

## THURSDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER 2010

The Speaker, Sir Allan Kemakeza took the chair at 9.32am.

Prayers.

### ATTENDANCE

At prayers, all were present with the exception of the Minister for Foreign Affairs; Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management & Meteorology; Agriculture & Livestock Development and the Members for North East Guadalcanal.

### **PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND OF REPORTS**

### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

#### **Choiseul Province Township**

1. **Mr SANDAKABATU** to the Minister for Provincial Government & Institutional Strengthening: What is the progress of Choiseul Province Township project to date and the government's plan for the next four years?

**Hon.: TOVUSIA:** Firstly, I would like to thank the Member for North West Choiseul for his concern on the progress of the township project.

As Minister responsible and only being in the office for only a few weeks, we have a full record of this township project. In 2007 to 2008 the Ministry of Provincial Government has spent about \$1.75million on the process, and it is one of the ongoing projects the Ministry is taking on board.

The Provincial Government also has some issues with finance and so this project is not being adequately implemented because the government has not been able to quickly fund the money it allocated. But for the interest of this question, yes, honorable Member for North West Choiseul, my Ministry is working hard on it and if there is money we will go ahead with it.

**Mr GUKUNA:** The honorable Minister said that he thinks that they have spent about \$1.75million. Is that his own thinking or is that the actual amount that was spent?

**Hon. Tovusia:** Money has already been used, and if this is in the interest of the Member raising the supplementary question, I have details of this project in the office and so he can come to the office and find it out for himself.

**Mr WALE:** If the Minister can outline what aspects of the process has been funded with this \$1.75million?

**Hon. MAELANGA:** I would like to add on to the question raised by my good colleague Member for Aoke/Langalanga. In regards to this Choiseul project, the amount of money spent, as indicated by the Minister for Provincial Government, those of us who are now sitting on the other side should know that the money spent was on survey and ground work on the proposed new site of Choiseul Township on the mainland. Most of the funds were spent on survey work and ground work.

**Mr Wale:** Just to follow up. What other aspects remained in this process and how much more does the Ministry requires to carry the project through?

**Hon. Tovusia:** To answer that question, I have the records here that in 2009, \$3.5million was allocated, which I believe the previous government did not provide and that is why this project did not move on. In 2010, \$3million was allowance, which this government is going to provide so that this project can continue.

**Mr Wale:** What additional aspects will this money cover?

**Hon. Tovusia:** The amount of \$1.75 million has been used for compensation survey, which was not done properly. The details of this program are in my office and if any honorable colleagues are interested to know, the office is there, just call in and we will give you the full details of the program.

**Mr Gukuna:** The Minister has said that he will give \$3 million to this project in this financial year. The honorable Member for North West Choiseul asked this question on behalf of his people and the people of Choiseul Province. I want the Minister to give assurance and not just because he wanted to answer the

question. I want him to assure the people of Choiseul that he will give that \$3 million this financial year.

**Hon. Tovusia:** Thank you for that supplementary question. This is an ongoing project and is not something I wanted to say just because I wanted to answer this question. This is an ongoing project that is a commitment of the government. I think seriously, this current government, this is one of our policies and is one of our priorities. I believe if there is money, and we know the strength of money is in our government, we will do it. What are we trying to talk about in here or argue about things that we did not do for our people in the village? If this is a priority it must happen anyway if there is money.

**Mr Gukuna:** I want the Minister to assure the people of Choiseul because he has just said that he will give the \$3 million this year. I do not want to hear his belief because we all believe in the project, but I want him to assure and confirm what he just said that he will give \$3 million towards this Choiseul Township project this year. That is what he said when he answered the question from the Member for Aoke/Langalanga. I want him to assure this House and the people of North West Choiseul that he will give that \$3 million as he said when he answered the original question.

**Hon. PHILIP:** This project does not belong to the people of North West Choiseul, but it belongs to the whole Choiseul Province. And as we all know, a project of this nature needs a lot of planning infrastructure, land acquisition, survey work and things like that. I think the question has been answered. What I am trying to say here in support of my Minister for Provincial Government is that the process is ongoing. If funds cannot be allocated in the small budget we are going to approve now, then definitely it would probably be put in the development budget next year.

I want to assure the people of Choiseul Province that it is a major project of the province and the government will be looking very, very seriously in providing those financial resources to ensure that the project is properly done for our people in Choiseul and that the infrastructure associated with the project must also come up with it at the same time. It will be a big capital outlay and the government will take it very consciously and is committed to the project like the previous government did. Thank you.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you Honorable Prime Minister. I think the question has been well covered. Can I ask the questioner to say thank you to the Minister?

**Mr Sandakabatu:** Thank you Mr Speaker, and thank you honorable Minister for Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening. I am satisfied with the answers given. I also thank the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and members of the Opposition for contributing to the questions. Can I now proceed on to my next question?

### **Choiseul Province road infrastructure**

2. **Mr SANDAKABATU** to the Minister for Infrastructure Development: Thirty years of independence has gone but Choiseul Province has been without a road system to service its populace. Can the Honorable Minister inform Parliament on:

- (a) What is the government's plan for road infrastructure on Choiseul Province in the next four years?
- (b) Is there a program to see Choiseul Province start building roads, bridges, wharfs and other infrastructure projects?

**Hon. FIULAUA:** I would like to thank the Member of Parliament for North West Choiseul for asking the question. I will answer the two parts of the question as follows:

- (a) There is no approval plan for Choiseul Province at this point in time.
- (b) There is no approval program for Choiseul Province to start build transport infrastructure.

**Mr SOGAVARE:** I would like to thank the Minister for his response. The question is very specific and it asks for the government's plan, the present government on those questions, on the issues raised?

**Mr Speaker:** The Minister already said there are no plans for both (a) and (b) questions.

**Mr Sogavare:** We understand that the government is going to put together and probably has finalized within the 30 days it stated, its program of actions and probably has some kind of indications as to what it is going to do in what areas and so maybe the Prime Minister will need to respond to this.

**Hon. Philip:** I think that is a very good question, right now in the Ministry where there is a Minister now. Of course, I think there is no specific plan on infrastructure development in regards to roads and wharf, as the Minister said. But that is not to say this government does not have a plan.

The infrastructure development on Choiseul will not be done in isolation of a holistic development plan, which means part of the question we have just answered, the development of Choiseul Province on mainland of Taro will be part of that infrastructure development. Along with growth centers in Choiseul Province there will be a sensible connection of road to connect with the growth centers.

What I am saying is that there is a specific government plan to address the infrastructure development needs in Choiseul Province with the development of the provincial headquarters in Taro as well as the selected growth centre areas that the government is thinking to consult with the province to identify the locations so that roads are not built for nothing but are connected with infrastructures like bridges, wharves and so forth to connect with marketing and transportation needs of the people of Choiseul. So it will be done, and is expressed very clearly in the government's program of action.

**Hon ETE:** Currently, the government is working on a transport sector development project that is going to address the entire transport sector of the country, which means that it will be initially under this program that the government is going to prioritize the rehabilitation of roads, wharves and any other transport infrastructures of this country.

