is good for the world.

Mr Speaker, this legislation is seen as a driving force in shaping the country's current aviation industry. Mr Speaker, Solomon Islands is a member of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), an overseas body that oversees the Civil Aviation Industry to comply with standards and recommended practices written in the annexes.

Before I left the Aviation Industry in 1993, there were 18 annexes. I don't know how many annexes are there now because most of my time was spent in the farms. But there were 18 and in these annexes are recommended practices and standards. And these standards are must do's. Once a contracting state becomes a party to these conferences, they must comply with these standards. There are standards in the security annexes, there are standards in the safety or transportation of dangerous goods so there are standards in this and there are recommended practices, and they are should do's that each contracting state should comply with where it is necessary.

Mr Speaker, not only that, we are also a contracting party to other international conventions, like the Warsaw Convention, the Montreal Additional Protocol, Nos. 1,2 and 4 of 1975, the Guadalajara Convention, which are related to international carriage by air. Solomon Islands also ratified the Montreal Convention 1971 for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the safety of civil aviation, the Tokyo Convention of Offences and certain other acts committed on board aircrafts and the Hague Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of aircrafts (this is on hijacking).

Mr Speaker, with this new legislation in place, the Acts namely (Tokyo, Hague, and Montreal Convention) have been repealed under this new legislation. However, Mr Speaker I have sighted many of the provisos in these acts are now translated and transferred in this Civil Aviation Act 2008.

Mr Speaker, this Bill covers a wide range of the aviation industry spectrum. If we are to ask what this bill is all about – this legislation is all about aerodromes, airports, airfields, navigation installations, runways, taxi ways, aprons, lightings. All these are what we are talking about. It is about Air Traffic Services (ATS). It talks about AIS or flight information. It talks about flight standards. It talks about meteorology, security and safety. It talks about operators, airlines, cargo, mail, baggage, passengers, aero planes, pilots, crews, international air services. It talks about international laws and conventions. It talks about binding agreements. It also talks about offences committed on board aircrafts at the airport. It talks about hijacking of aircrafts, sabotage of aircrafts. It talks about explosives and weapon. It talks about investigation of accidents. All these are what the bill is all about.

Mr Speaker, this Bill covers a wide range of the aviation industry spectrum. I shall deliberate specifically on aviation security as it is my field of expertise. Being the founding father of the civil aviation security in Solomon Islands, I wish to take this opportunity to tell everyone and each one, especially those of us who travel frequently on planes to go overseas, those of us who uses air transport that security is a critically important aspect of all aviation activities. There is a saying in our security language that "safety in the air starts with security on the ground".

Mr Speaker, though the word security is not technically defined in this Bill, it is a combination of measures both human and material resources used to protect life and property. That is the simplest form and the simplest definition of what security is.

Mr Speaker, when you compare traveling in a car and traveling in a plane which of these two is safe. Many people fear traveling in planes. But I see traveling in cars as not safe. We security personnel know that traveling in a plane is safe. When security on the ground is better then safety is guaranteed in the air. There are many road accidents nearly every day than at the airports or in the air. However, there are security threats against the Civil Aviation Industry too.

There is a rising crime, youth delinquency, social decay, unemployment and poverty that is escalating in this nation and in nations around us, and so aviation security must be a first line of defense to fight against terrorism.

There are industrial conflicts, Mr Speaker, strikes, pickets and sabotage to installations and aircrafts are also threats to this industry that the aviation security has to face each day. Mr Speaker, with powers vested in aviation security officers to screen and search passengers and baggage to be taken onboard aircrafts, in my opinion there should be also a provision in this Bill that indemnifies the government and aviation security officers from liability or damage caused in good faith whilst performing their official duties.

In my respectful view the task of screening and checking of passengers, baggage, cargo, mail and anything that is to be taken onboard an aircraft should be given to the airline or the operators. The reason I raised this point is to free the Civil Aviation Authority from any civil litigation for damage or liability. The government must look carefully at this, otherwise security officers that do the checking just overlook a bomb and it went pass because they don't recognize it and so they did not stop it before the aircraft flies, then something happens because these days criminals and terrorists are using sophisticated explosives and weapons. They can use sheet explosives too, like the semetex sheet explosives, which are odorless and cannot be felt and seen and one must be well trained to be able to identify and recognize them. Some explosives come in the form of liquid and some come in the form of powder, and that is why I am a bit concern here that the screening of passengers and baggage should be left entirely on the operators.