Currently, in Choiseul Province to be particular, in terms of infrastructure, under the Maritime Improvement project there is one in Zingoa and Paqoe. The Taro wharf is funded under the European Union and the ADB (Asian Development Bank). One is in Katurasele and Nuatabu which is funded under the European Union and the ADB and projects like what the Minister has said is that currently on road project the government is going to look at it. There is a 20 years plan that is going to be revised every five year. Financing of these projects, as I have said is going to be done by ADB, partly AusAID, New Zealand Aid and the Solomon Islands Government component.

On roads, plans are now underway to look at constructing other roads including Choiseul Province. I understand that in successive parliaments, there are a number of Choiseul parliamentarians who have been to this Honorable House have worked hard in including these infrastructures, and this is one province our government is going to look at improving when it comes to national infrastructure programs. Thank you.

**Mr HANARIA:** I want the Minister for Infrastructure to confirm that the government has a plan for four years but it is not constructing the roads or bridges within the four years.

**Mr Speaker:** I think the honorable Prime Minister has covered that its program of action for 2010/2014 will include Choiseul Province.

**Mr HOU:** I would like to go back to the Honorable Minister's response in response to the question when he said that the government does not have any plan and I also heard from the Prime Minister that there is a plan and the Minister for Public Service has also just mentioned some very specific plans, so I would like to know who I am going to believe. Is it the Minister responsible or the Prime Minister or who?

**Hon LILO:** Previously, in the previous government there is a plan, which the new government obviously is going to review. This government has only been in office for about a month. We are still in the process of looking through all the previous plans and the policy of the government for us to come up with plans for the next four years.

But obviously good programs like this must be implemented and must continue. There is no doubt that it will be featured in the plan of our government. I think we need to assure the people of Choiseul and especially the questioner that the long standing request of Choiseul Province to develop its township project must continue. Because in fact it started off during your time too, Mr Speaker, when you were in government the planning started off during your time and on to the government of the Member for East Choiseul. I think it was only the last government that was able to have a concrete plan and funds were made available, but because of the financial crisis we have experienced the government has been unable to fully implement it. But I think there has been some groundwork that has been established in developing the new township in Choiseul Province.

The question by the Member for Small Malaita to find out which plan still remains, there is an existing plan approved by the previous government under the Development Budget, and I think these are plans that will be subject to certain review that we will have to carry out in view of the new government and the new policies of government. But for obvious reasons very good projects like this will not change but must be featured in any plans because that is the wishes of our people, it has been the subject of consultations between the provincial governments and other various stakeholders including landowners too who are

willing to offer their lands for establishing the township in Choiseul. That is where we are at right now. Thank you.

**Mr Sogavare:** Before I ask my supplementary question, in fact the supplementary question is to get the government's assurance. And to ask for that assurance I would like to say this. The Minister is correct that these are good projects, which have been there for a long time and transcends a number of governments. But the problem always has been is a change in priorities during the course of the year. That is what it is. Therefore, although funds are provided for projects like this, when priorities change, funds are shifted somewhere and projects approved by parliament are left behind.

The question I would like to ask the government is to give assurance to us that if we are going to take up this project, infrastructure projects in Choiseul Province in next year's budget, the assurance we want is that you must do it. And that means that priorities must be right. If we have too much in the budget we will end up where projects like that will suffer every year. I just want to get that assurance from the government.

**Hon Philip:** I would like to take this opportunity to assure the people of Choiseul Province that in terms of priority and government planning, this government's priority will be to try and establish the relocation of the headquarters of Choiseul Province from Taro Island to the mainland. Along with that, I want to assure the people of Choiseul that we will work with the Lauru Conference in terms of land matters along with the government's new program of customary land reform, which will come in the program so that land matters are dealt with in a much more transparent, objective and constructive way in paving the way forward for all other infrastructure development whether it be roads, bridges, wharves and even growth centres that we are so aspiring to develop in provinces throughout the country. These will require a lot of resources, these will need the support of our donor partners and the Solomon Islands Government and any other people who are here to help us do this. The process of consultation is ongoing, is continuing and there are positive signs that people are coming onboard to support our development programs in the next four years.

I would like to tell the good people of Choiseul that we want to work together with you on matters of land settlement and dispute resolution. We would like to work with you in relocating your provincial headquarter from Taro Island, so that Taro Island remains to be a touristic destination for Choiseul Province. We also would like to have some plans for southern Choiseul so that tourism can also grow in southern Choiseul plus a growth centre so that people

are able to get transportation and agriculture needs to those growth centres to take them to market centres.

That much I can say at the moment. Our program will come out shortly and the country will understand exactly what we represent in terms of development not only for Choiseul Province but every other province throughout the country.

**Mr Speaker:** I think this question has been covered very well.

**Mr. Sandakabatu:** Thank you Mr. Speaker, and thank you the Minister for Infrastructure Development, the Hon. Prime Minister and the Ministers for responding to my question as well as questions from Members of the Opposition.

My people of North West Choiseul would really like to see these two projects going and I am happy to hear on this floor of Parliament assurance being given. We will keep our eyes open and we hope to see observable or tangible changes in the years to come. With that, thank you very much.

**Mr. Speaker:** At this point I would like to ask all Members of Parliament to observe standing order 22 in terms of asking and answering of questions.

### **Funding status: Uhu Wharf Project**

3. **Mr. MANENIARU** to the Minister for Infrastructure Development: Can the Minister inform Parliament about the funding status of the Uhu Wharf Project and the planned commencement date of this important infrastructure project.

**Hon. FIULAUA:** The Uhu wharf is amongst the 12 listed wharves for the ADB/EC funding project.

**Mr. Maneniaru:** I thank the Minister for informing the House that this important infrastructure project of my people is listed amongst the 12. Can you be able to tell my people when this project will actually commence?

**Hon. MAELANGA:** I just want to answer that supplementary question. I think I know it from the previous government that there are 12 places listed for wharves, and one is Uhu. I think it will be around October that tenders for those wharves will happen. That is on that.

**Mr. HOU:** I am also very interested in this project because Uhu is a place I normally disembark on and so I really want that wharf to be quickly constructed. The original question was directed to the Minister for Infrastructure & Development and in his response he said that this project is with the ADB and EU. But I want to know if this project is going to be funded by them or what are they doing with it. I want to know what it means when he said this project is with them.

**Hon. Maelanga:** The wharf is listed and so on 20<sup>th</sup> October which I mentioned earlier tender bids for it will take place. Tenders are expected to be released on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2010. That is what I said and it is from there that we would know which ones they will construct.

**Hon. Maneniaru:** Can I ask the Minister for Infrastructure to confirm that this wharf will be tendered out because the Deputy Prime Minister already confirmed on the floor of Parliament that it is listed with the 12 that would be tendered out. Can he confirm that this particular project will be tendered?

**Mr Speaker:** I think the answer given was that Uhu is included. But I will ask the Minister responsible to again give the assurance.