Mr Speaker, I will stop here but I want to leave a story about the Wright Brothers, the brothers who invented the aircraft. When the Wright Brothers invented the aircraft, their intention was pure and good; they planned it purposely for air transportation to carry people faster across the nations, across the oceans to get to their destination very fast. They invented the aircraft but just before they died they regretted what they did because human beings are going to use those machines to destroy each other. They will use aircrafts to carry explosives and bombs to destroy peoples. They invented air balloons to destroy other people. They will

use it to hijack planes to achieve their aims. People will use aircrafts to carry bombs and explosives inside so that when the aircraft is in the air it explodes in the air and people are in pieces and fall to the ground. That is one of their regrets. And today we also see and hear about sabotage and destruction of aircrafts. We also hear about destruction of aircrafts. We also hear of aircrafts being hijacked and crashing them on the twin towers and many people died. That was the regret of the two brothers. This new law or bill is very timely so that appropriate measures can be put in place.

With this contribution, Mr Speaker, I support the Bill.

**Hon. WAIPORA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this time to talk very briefly on this Civil Aviation Bill that we have been dealing with, especially the Bills and Legislation Committee has been dealing with this Bill last week. And because we have been dealing with it for the past few days, I do not want to prolong the debate but I want to go straight to the points I want to raise in Parliament on this bill. But before I do so, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister and his Ministry for bringing this Bill before Parliament for Parliament to deliberate on at this time. In fact this is a bill that was initiated during the time of the Grand Coalition for Change Government, and so we are very grateful that this government has taken it up. It is very timely for us as a parliament to look at reviewing it or may be change legislations especially this very important bill that deals with the safety and security of human beings. I think it is a very, very important bill, as stated by the Leader of Opposition, for everyone of us.

Mr Speaker, when we talk about this Civil Aviation Bill, we are talking about the things, like the honorable Member who has just sit down said is about airfields, hangars, runways and so on. The question that comes to mind is why do we need this Bill? We need it because man comes up and wants to travel from place to place through different means, like ship but they are not fast and so and they invented aero plane that travels in the air much faster. So it is something that is an urge or something that comes from human beings. So we build airports and build planes to land on the airports. Today we are talking about an authority to be established so that it guides and controls the traveling public at the airport to the planes, the landing and taking off of planes and everything like that.

When we look at this Bill, whilst we are talking about this Bill we are talking about things like the Civil Aviation Authority, we are talking about the Lands Department, we are talking about the Works department, we are talking about landowners, we are talking about the province and we are talking about the airlines. All these things are catered for in the Bill. Even a piece of land that is cleared for an airport to be built on involves many of the departments for the safety and security of the traveling public.

Mr Speaker, although the traveling public is given all sorts of terms, they are tourists because they are people traveling from place to place either domestically or internationally. We are trying to care for the welfare of the traveling public all over the world.

Mr Speaker, what I would like to bring up here so that the Minister when implementing this Bill so that it becomes an act, must sort out all these things.

When you talk about provincial airfields, some complications are there. But as I have said, it involves different functions or services like the Civil Aviation, Lands, Works, landowners, province, airline and the MET Department. All these are involved. They must

know that the weather must be fine before a plane can travel. All these services are involved, and that is why I would like to say here that most of the provinces are confused as to who is really owns the airports and who is to maintain them. Sometimes they throw it to the province and so the airlines refuse to fly until the airports are cleared or maintained. Sometimes they throw it to the Ministry of Works. Sometimes they throw it on landowners saying that they are in dispute and that is why planes do not go there, but we do not know the real landowner of the land where the airport is built. Is it the landowners or the government? Those things are very important for the welfare of the traveling public.

Sometimes the airline refused to fly its planes to a particular airport because maybe the airfield is not in good condition. They said the province is responsible in maintaining the airport to make it useable again or make sure the plane lands or there is no fuel, there is no equipment for brushing of the airport, and all those kinds of excuses are made. That is why I said that I think it is high time for the government of the day to sort out these things so that it is not confusing among the authorities within the central government and also the provincial governments.

The upkeep of airstrips is very important. We must know exactly who owns the airport land, who is responsible for the upkeep of airstrips and who owns the terminal, whether it is the Airlines or who. Those facilities are there and I am talking with experience because a lot of problems were encountered.

When the other group says something they throw everything to the province, and politics in the province would say this is not a devolved function, you didn't take any devolution order to Parliament for approval so that we take over this function, and it is still a government function. Those things are happening although we may see it is small but I think air services in the provinces are affected by the law.

Mr Speaker, I think so far in Solomon Islands history we have plane accidents two times. That too is a concern because I can remember the last plane crash, the relatives of those who died were trying to make some claims but nothing came about until today. Therefore, as we debate this Bill and we go through sections of this book, Mr Speaker, I would like those who are responsible to answer this question because it is very important. This is a very serious matter. I remember in 1991 when the accident happened people were very furious, very angry and were trying to get compensation from the airline or the appropriate authorities. I hope this Bill caters for this kind of situation.

Mr Speaker, we are talking about encouraging tourism as it should be one of the main earners in the economic development of the country. But our airports must be upgraded to the required standard and the Ministry of Tourism too must inform us of which destination they are encouraging this time. Is it going to be Western Province all the time? Can't the Ministry create any new tourism destination?

In order to encourage and attract people to travel, the security and safety in our different airports and the way we deliver services in the airport, the Civil Aviation must keep up to its rules strictly and effectively, those things must be in place.

Since Solomon Islands is a nation of islands, I think we need more airports. We need some more airports because our population is increasing. It is my belief that if we do not improve our sea transport and air transport then forget about economic development. That is

the very important thing. That is why I have been talking about our airport at West Makira but you did not respond to it. It is my conviction that sea transport and air transport are very important, and that is why the Civil Aviation Bill caters for those routes.

It is stated in your policy programs that three airports are going to be built this year 2008, but I cannot see any three new airports or which ones are they. But we need those facilities if we are to encourage our tourism industry in this country. Some places are yet to see this, but you have to provide facilities so that they can go and see them.

I was talking about Renbel last time, and the Minister for Tourism is from Renbel but I am yet to see him encouraging tourism in Renbel. Mr. Speaker, you must do it. If you believe tourism is one of the ways the country earns money, do it, encourage it. Tourism Minister, you must work hard to make sure those things are coming up. I have not seen your programs yet.

Mr. Speaker, it is very important that when we pass bills we must make sure they are implemented so that we run those things properly and practically and not just talk about them. Mr. Speaker, this is a very important Bill because it deals with the safety and security of our people. During our deliberation of this Bill at the Bills and Legislation Committee, I asked the question why do we pick New Zealand as the country to adopt their Civil Aviation rules. The answer we were given is that it is the best one. I asked why not Australia and why did you leave out UK and I was told that we take the practices of the Civil Aviation of New Zealand.

Mr. Speaker, I think the people who advised us on this bill are very genuine that we are really concerned about safety, especially at this time when things are changing, there is talk of terrorism, people smuggling objects and weapons out of a country or even into a country. I think some of the rules that I see when we went through this Bill are very important rules that should be adhered to. However, human beings working in those departments must be honest. We must be honest, we must have the right attitude towards our work. That is why there is a break down in government services because our attitude to work is very slack. The attitude of the people of this country towards work is very slack. When we are given responsibility we are not serious with it. We think we know everything. If we pass this Bill but the people responsible of implementing this Bill are careless, this Bill will not work.

Mr. Speaker, my main point in standing up is to emphasize some of the concerns that we all seem to have in common in the different provinces. We all have the same problem in the provinces and that is they are confused about their airports. I think the responsible people should sit down together one day and see how they are going to address the issue of airports. In Kirakira the airport is always closed because they are confused about the airport. The landowners are saying it is theirs and so they are jumping up and the province says it belongs to the government. That is why they closed the airport at Kirakira five times already.