**Hon. Ete:** Yes, Uhu is listed and is part of the 12 wharves listed and the Ministry of Infrastructure has approved it and is going out for tender on October and if things go on well, implementation will start in February 2011. The wharves that are listed are Uhu in Malaita Province, which is one of the strategic locations in South Malaita, Nu'usi in Malaita Province, Manikaraku in Marau in Guadalcanal, Siota in Central Province, and this is a high priority under the National Transport Plan, Susubona in Isabel Province, Koriovuku in Western Province, Lengana in Western Province funded under the emergency rehabilitation, Lambulambu in Western Province, Keru in Western Province, Mbunikalo in Western Province, Nuatabu in Choiseul Province, and Katurasele in Choiseul Province. I think those are the 12 wharves listed for tender sometimes in October. Thank you.

**Mr GUKUNA:** I appreciate the answers from the Minister of Public Service, but I would like to know whether he understands that as a government policy or he is reading the answers of the Minister of Works.

**Hon. Philips:** You will see that there is serious cooperation on this side of the bench and therefore I would like to say that infrastructure development will remain a glaring reality in our planning process. The last government, this government, future governments, it will remain with us for almost forever. What we are saying is that some of these questions have preempted what we have in the Policy Paper. I would like to ask the Opposition to be patient a little bit with us. We will come out with a comprehensive policy on infrastructure development of our country. The list of existing projects is well known to those on the other side. They know about these projects and we will try as much as possible to continue with the good work you have done before and do some more because I do not see Renbell in here yet, and so I think the Minister would have to submit that to us for us to market it. And if we cannot put it, just come across to us so that we become one team so that we can start to work. If you are concerned about your projects, I think the best way for you Choiseul is to come across, those of you there just come across here so that we can do team work and develop this country.

**Mr ABANA:** Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Prime Minister. The Minister of Public Service has just read a number of places or sites where wharves are going to be constructed. I want us to assure our people that they have heard the names and that we are not going to change them. We must make sure that the names mentioned on the floor of Parliament remained without being changed.

I want my colleague Minister for Infrastructure just to say, yes the names enlisted for the wharves are there and not to be changed.

**Mr Speaker:** Can the Minister assure our people?

**Hon. FIULAUA:** The projects that were put on paper and mentioned have already been confirmed for funding. Those waiting for tender, tender is coming soon.

**Hon. HA'AMORI:** I would like to respond to the question raised by the Member for Rennell/Bellona. Some of us are new in here, and I believe the questions raised by the other side are not raised to individuals but are raised to the government, hence on the paper the questions were addressed to the Minister of

whatever portfolios. Therefore, if questions are addressed to the government, I believe this side of the House is at liberty to respond in whatever way it likes to do.

I noticed the Order Paper this morning, and I am a bit suspicious that it appears it looks like as confirmed as the minutes passed that perhaps we would like to test individuals.

**Mr Speaker:** The Chair allows any Ministers, including the Prime Minister to assist because as you said it is government's program.

**Hon Abana:** Point of order. I just want to come back to the point raised by the Minister for Education. In fact, the noticing of questions colleagues, comes on their own timing. The questions were noticed by Parliament and so as and when questions come, the government can see them appear on the Notice Paper and then on the Order Paper. I want to make that clarification.

**Mr Speaker:** There are more than 18 questions in my office and the Clerk's Office allocates four questions a day so the questions are in order.

**Mr. Maneniaru:** Before I thank the honorable Minister for his answers, I would like to make a comment that first the comment from the Minister of Education is not a background to this question. The question itself is about an important project for the constituency and that particular part of our country and is put purposely to solicit a right answer from the Ministry and the Minister responsible.

Remote areas of our country seemed to be neglected a bit by governments in the past and that is why leaders that represent their people in their constituencies in far away provinces, it is our responsibility to continue remind our good Ministers and the government not to think of the centres or provincial centres in the provinces but to also look at remote parts of the provinces, for example, one of which is the West Are Are constituency. We are part of the development and we would like to continue to take part aggressively in the development and the economy of the country and infrastructure development is very, very important.

I would now like to finally thank the honorable Minister for his assurance given on the floor of Parliament and especially to my people of West Are Are that the Uhu wharf is included in the 12 wharves listed for tender, and I will work very closely with my capable Minister for both of us to ensure that this particular wharf is part of the government's plan to help people in the constituency, as well as Solomon Islands as a whole in our economic aspirations.

I would also like to thank the honorable Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers that assist in answering this question. I also thank my colleague Members on the Opposition for their supplementary questions. Thank you honorable Minister once again for your answers and assurance on the floor of Parliament to our people.

### **Wairokai Economic Growth Centre Project**

4. **Mr MANENIARU** to the Minister for Infrastructure Development: Can the Minister inform Parliament about his Ministry's immediate plans in advancing the Wairokai Economic Growth Centre project?

**Hon. FIULAUA:** My Ministry has no plans for advancing the Wairokai Economic Growth Centre. The mandate is not with my Ministry as yet to plan for Economic Growth Centre Projects but the Ministry is available to provide the support to any leading agency.

**Hon. Abana:** In regards to policy direction, and so maybe the Prime Minister can help and this is for Malaita Province. I heard the Prime Minister talked about a number of economic growth centers, and this is an important policy direction of the government as well. In your point of view for Malaita Province, how many economic growth centers do you think the government can set up there?

**Hon. PHILIP:** As I have said, some of these questions sort of preempt what we are still hiding or maybe not hiding but what is in the government's program of action. There will be a lot of consultations in Malaita Province to come up with locations on the number of growth centers we are going to build in the provinces. These are highly ambitious projects and all of them cannot be completed in four years, but at least we can make a start. That is most important to our people in the provinces. Of course, if you ask the Ministry at this time, the simple answer is that the Ministry still does not have a plan as yet. That was an honest answer from the Minister because the government is yet to settle down in its programming and identification of locations in consultation with each province. It will not be a top down but it will be done in consultation with provinces and also in consultation with landowners. This has to go in line with the customary land reform program the government has so that the process towards establishing these major infrastructure developments will go on well.

What I am saying is that in our meeting next year, there will be a lot of comprehensive plan on infrastructure development the government can come up

with, but the principle is that we need growth centers. We need growth centers throughout the country in identified areas in consultation with provinces so that we can develop market places, transportation places and storage places for our people in the provinces and the communities.

**Mr HOU:** Just a supplementary question and perhaps it would be quite an important thing for those of us on that area for the government to assure us that this project is included in its plan. Sorry, we are not preempting your plan but we want assurance that this place is in the government's plan still.

**Hon. Philip:** Yes, without even us telling everybody about the southern region's growth centre areas, Wairokai stands out very clear. That is much I know. The people in the southern region of Are Are, especially keep talking about Wairokai. Going by year, we have already identified Wairokai as already in the plan. There should be a good growth centre in the southern region with connections of roads, good wharves close there and we should be able to make sure that land around Wairokai, and that is a challenge to people in the southern region to make sure those customary land areas around that growth centre are quickly liberalized. The government will help to come up with a scheme, legal scheme for customary land itself called the institutionalization customary land, so that exclusive club around the Wairokai area or the southern region becomes more liberalized or becomes more inclusive for the usage of other people who want to develop growth centres and livelihoods around that growth centre. That is the principle and.