Mr. Speaker, these are practical things that are very important if we want work to go on inline with government policies and plans. Mr. Speaker, I think I have nothing more to say, but thank you for giving me this opportunity to talk briefly on this Bill. Before I sit down I must say that I support the Bill.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you Honorable Member for West Makira. Obviously there is complete support for the Bill on both sides of the House and I wonder whether we need to delay the debate any longer.

**Hon. HAOMAE:** Mr. Speaker, I shall be very brief. At the outset, I would like to thank the Honorable Minister for Aviation and Communication for bringing this important Bill to Parliament. The Bill, after some time, has finally find its way to the floor of Parliament hence I wish to thank the hard working Minister for Civil Aviation and Communication for bringing the Bill to Parliament.

Unlike the Member for West Makira Mr. Speaker, I would not be debating the Appropriation Bill. He was talking about building airfields and all those, but those are not matters covered by this Bill. Those are development matters that should be reserved for the debate on the Appropriation Bill, which is coming, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill is very detailed, and that is important because it deals with civil aviation, and civil aviation is very particular about safety and security, hence the Bill is not only bulky but also very detail. The Bill has 18 parts, 239 sections and 5 schedules. The structure of the Bill, if you look at the structure, the Minister and his powers, the Civil Aviation Authority, the functions and the powers and also the Director, the powers and the functions of the Director are all vested in the Bill, and I totally agree with the provision made thereto.

Mr. Speaker, Part 1 deals with the preliminary aspects of it, the interpretation and all those, and that is appropriate. Part 2 deals with powers, functions and duties, and delegations by the Minister, the authority and the director. I think those matters covered some of the concerns raised by honorable speakers who have already spoken on the bill. Part 3 deals with registration and all information services, all matters to do with security. I read through the bill and I think it covers some of the concerns that have been expressed by some of my colleagues who have just spoken. Part 5 covers regulations, fees and charges. Part 6 covers civil aviation system on the entry, general requirements that cover security. Matters of terrorism, I think, are subsumed in those provisions under Part 6. Matters of medical certification detail are under Part 7. I am merely helping the Minister for Aviation in trying to explain the parts that deal with some of the concerns raised by some honorable colleagues. Part 8 is very in detail about accidents and investigations as raised by the Member for West Makira. Part 9 deals with disclosure, admissibility and all those in terms of an unlikely situation happening where there is an aviation accident. Part 10 of the Bill deals with aviation security, international services and international air carriers and so on. All these parts deal with what the honorable colleagues have raised in detail. The legislative framework is there and it is up to the structure, the Minister, the Civil Aviation Authority and the director to implement those provisions within the ambit of the legal framework. Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I support the Bill.

**Hon. SOALAOI:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this very important bill. At the outset I wish to thank the Minister for bringing this very important Bill to Parliament and also the officials for their hard work in the preparation of the Bill.

Mr Speaker, in expressing support for the bill, there is a concern from the Solomon Airline's point of view as a local airline. I did not hear it, I think somebody mentioned it when I was not in here, but if I can express the concern. The view of establishing a new Civil Aviation Authority brings into question the ownership of the assets currently at the airport. I believe it will not go down well with our local Solomon Airlines to immediately lose control of the assets

they have been building for, I don't know how many years, but for a number of years. I think Members of Parliament need to be informed of who will be looking after the assets that have been all of these times as we know are the assets of Solomon Airlines. Mr Speaker, as a supporter of the Solomon Airlines I want the Minister to clearly inform Parliament as to who will be the owner of the assets at the airport.

The other concern, Mr Speaker, and which has already been expressed by Members who have spoken the bill is, whilst I appreciate that it is cheaper to adopt a model from a neighboring country that has already been practicing for sometime, I think meeting the requirements of the Bill will be costly on our part. Coming into force of this Bill will simply mean we are now trying to come up to the same level as our members in the region or those who are members of this regional organization that oversees the operation of civil aviation laws and practices.

Mr Speaker, I guess in our efforts to update or upgrade our facilities to a level that is acceptable to ICAO, it will be very costly. I think it is good for us to know who will bear the cost. If it is going to be the Solomon Islands government then we need to be informed how much this will cost the government. For the start we need to know who will bear the cost. I guess may be somewhere in the Bill it is clear on who is bearing this cost, but I believe Members of Parliament need to be informed about this.

Mr Speaker, I appreciate the fact that because we are dealing with the safety and security of human beings traveling on aircrafts in and out of Solomon Islands, there is the need for us to upgrade our civil aviation laws, especially with the changing technology in the world. We, as a member of the international community need to update ourselves. I must thank the Minister for seeing it fit for us to pitch ourselves to a level where we can become equal partners of a regional organization that regulates the operation of airlines within the region.

Mr Speaker, I must thank the Minister for taking to heart the safety of our traveling passengers, and most importantly our visitors from outside because they are the ones that contribute to the economy of Solomon Islands.

I believe, Mr Speaker, like I said in the changing world that is becoming more complex and very technical, I think restructuring or having a new bill becomes not only an option but a necessity to ensure that we continue to have the security and safety of our traveling passengers in all our planning.

Like I said, Mr Speaker, I will be very brief and so if I can reiterate my concerns again, I have never been a chairman of the Solomon Airlines but from the Solomon Airlines' point of view and as a local airline, I am concerned about the ownership of the assets currently at the airport.

With that, Mr Speaker, I wish to thank the Minister once again. Whatever is in the Bill – whatever details are there in the Bill, I very much appreciate the concerns of the responsible authorities for safety and security of our traveling public. It is also our desire to see our facilities upgraded to a level at par with international standard. I think we have remained in this place for such a long time. Regardless of the number of years we have become an independent nation, and so we want to see our aviation laws and rules improved or upgraded to international standards.

Mr Speaker, with those few remarks I wish to express once again my support for the Bill. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Hon SOFU:** Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to join my colleague Members of Parliament to contribute to this very important Bill. Mr Speaker, in so doing I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Aviation and the CNURA Government for recognizing the importance of the Bill and the benefits associated with it.

Mr Speaker, I wish to also take this opportunity to thank the Permanent Secretary and staff of the Ministry of Aviation. Sir, I wish to also record my sincere word of thanks to the AG's Chambers for drafting this very important piece of legislation. Mr Speaker, I must also thank the Chairman and Members of the Bills and Legislation Committee for examining this very important Bill.

Mr Speaker, I agree that the current legislation though maybe still applicable or usable, the deficiencies that were identified speaks loud for the need for an adequate legislation, one that specifically addresses or covers these deficiencies. Mr Speaker, the fact that already we are lagging behind in aviation compliance and development as compared to our next door neighbors is a real concern and we must take the right steps to progress and be part with them.

Mr Speaker, our progress can be assured with relevant improvements on the legislation. Mr Speaker if the current aviation legislation is the cause of the deficiencies then there has to be an adequate one put in place. We must not think or decide otherwise because I believe the opportunity is right now before Solomon Islands finds itself amidst a costly aviation disaster.

Sir, the new legislation now tabled before this honorable House has very clear objectives, intentions and benefits. Firstly, the legislation will align us with our neighbors. It will help to remove much of the deficiencies identified by the audit teams. Mr Speaker, the Bill will also establish a civil aviation authority, thus separating regulatory requirement from service provision. I see this as very important as it will minimize a rise in compromising safety.

Mr Speaker, I see a lot of advantages in terms of improvements in the Aviation Sector in the Bill, and if such has not been possible with the current legislation, it is only wise that we make the change which will certainly be for the better.

Mr Speaker, I noted that we, along with our Pacific neighbors, are adopting a system based on the New Zealand Rules system. It is more modern, wide ranging and a flexible system that is constantly updated depending on our situation. Mr Speaker, if we are to progress in aviation we must make the change for the better.

The Civil Aviation Bill 2008 aims to provide mechanisms, avenues and procedures to make the improved changes. Sir, let us make improvements and let us make the change.

Mr Speaker, with this I support the Bill. Thank you.