In the northern region we are also looking at other places, and also in the Fataleka, East Kwaio and those places, we need to open up another growth centre in that area. It is a very ambitious plan and we would like to appeal to members on the other side to work together with us. Talk with your people to identify who are the customary landowners otherwise we are bogged down on problems like the Bina Harbour. We have been talking about Bina Harbour for the last 20 years, and this one we would like to make sure these things happen in the next four years by identifying locations so that we can put down a comprehensive plan on infrastructure development so that they go together with land reform growth centers, markets, production and that kind of thing. It is one whole big parcel and not just one project or growth centre.

**Hon. SOALAOI:** I just want to make a general comment if you allow me to do so.

**Mr Speaker:** Sorry, Leader of Independent I did not hear you clearly.

**Hon. Soalaoi:** Can I just make a general comment and will sound a bit more like a question regarding the questions being asked to the Minister for Infrastructure.

**Mr Speaker:** That is why I remind Members of the House to observe standing order 23(6), which restricts making of statement and so ask supplementary questions.

**Hon. Soalaoi:** Thank you Mr Speaker. In that case I will say it in a way that sounds like a question.

Just to remind the government of the importance of infrastructure in our effort to stimulate economic growth in our country. I think we can only have true economic development if we engage everybody. Some of us like the Member for Renbell did not hear Renbell in the list of wharves and so feel a bit uneasy. But we are observing a legacy of doing things that we already know are areas that are economical.

There are two ways to this and this is whether it is us that make it uneconomical or we try to make it economical. The growth centers, I want to encourage the government to look at areas that even if we think are not economical, please do think that you can make them economical because it is only us who will make them economical. Those places, naturally, have something that still contributes to the economy of his country. I would like to  
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**Mr Speaker:** What is the supplementary question of the Leader of Independent? I remind Members to observe Standing Order 23(6). So your supplementary question, the Leader of Independent please?

**Hon. Soalaoi:** The supplementary question is, is the government looking at also coming up with a plan that is holistic like the Prime Minister has said where other parts of the country are also included in infrastructure development. Some parts of the country, mind you, we cannot put same infrastructures everywhere. There are specific needs in terms of infrastructure. Just for the Prime Minister or the Government to assure Members of Parliament on the floor that yes, it is truly going to be a comprehensive and holistic plan in terms of infrastructure.

**Hon. Philip:** That is the philosophy and the principle. For too long now our people have been living out their development aspirations to themselves. They see the government as too distant; the government not helping them. The new constituency of Vattu, we would have to look at an area where we can help that

remote part of our country to enable them get closer to transportation needs and production, especially tourism which is a very good thing in that area so that we can develop our remote friends in constituencies. For Renbell, there is already a submission from the province itself coming through to build a permanent wharf somewhere there and to rehabilitate the road from Tiggoa to the east, the lake. These things are coming up but in regards to the sentiments expressed by the Member for Vattu, yes that is a philosophy, that is a thinking the government is taking onboard. We will spread the corporate plan of the government in the next couple of weeks. The launching will happen as soon as possible this week or early next week. Thank you.

**Mr Maneniaru:** Before I thank the Honorable Minister for Infrastructure Development, I am very encouraged by the statement made by the Honorable Prime Minister on the growth centres. I think that is the way forward for our country, and so I thank my Honorable Prime Minister for his wisdom and insight to look into holistic development for Solomon Islands. Our remote areas, constituencies and provinces need to be tapped into the economic development and plan of this country if we are taking about developing Solomon Islands.

I would like to thank my colleague Members on the Opposition for the supplementary questions. I would like to thank the Honorable Prime Minister for assisting the Honorable Minister for Infrastructure Development whom I am directing the questions to. Thank you.

## **STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

### **MOTIONS**

#### **Motion of Appreciation**

1. "That this House expresses its appreciation of the service to the National Parliament of Solomon Islands of the Rt. Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea, Speaker of National Parliament of Solomon Islands, since December 2001.
2. That this resolution be communicated to the Rt. Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea by the Speaker

**Mr Speaker:** Honourable Members, at the first sitting of this meeting, we were all made aware of the Prime Minister's intention to move a motion of appreciation in relation to the former Speaker of Parliament at that sitting. However, in order to allow time for Members to prepare better for this particular motion, the Honorable Prime Minister did not move that motion. Today, he will move the motion, but before I call on him I would like to ask the Member of Parliament for East Choiseul for amendment to the motion. He has asked my office for amendment to the original motion. If the amendment is accepted by the Prime Minister then we are going to debate on the amended motion.

**Mr SOGAVARE:** Thank you very much and thank you for allowing me to move an amendment to this motion that the Prime Minister is going to move, and that is to do justice, I guess, to the real intentions of this motion.

The amendment I would like to move now is that immediately after, and in fact part 1 of the motion, and that is immediately after the figure 2001, the following words are going to be added: "for his outstanding contribution to nation building and the advancement of democracy and good governance in Solomon Islands". The amended motion I would like to put to the floor is going to read like this: "That this House expresses its appreciation of services to the National Parliament of Solomon Islands of the Rt. Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea, Speaker of National Parliament of Solomon Islands since 2001, and for his outstanding contribution to nation building and the advancement of democracy and good governance in Solomon Islands".

The reason for that amendment is that the person we would want to pay tribute to in this motion is not only a Speaker of Parliament who holds that office since 2001 but he is also the founding father of this nation and has done a lot to the building of this nation. His contribution to democracy and good governance in this country is simply outstanding and so to do justice to the presentations and tributes that Members of Parliament are going to make, I would respectfully ask the Prime Minister to accept this amendment, and I beg to move that amendment.

**Mr Speaker:** Under Standing Order 30(2) the Prime Minister can accept this amendment.

**Hon. Philip:** Thank you Honorable Member for East Choiseul for this particular suggestion to amend the original motion. I absolutely have no contention about it. In fact the words "outstanding contributions", I think we all acknowledge to the fact and testify to the fact that Sir Peter's outstanding contributions not only as the Speaker of Parliament but as a founder of the nation through the

constitutional process and negotiations with England/Britain in bringing this country to independence is an outstanding contribution, an outstanding achievement towards nation. Also the advancement of parliament and democracy in this country are also hallmarks of the man who has just left Parliament. The motion itself will not be complete until we point out some of these outstanding attributes to Rt. Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea.

I would like to support the motion at this juncture as good governance in Solomon Islands has been achieved to some degree. We have a long way to go but at least Rt. Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea as a leader, a political leader and an araha in his own constituency and his community is well said. I would like to say that the additional words, "for his outstanding contribution to nation building and the advancement of democracy and good governance in Solomon Islands" are taken on board. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** According to standing order 30(2), to insert the following words after the year 2001: "And for his outstanding contribution to nation building and the advancement of democracy and good governance in Solomon Islands" is amended to the original motion above.

*The amendment to the motion agreed to.*

**Mr Speaker:** The motion will now be moved as amended.

**Hon. Philip:** I shall therefore now move the motion as amended that this House expresses its appreciation of the services to the National Parliament of Solomon Islands of the Rt Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea, Speaker of National Parliament of Solomon Islands since December 2001 and for his outstanding contribution to nation building and the advancement of democracy and good governance in Solomon Islands.

Honorable colleagues, today we are witnessing the retirement of one of the most colourful and senior decorated statesmen of our country or young democracy, should I say. Sir Peter Keniorea means a lot to Solomon Islands as a grand survivor of the Solomon Islands politics and our nation's elder statesman. He has had an exceptional and colourful life which has a long list of honors bestowed on him. This includes membership of the Privy Council, a British Knighthood, an Order of the Brilliant Star with Special Grand Cordon, the highest honor that the Republic of China can give to any foreign citizen, and most recently his receiving of an honorary doctorate at the University of Queensland in December 2008.

May I as the Prime Minister of our beloved Solomon Islands and the Ninth Parliament speaking on behalf of my government and the people of Solomon Islands, it is my duty to officially farewell and to take this opportunity to say thank you and express my deepest appreciation for the outgoing Speaker, the Rt Honourable Sir, Peter Kenilorea for rendering commendable service to this honorable House since December 2001, and many other years of dedicated service to the development of Solomon Islands and the region in politics and administration.

In the tradition way, I wish to pay tribute to the Speaker for his fine leadership and loyalty. Indeed he has been part of this honorable House since 1974 as one of the pioneers and founders of our beloved country and parliament for that matter. Sir Peter was elected to the National Legislative Assembly in 1976 and became chief minister of Solomon Islands at that time. In 1978 when the nation gained independence from British Rule, he became the first Prime Minister, a position he held until 1980. He was elected again in 1984 for the East Are Are constituency and was re-elected for the third consecutive term as Prime Minister. Many who have worked under Sir Peter as Prime Minister, a Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, as Director of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency from 1991 to 1994 here in Honiara, as Ombudsman from 1996 to 2001 and as the Speaker have acknowledged him as a dedicated and disciplined leader, administrator, manager and role model.

Sir Peter has developed passion for the development of our young people to take up leadership roles both in the public sector and the private sector. He was an enthusiastic traveller, having been to about 70 nations during his career. He represented Solomon Islands and the region outstandingly on many international forums through a variety of jobs since he joined the civil service and later as politician and senior statesman. It is indeed a remarkable achievement for this modern areka ara to retire with flying colours after more than 40 years of dedicated service in the field of teaching to start with, administration, politics, diplomacy and senior statesman.

Peace and stability as well as law and order are important ingredients required for Solomon Islands to move forward in its development aspirations. Sir Peter, as I can recall was instrumental in advancing the peace process for Solomon Islands. He was a co-chair along with Mr. Paul Tovua of the Ceasefire Negotiations and Peace Monitoring Council. He later became co-chair for the Peace Monitoring Council created in 2000. At this juncture, I would like to extend appreciation on behalf of all Solomon Islanders to Sir Peter Kenilorea for his contributions in negotiating the peace process following the events of 1998 to 2003. Further, Sir Peter Kenilorea was instrumental and supported the need to bring an end to the crisis that we all endured in the short history of our nation.

The Ninth Parliament will agree with me that this was a difficult time for all Solomon Islanders.

He was a strong advocator of constitutional democracy in ensuring that successive governments for that matter do not abuse the constitution he helped design and was influential in introducing it. He was a constructive debater in his days as a politician and to this very day as a father of our nation on national issues that are extremely important to Solomon Islands.

Furthermore, Hon Speaker and colleague Members of Parliament, apart from being the Speaker of the National Parliament, Sir Peter Kenilorea also takes on other important constitutional posts such as chairman of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission with no hesitation.

Honorable Members, we are all here as end products of Sir Peter's tireless work with his officials at the Electoral office. Overseeing national elections with the view to be fair, effective and timely and corrupt free is an enormous responsibility, and this House must give credit to Sir Peter for the job well done in August 4<sup>th</sup> 2010 of the Solomon Islands national elections.

I also understand that Sir Peter Kenilorea was the National Director for the UNDP/Solomon Islands Parliamentary Strengthening Project, which you will all agree with me, had resulted in the transformation of Parliament hence contributed to the efficient functioning of this House. This project, I believe, ensures that services, management and administration of the affairs of the National Parliament Office are effective and efficient often with limited resources. The remarkable improvement of services to Members of Parliament in the recent past is highly admirable, and Sir Peter must be acknowledged as he was instrumental in securing the project from the very beginning.

I also noted that phase 2 of the Solomon Islands Parliamentary Strengthening Project was the construction of the office complex for Members of Parliament funded by the Republic of China on Taiwan. This is indeed an extremely important project for the political development of this country. For so long members of parliament do not have a place where constituency matters can be addressed or discussed as we all aspire to. It is my hope that at the completion of this project, members of parliament will fulfil their functions and responsibilities through the provision of their own offices. However, let me reiterate the fact that someone has to take leadership of such a project and the path in ensuring it takes off the ground. I understand that there were hiccups along the way and I want to thank the outgoing Speaker for his patience, hard work and commitment in ensuring the project is formalized early this year to pave the way for construction which is currently underway.

There is no doubt that Sir Peter Kenilorea will leave behind a rich legacy of his success and achievements, but more so a gap that will take time for this

country to fill. Allow me to take this time to acknowledge and to express my appreciation to the Clerk to Parliament and staff of the National Parliament Office for unwavering support rendered to Sir Peter since he was elected to this post of Speaker in December of 2001. You will no doubt, immensely learn from him, which I believe will help you in the execution of your duties and responsibilities.

Finally, allow me once again to take this opportunity to express my personal wishes and that of my government, my constituency and the people of Solomon Islands to acknowledge Sir Peter's contribution, distinguished career and his contributions to the development of our nation, Solomon Islands. It is my hope that you will find life after retirement fulfilling and a fitting reward for your many years of hard work.

With these few remarks, I beg to move.

**Mr Speaker:** The motion is now open for debate as amended.

**Mr ABANA:** First of all, I thank the honorable Prime Minister for moving this motion.

**Hon. Maelanga:** Point of order. I think it would be good if Rt Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea, former Speaker of National Parliament sits beside you up there when we give our appreciation for him.

**Mr Speaker:** In fact, that was the original arrangement but due to unforeseen circumstances regarding his health, he would not be able to be present here. Thank you for your very important point.

**Mr Speaker:** I will ask the Leader of Opposition to continue with the debate on the motion as amended.

**Mr Abana:** Thank you again honorable Prime Minister for moving this very important motion in appreciating the work the outgoing Speaker has done for our nation. I also thank the Member for East Choiseul for that amendment, which I think is very, very encompassing.