**Hon TOZAKA:** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this Bill. I too would like to join my colleagues who have spoken to thank the Minister for Civil Aviation for bringing this Bill to Parliament at this period of time for this very important national function of the SIG.

Mr Speaker, we are all aware that the aviation industry plays very vital role in the development of our country, given the fact that our country is spread over a large number of



islands, and also in comparison to our neighbors we are a bit far from each other and therefore it is inevitable in this modern time that we need to transform our aviation industry.

In terms of the government, the Aviation Bill 2008 does not come into this House by accident. It is an output of the Coalition for National Unity and Rural Advancement (CNURA) government's policy of the aviation portfolio.

We noted the Minister asserting yesterday that it is to provide rules, regulations and policies and ensure safe aviation services are provided for the traveling public in Solomon Islands and to have a competitive and open market for international air travel.

Sir, it is common knowledge to all of us here that concerns have been expressed in our media about including our business sector, about the capability, the capacity of our civil aviation services in the country, example, the low standard of our airport services, the lack of aero planes, airports, skilled manpower and so on.

In my own constituency of North Vella La Vella, for example, we have two airports that have been lying dormant for sometime because of land in that part of the country. But I am sure this piece of legislation will help to attract investors. A group of aviation is preparing these two very important airports as comparable to Munda airport and the Barakoma airport. They were constructed during the World War times and they are strong. Basically they are not operational at the moment because there is another airport at the North Vella side, which is a community airport unlike those two airports. But I am sure this piece of legislation will help to revisit those airports.

As other speakers have said we all want improvement in our aviation system and this is the right time. And so I congratulate my colleague Minister for introduce this piece of legislation at this point in time.

Sir, as you are aware our aviation legislation is out of date. It is out of date and also very old. We cannot deny that. We are signatory to various international civil aviation treaties and conventions that we all do not honor simply because the legislations are not enough.

But having said that, I would like to congratulate our selves, the Aviation Department, the government as well as the private sectors that deal with aviation for the good work they have done. I salute and commend the excellent work of our aviation personnel and the management in the operational divisions. I am referring here to our pilots, engineers and the operational staff. I am very proud of them. They are still flying our domestic airlines. I am surprised that they are still working very hard. I am sure this new legislation will help improve the standards and skills of aviation personnel, help to improve the management side and also in regards to government policy. This is an important piece of legislation, as I said because Solomon Islands, as you know because you said it yourself that it is not an island of its own, but we are also signatories to treaties like the Pacific Aviation Safety Security Treaty (PICASTT). We are part of that organization, it is a member state of the Pacific Aviation Safety Office (PASO), which seeks to achieve regional harmonization in aviation laws and practices in the Pacific region. Therefore, already a number of other PASO member states have introduced civil aviation legislation using the same model. Therefore, once this legislation is enacted, our country will be able to benefit from regional aviation services.

The Leader of Opposition has expressed his serious concern in regards to financial support for this legislation. But I think now that we have connected ourselves to these treaties, I

am sure help will come and we work together with our other parties. In the past we have not been able to do this because our old legislation cannot achieve the compliance and requirement in the various treaties that we signed. Once this Bill is passed, I am sure all the opportunities missed by our civil system will become available to us in the country. I am very pleased about that.

Mr Speaker, the Solomon Islands Aviation must have established rules of operation, missions of responsibility within the Solomon Island Civil Aviation system. Hence, this law will not only ensure Solomon Islands meets its international obligation as a member of the ICAO, but more importantly it will provide the traveling public on international flights to Solomon Islands registered or operated aircraft in Solomon Islands airspace unlimited compensation in the event of death.

Sir, it is because of this reason that the government is introducing this Civil Aviation Bill 2008, a strategy to ensure Solomon Islanders are provided the safest and secure aviation environment.

The need for a safest aviation environment and conditions would be of significant economic benefit development to Solomon Islands tendered by this legislation is a pride to this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, in the economy sphere, this legislation is crucial as it provides a competitive and open market for international air travel or better still create a level playing field for operators in the aviation industry.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this legislation paves the way for a new era in the regulation of civil aviation in Solomon Islands, as stated by the Minister himself is going to be modern, easy to locate, easy to use in comparison with the old legislation that we currently have.