I rise as the Leader of the Opposition to take on a unique task that I consider an honor, a privilege and indeed joy. Today marks an important and significant milestone in the life of this honorable House in that today we officially farewell the Rt Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea, KBE, PC, an honorary Doctor of Philosophy and two times Speaker of National Parliament.

In this address I would like to call him Sir Peter.

To properly portray our special guest, we need to step back a bit in history. Please, therefore, allow me to attempt to trace the emergence of this great man. Sir Peter was born on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 1943 to Ezra To'imae Arahaimo'u and Oirao of East Are Are, his true godly parents. His growing up is documented in his auto-biography titled, "Tell It As It Is" which I would recommend to all Solomon Islanders to read. Just to give us a glimpse of what growing up is for Sir Peter, I will quote from his book on page 20: "Other than the events which I have already written, my childhood days were mostly uneventful." The events that he was referring to included being born amidst air attack by the Americans during World War II, falling from a coconut tree, being bitten by a snake and being hanged up side down under a fire as punishment for insisting on extra food. Sir Peter, with respect, I beg to differ in your suggestion that those incidents were uneventful.

I am sure we can all relate to some of those experiences as well for our guest of honor, however, these reflections are important in appreciating and understanding where the personality, the audacity and the clear demonstration of intelligence and wisdom so prevalent in this great man. Sir Peter is who he is because of his experiences in those early days.

His autobiography also gave an account of his early education days. Although he found himself slightly too old amongst his peers at that time, he was by destiny, eventually whisked off to study at the prestigious KGVI, now the Aligegeo Provincial Secondary School. From there, Sir Peter was offered a scholarship to study as a teacher trainee at the Ardmore Teacher's Training College in New Zealand after completing secondary school at Wesley College. Sir Peter completed his tertiary education and returned to Solomon Islands to work as a teacher at the now KGVI National Secondary School where he also subsequently met his beautiful wife, Lady Margaret Kenilorea who became Sir Peter's backbone in the life after marriage.

Sir Peter joined the government administration in 1971 and worked alongside the then prominent Solomon Islanders like Sir Baddeley Devesi, the late David Lloyd Maepeza Gina, a former Speaker of this Parliament as well and many more of our earlier leaders. These friendships became very important in his later life in politics.

The colonial setting that Sir Peter found himself in, may have also contributed to his decision to take up politics as a career path for some of his early encounters were described as unconventional. There were times when he stood his ground against his colonial masters and in those days such approaches could have easily earned him the sacking. He got away on many occasions, as I have read.

Important in these interactions, however, was the fact that he started developing a very strong interest in shaping the direction of the country he was taking. In 1972 as stated in his autobiography, which can be found out on page 201, Sir Peter presented a paper at the University of Papua New Guinea which proposed a government structure for Solomon Islands. The paper was later submitted to the government as a proposal for serious consideration and was later followed by countless contributions either through government or other forums.

Sir Peter's political calling, however, really began in June 1976 when he successfully contested the East Are Are seat. Again, reflecting on the politics then, Sir Peter stated in his author biography, and I quote, "For that election I only spent \$30 to hire a motorized canoe to take me home to get my nomination form signed". I am sure we can all agree that the cost of travelling to East Are Are now is not \$30. I see my colleague for East Are Are agreeing with me. The same year Sir Peter became the Chief Minister and later the Prime Minister on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1978, the year we attained independence from England. Sir Peter was again re-elected Prime Minister thereafter until August 31<sup>st</sup> 1981, when the late Solomon Mamaloni took over.

The contributions that Sir Peter made to this country in the various capacities that he held in government were enormous. As a very young Chief Minister, he led the delegation that received the order for our independence from the Queen of England. As Prime Minister on two occasions he guided the development of our country and through government policy in the various portfolios he had held, he also influenced government activities that touched the lives of all Solomon Islanders. His leadership on the floor of parliament, in cabinet and in the international scene puts him amongst some of the most notable leaders of our time.

Outside of parliament, Sir Peter did not venture far, for he took up the post of Ombudsman and so had the chance to watch government activities from a different angle. As you would recall in the darkest hours of our history, Sir Peter was again called on to serve as co-chairman of the Peace Monitoring Council. It was a calling that was necessary at that time for the very fabrics of our society, supporting maintenance of law and order, which was breaking down fast. Sir Peter's presence and involvement was a real blessing. In spite of the deep wounds and animosity that existed, the warring parties came together and decided to lay down arms and negotiate a peace settlement.

Outside of politics, Sir Peter also made a lot of impacts. If he attends a church service in any village, he automatically qualifies as a preacher for that service. If he attends a function he is called on to say a few words, and when he is just an invited guest, his name is always mentioned first. At one wedding, I

have been informed the church pastor, in fact, started the wedding service by addressing Sir Peter instead of the groom's and the bride's parents. His speeches are music to the ears and his messages either from the pulpit or from any of the various capacities he had once held were always inspiring and uplifting. Sir Peter is an icon in our communities.

Just as we thought Sir Peter was going for good after his role in the Peace Monitoring Council, again as you know, he was again called to serve in this honorable house. Sir Peter has served for two terms as the Speaker of National Parliament. As the Speaker of the National Parliament, we can all remember the many times he guided us through meetings. When debates are so heated up and there does not seem to be a way out, Sir Peter would, in his own way, diffuse the tension and provide a way out for things to fall back into place.

His term as Speaker has certainly brought the important role of the Speaker and the Parliament to the forefront. Sir Peter also ensures that the Parliament as the legislature maintains its independence from the executive and judicial arms of the government. Amidst strong pressure from both sides of the House at times, Sir Peter always rise above is all and ensures that the balance is maintained in governance. Sir Peter makes certain always that the opposition group is represented in parliament and in standing committees. On the floor of parliament, he jealously guides the floor of debates and makes sure that opposition has a fair go in their role of checking on the work of the government.

The improvements that we see in this honorable house are also part of the effort that our guest has put in during his time. The improvements are demonstration of his commitments and conviction to ensuring that democracy in our country is alive and breathing. Through this honorable house, Sir Peter will be leaving behind a legacy that will remind us for many more years to come.

The standards that Sir Peter has set throughout his life stand tall as a beacon, constantly reminding us as leaders of the great responsibilities that come with being elected as members of parliament. The mandate given to us by our people demands that we adhere to the principle of good governance, we respect the rule of law, and most of all, that we put God first in all we do. If there is a lesson in Sir Peter's contributions, it would have to come from his style of leadership, and I have no doubt that God is the head of all characteristics that we would find buttressing that style of leadership. I am here talking about the life dedicated serving a nation through God. Sir Peter is truly a man of this time.

Achievements acquired by Sir Peter including his knighthood and various other honors, his qualifications, recently his honorary doctoral award from Queensland University, are but a few of appreciations that our communities and country have honored him with. Sir Peter, while we share your joy in appreciating these accolades as marks of your achievements, we also know in

our hearts that the true appreciation measuring your contributions will one day be bestowed on you for us by the holy one, and for that we are even more grateful.