With these brief comments, Mr. Speaker, I support the Bill.

**Hon. Dr. SIKUA:** Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to thank thee Honorable Minister and his hard working officials for their efforts in preparing this Bill and making it possible to be brought before Parliament. Of course, as has been raised, Mr. Speaker, Honorable Members will recall that an explanatory statement or memorandum was already given to them in the last sitting of Parliament, and so I would like to thank the Bills & Legislation Committee for the hard work they have put in to ensure the report is available to Members of Parliament this morning.

I also wish to thank you Honorable Speaker for your understanding on the delay to commence this morning's sitting and to thank all Members of Parliament on both sides of the House for their tolerance, patience and understanding for the delay we have gone through this morning.

Before I briefly make my comments on the Civil Aviation Bill 2008, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to make some comments in response to the concerns raised in the letter by the Member for Temotu Nende, which you have already alluded to this morning Mr. Speaker. May I refer to Standing Order 48(5), which states in no ambiguous terms that a debate on a motion that a bill be read a second time is to be confined to the general merits and principles of the bill. This therefore means that during the debate that has taken place in this Second Reading, details of the Bill are not examined. It is at the committee stage that details of a bill are to be examined.

Standing Order 51 clearly states that when a bill is committed to the committee of supply, the committee shall not discuss the principles of the bill but only its details.

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members are not prejudiced by the non availability of the list of errors. Honorable Members can read the explanatory memorandum for themselves to understand the general merits and principles. Mr Speaker, the objects and reasons found at the back of the Bill can also assist Honorable Members of Parliament. Further, the reports by the Bills and Legislation Committee examined adequately the general merits and principles, and I urge all Members of Parliament to read that report diligently.

I understand that a list of errors has now been sent to Parliament officials for examination and since the officials were busy with the finalization of the report by the Legislation and Bills Committee, they could not examine the list before resumption of sitting this morning. However, I am assured that the list will be available this afternoon.

Mr Speaker, although the Bill as it is, has typing errors, that does not make it impossible or difficult for Members to comprehend the general merits and the principles of the bill. I just want to mention something on the issue of the use of the A4 or A5 format. Mr Speaker, it is a practice that bills are produced on A5 paper. There is, as I understand it, Mr Speaker, no statutory prohibition for usage of A4 size paper. Bills, however, must be presented in the form satisfactory to the Honorable Speaker. And so in the situation of this bill, the format used when the bill was tabled and read at the first reading was the A4 size paper. It was the A4 size paper which was endorsed by the Speaker pursuant to Standing Orders 46(1) and published pursuant to Standing Orders. And so the A5 size copy is an advanced preparation of the bill for reprinting. Those comments, Mr Speaker, are just to substantiate some of the concerns that were raised earlier on, just to put Members for Parliaments minds at rest that what we are doing is in order, and so I now wish to just contribute briefly to the debate in general terms on the Civil Aviation Bill 2008.

The report of the Bills and Legislation Committee, which studied the Civil Aviation Bill 2008, explains extremely well why we need a new Civil Aviation Act and the objects and reasons of the bill. As you have heard from the Honorable Minister, Mr Speaker, the world of aviation has undergone tremendous changes in recent years. We need to make adjustments and changes so that our laws, rules and regulations match the expectations of the regional and international community and include provisions necessitated by new technology as well as improved safety provisions.

Mr Speaker, a large body of international laws and conventions helped to regulate the Aviation Industry and this Bill is our contribution to this body. Mr Speaker, if you compare the size of the Bill before the House with CAP 47, which it is to replace, one will notice that all the legislation has just 25 Sections. If you add the sections of CAP 46, the Aircraft Tokyo, Hague and Montreal conventions, which is also to be repealed we only have 22 more sections.