As we farewell Sir Peter, I would like to assure him that our prayers as leaders will always go with him. We know Sir Peter that you will be taking time out now to be with your children and your grandchildren. Be rest assured however that we the leaders of today and those of tomorrow will continue to serve our people through the democratic system that you have helped nurture on our shores.

Sir Peter, in conclusion, may I just say that although this country cannot thank you enough and that many, if not all Solomon Islands owe it to you. You have indelibly left a mark in the establishment growth of a nation on earth called Solomon Islands. We say farewell to you and take comfort in the fact that you did it all for God and the nation we all know you love very, very much. God bless Sir Peter Kenilorea and God bless Solomon Islands. Thank you.

**Hon. MAELANGA:** I want to thank the Honorable Prime Minister for moving this motion of appreciation to the Rt. Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea.

I am so privilege indeed to be given the chance to formally thank the outgoing Speaker, Sir Peter Kenilorea for his genuine support to the past government during his two terms in Parliament as Speaker.

As the founding father of this nation, you have created history that will linger on as the first Prime Minister of this nation, who leads this country to gain independence in 1978. In addition, you have served the country as Prime Minister for three terms and have done significant development plans for the nation. Therefore, this country will be like your child to you because you lead us to adopt the Westminster system as well as being able to stand on our own during the most crucial times until now.

The legacy you have left in the country as a leader in politics and a civil servant is a great achievement that comes from your personal attitude towards work commitment. It is the value that you have towards work commitment. It is the value that you have towards the responsibilities bestowed upon you during your service to the government as an administrator and later a politician, as the driving force towards your achievements both nationally and internationally.

I would like to thank you also for the leadership skills and knowledge that you have shown to us both the politicians and the citizens of this country during your time as a civil servant, a prime minister and a speaker. Leadership to me is acquired through commitment in all aspects of life, as spiritually and physically which is really challenging. However, you have been so fair in your decision making during debates and passing of bills in parliament. The lack of nepotism

that exists within you has enabled both the Government and Opposition parties to scrutinize whatever policies, legislations and amendments of the national constitution logically with less constraint and success. It is through the significant and neutral decisions that you have made as the Speaker in Parliament that has impact on government leaders to maintain your position despite of the change in government in 2006 until now.

I would like to stress your achievements when rendering that service to this nation as a civil servant, prime minister and lately the Speaker for the Solomon Islands National Parliament. Through your leadership skills, you managed to establish the biggest fishing company that contributes a lot to the national economy of this country, the Solomon Taiyo joint venture company which is now known as the Soltai Company, in 1971 as the Assistant Secretary Finance and Secretary to the negotiation team. Not only that, you have successfully established the company and the joint venture agreement was well known as the best in the region. Such achievements are of a true leader with great commitment.

There are many great activities that you have involved in when you served the government that leads towards your first election victory to the National Legislative Assembly in 1976 as an unopposed candidate. You not only served in the public sector, but you have also worked in the private sector with great attainment of their respective organizational goals and targets. Your religious commitment has also added great value to your involvement in politics and administration. Such leadership skill is vital for the betterment of our nation as we are still in the developing stage.

Furthermore, since the time you have led the country in gaining its independence, you have rendered commitment to work for the government as a politician and as a leader in one way or the other. You have shown great leadership skills that the entire current politicians and the people of the nation should abide by in order to create changes in the country. You are also dedicated to the Parliament that despite of lengthy sittings in the Chamber, you have the patience to maintain order.

I would like to also thank you for the great assistance you have rendered for us all because you are always available to help us whenever we seek assistance. Furthermore, I would like to thank you for your assistance in recommending me and Honourable Peter Shanel to attend the Members of Parliament Course in Canberra last year 2009. This really helped me as a newly elected Member to Parliament to become familiar with parliamentary requirements and expectations. You have also been vocal in collaborating with the Parliamentary Committees in establishing members of the Parliament building that will enabled each Members to have an office of their own upon

completion of the building. Not only that, but you are really committed to upgrading the standard of parliamentary procedures during your term as Speaker. For instance, the UNDP Strengthening Project initiation has set our standard to become outstanding compared to other Pacific countries. Most of all, as the Chairman of the National Electoral Commission you have been placed in a position that your decisions are guided by the National Constitution with regards to elections, and you have managed to uphold the decisions that resulted in the successful election that is free from other disturbance. These tasks are not so easy, but you have taken on with much appreciation and fairness. However, the list of your achievements still goes on because you are the most senior and prominent leader of this country. You deserve to be thanked by the good citizens of this nation for your commitment in serving as the founding leader of the country.

Lastly but not the least, on behalf of my people of East Malaita constituency, I would like to take this time to thank you for all the good things that you have done for our nation during your time as a civil servant, a Prime Minister and the Speaker for the National Parliament. Your fairness in decision making has greatly impact on national matters that will in return affect the public positively and negatively.

Once again, I would like to thank you for the time and commitment you have tirelessly rendered to the country as a leader that we will continue to reflect on as guiding principles that were set as precedence for us and for future leaders of this nation, Solomon Islands. I would like to wish you well in your future endeavors as you journey on in life. May God continue to bless you Rt. Sir Hon Peter Kenilorea. Thank you.

**Mr WALE:** I stand also to add my voice and that of my good people to the chorus of appreciation to the Rt. Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea.

It is important both to the nation and especially to us Members of Parliament that we appreciate the contributions made by those who have gone before us in building our beloved nation. It is too easy to simply take for granted the contributions of our forebears in the great enterprise of nation building and to fail to appreciate their life and work and thereby miss the lessons that could benefit us, as we in turn take our place in leading this beautiful country.

Many nations and societies take pride in the exploits and the efforts of their founding leaders, and it is only right that this is so. We, in Solomon Islands, must also take much pride in what our fathers before us were able to achieve with the limited knowledge perhaps, but certainly limited resources. Today, we look at our self as we ponder the many challenges that face us and there are times when we wonder where to begin in addressing these challenges. How

much more must our founding fathers have wondered about how they were going to build a modern Solomon Islands out of its diversity that where we are today is testament to their wisdom and leadership through those early days in this great enterprise, an enterprise that we today have unreservedly committed ourselves to, I hope, with great passion.

Mr Speaker, I am sure that you have read your predecessor's autobiography. It certainly is very interesting reading both from a national historical point of view, but also in terms of how candid he is about his own private life. I am not sure that any of us would venture as to be candid as he is about our lives, but such is the measure of this great man.

Among his many strengths is the integrity of your predecessor's character. His full commitment to his Christian faith is abundantly clear in all that he is and does. This is part of the legacy that he has bequeathed to us. What your predecessor has demonstrated, Mr Speaker, is that it is possible for one to maintain one's Christian faith and integrity in public life, especially in politics. He has shown that politics need not be dirty. He did not practice the deceit and corruption that politics has become known for and so many accusations have been made over a recent number of years and still he succeeded; he was Prime Minister three times. Further, his commitment to family and children is remarkable in a man who has been under immense pressure for his time for most of his life. The way that he was able to prioritise his family and hold his leadership responsibilities in proper balance is something we would all do well to emulate.