The Bill before the House has 239 sections that clearly demonstrate the complexity of civil aviation in this day and age. Mr Speaker, it also demonstrates the inadequacy of the laws that we have in place for many years. Mr Speaker, your good self and all Members of this Honorable House are frequent air travelers and when we take to the air, Mr Speaker, we trust to the good judgment and professional expertise of many people - the engineers who keep the aircrafts in good condition, the pilots who must navigate and fly the aircraft, the civil aviation

staffs who provides flight service information and in more congested air space, the aircraft controllers.

We rely on the expertise of the emergency service people who are constantly on standby, the ground handling staff who move our baggage and check us in, the security staff who watch out for terrorists and those who can endanger the traveling public, and the technical staff who take care of the electronic systems needed to support modern aviation.

Mr Speaker, working behind the scenes are people who exercise certain functions and authority in order to regulate the industry. The details of this will emerge more clearly when we move into the Committee Stage to consider the details of the bill.

Mr Speaker, in general terms this Bill has outcomes that will both challenge and help us. Already we have sufficient qualified staff to sustain the requirements of CAPs 46 and 47. The adoption of this new bill will mean a wider range of professional staff will be needed and this means the career path for people interested in the aviation industry will open up.

Mr Speaker, this is good news for our young people. Up to date laws and regulations will also help investors where we have been working from outdated information and laws we now have the opportunity to offer potential investors world class standards in the way we regulate the Civil Aviation industry.

Mr Speaker, potential investors will more confidently identify opportunities and have the comfort of knowing that our regulations are on par with international aviation industry expectations. Mr Speaker, one of the industries with huge potential, relatively untapped for the past 30 years in Solomon Islands has been the tourism industry, which without Civil Aviation would be almost legless. As honorable Members know, the CNURA Government is trying to ensure that the country is served by well surfaced, well maintained airstrips so that we can distribute the benefits of the tourism industry as well as the Civil Aviation Industry throughout Solomon Islands.

Mr Speaker, ensuring a safe and operating environment for the aviation industry is so important in this regard. The Aviation Industry is part of the national transport and communication infrastructure and as such is a major contributor to the economic growth of Solomon Islands. And just to assure the Member for West Makira, the government will continue with its programs to establish new airports in 2009.

Finally, Mr Speaker, just on the points that were raised by the Honorable Leader of Opposition on license, I think Section 239 Sub-Section 4 adequately addresses those issues, and the issue on making regulations for any transitional matters that were raised by the Honorable Member for Temotu Vattu, Mr Speaker, are also adequately addressed by the Bill in Section 239 Sub-Section 5.

With those few comments, Mr Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House and I support the motion. Thank you.

**Hon Lonamei:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. In winding up I would like to thank the two sides of the House for supporting this very important Bill and for seeing the importance of the Bill.

Mr Speaker, all the concerns raised by Honorable colleagues are taken note of, especially the costing of the authority and assets that the Airlines is very concerned about are also taken note of, as they are also the same concern we have. These things will be sorted out as we go

along. I would like to inform Solomon Airlines not to worry because everything will be sorted out in a manner that is good for both sides.

Mr Speaker, in regards to security, Aviation is very mindful of that and we trained our securities very well. We have just held a graduation ceremony last week where 10 graduates have passed in regards to security. The Aviation is very mindful of the security of people traveling in the air.

Mr Speaker, this Bill is a very technical Bill and also very comprehensive and that is why there is a self-explanatory note clause by clause. Therefore, if you have any questions you can refer back to the notes as everything should be properly explained.

Mr Speaker, I think with everyone supporting this Bill, I would like to thank all of you and thank my hard working staff of the Civil Aviation for coming up with this Bill. I would also like to thank the GCC government for initiating this bill, which I have completed and brought to Parliament for us to pass for the safety of the traveling public traveling in planes.

Mr Speaker, with these few remarks, I beg to move.

*The Bill agreed to*

**Mr Speaker:** Honorable Members I have been advised that the government does not propose to deal with the committee stage today as we have already heard and as indicated to you. As most of you would be aware, there are a number of amendments and corrections that the government will propose on this Bill. Leaving the committee stage until tomorrow would therefore allow time for those amendments to be properly noticed and circulated.

**Hon. Sikua:** I move that the House do now adjourn.

*The House adjourned at 12.30 pm*