Mr Speaker, your predecessor was also very committed to constitutional parliament democracy. He was not only the founding father as the first Prime Minister of these beautiful beloved islands, but even in his private capacity he was vigilant in watching out for breaches of the constitution, especially by those in power or those in the ascendancy. He so valued constitutional government that he took it upon himself personally to see court redress when constitutional law is at stake. This is a mark of his deep love for Solomon Islands.

Of course, Mr Speaker, your predecessor also played a positive, significant and critical role in our peace process as has been alluded to by those who have spoken before me. He was untiring in his efforts at finding lasting peace for our nation. In that, he was committed to ensuring that such a peace did not undermine the constitution. There were many others who contributed much in our peace process, however, he may have been among a very few who sought to ensure that our constitution was not compromised in our search for lasting peace.

Among the leaders of our founding generation, I think history will judge the Rt Hon. Sir, Peter Kenilorea as a truly great leader. He is a great leader

because he is first a great man; a man of integrity in his personal life, a man with the right perspective on matters of family and private life as against the demands of leadership and public life. He is a great leader because he is a man who sought to do right and to do good. This is the legacy he bequeaths to the present and the future generation of leaders.

If we were to sum up Sir Peter's life, I would venture to say that he lived his life to do right and to do good as guided by his faith and by his commitment to the national constitution. It was not in him to seek out loopholes in the constitution or where the law is silent to advance his personal perhaps and/or political agenda however good those maybe.

Mr. Speaker, your predecessor has also left you as speaker a challenge to discharge your duty impartially, guided by the overall desire to ensure a strong and impartial or independent parliamentary democracy. It is eight years in your chair, he was never swayed by prime ministers nor the governments of the day to rule in their favor. Even in the face of threats of removal, he always ruled in favour of parliament and upheld the law as he knew best. He upheld the integrity of the people's parliament.

Sir Peter was so committed to the idea of a strong independent united Solomon Islands that he saw the only way to achieving that is to ensure a strong robust parliament. In his life and work he has left us many examples of commitment to values and principles determining decisions and actions. We often talk about good governance and transparency and so forth and it is good that we talk about it. In your predecessor, Sir, we have someone who did his utmost best to live those principles and to insist on it in government.

This country has been blessed with such leadership at its birth. In this, he has left us all, those in the public service, in the private sector and certainly in leadership, a fine example to follow.

It is sad that the politics of Sir Peter is not so popular today. Not many would like to emulate the politics or values and principles. Many prefer to play the politics of deceit. It is sad that perhaps the politics of money is much more overwhelming these days than the politics, which is a politics that was very alien and very foreign to the politics of Sir Peter.

We would do well to ponder this simple man's life in leadership and pray for strength, in spite of ourselves to emulate his politics, if not his many other good qualities. The politics of a national vision, not a regional one, the politics of a united Solomon Islands not a dismembered one, the politics of seeking to do right, not that to advance vested interests. The politics to do good, not that to advance one's own agenda. The politics of always seeking the greater good, not that of one upmanship.

As Sir Peter goes into retirement, I pray him and his lovely wife a fruitful retirement if that is possible; one as gifted and blessed as he is will never totally retire, of course. He will always be called upon to do various things, and we pray that many more will rise from within this country with the faith, conviction, vision and commitment of Sir Peter Kenilorea to lead this beloved nation into the future.

It would be fitting as a lasting tribute to establish, perhaps a leadership development institute or program that is specifically aimed at nurturing leadership in his name for future generations. Leadership is so important that we must be deliberate in finding talent for it and nurturing it over the long term, and it is only fitting that if the Prime Minister and his government were to consider it that it would be named in his honour. With these few remarks I support the motion.

**Mr. GUKUNA:** I would like to first of all thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion. This is a motion that really needs to come in. I thought it was going to come in the first meeting but since it has come now and so I want to thank him for moving it.

All the good things about our outgoing Speaker, the Rt Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea have been said and there is no need for me to repeat them. What I can say and I would like to stand here to express is my appreciation on behalf of the people I represent in this House for what he has done for this country. As a representative of a minority group in this country, we saw Sir Peter as someone who strives to promote a country that is fair and just for all, and that alone is big enough for my people to appreciate his service to this country.

Some of us who have had the privilege of serving this country overseas and listen in to the periods between 2000 and 2004, Sir Peter's voice was one of the voices that we took for face value when we heard him speak in this country. A lot of other voices we also heard but we had a lot of doubts and we questioned them. But when Sir Peter comes one and says something, we always thought that that is the best representation of the true position of the people of this country.

I am a colleague in the last house, the last Parliament who was trying to give my sympathy to him because his old man passed away, but when I gave my sympathy to him he turned around and said, "no worries my brother, but maybe God wants me; He wants my people to see my leadership qualities". We can stand here and express whatever words we want to say, we can express our appreciation of what Sir Peter has done for this country, but I think what Sir Peter wants us to do is to start behaving and act as he did. That is the most practical way of appreciating what Sir Peter has done for this country.

Of course, Sir Peter will go out from public life in terms of this Parliament, but one of the things I really appreciate about him over the last two, three years, are his writings in the newspapers, which always makes reading interesting, and I encourage him to keep writing. There are issues that are left unresolved and Sir Peter will be watching, and so it will be really nice to continue reading his views on issues, as it is part of us trying to educate ourselves too. If he has the time, I hope it is not very demanding from some of us who have been following his writings in the newspapers if he can continue to contribute to issues that are left outstanding.

As I said, the hallmark of Sir Peter's contribution to this country was trying to unite this country and trying to make things fair. I also said and I want to reiterate this point because I think it is very important that we continue to strive to create fairness in this country as Sir Peter would have wanted us and wanted this country to become. If in the last house we, especially some of us who normally make a lot of noise have said something in this House that maybe could have caused him to be displeased with us, I want to ask him to forgive us. But I want to say too that we were very happy he allowed this House to make some noise because if we all come sitting quietly in here we would all fall asleep. I would like to thank him, I think he was very good in allowing us to make exchanges on the floor of Parliament. Honorable Speaker you have now taken on the task of looking after us so bear with us if we make a bit of noise so as to wake us up.

Apart from that, the second part of this motion says that you are to convey to the outgoing Speaker, Sir Peter our appreciation. And so I would like you to express the appreciation of the people of Rennell/Bellona which I represent in this House to Sir Peter that we appreciate the contributions, the massive contributions he has made towards the progress of this country, especially the need to creating a fair country and a united country where the minority groupings of this country will not be left out but feel part of the mainstream development of this country.

Again, on behalf of the people of Rennell/Bellona, I would like to say thank you and bid good retirement for Sir Peter. With those comments I would like to support this motion.

**Hon. LUSIBAEA:** I on behalf of my good people of North Malaita take this opportunity to thank the former Speaker of Parliament for his service to our nation. Sir Peter's commitment, love, dedication and service to our nation is one that will stand tall in the history of our nation.

As one of the founding fathers of our nation, his light burns bright to this day, and my people and I wish to humbly honour the humble service of this

great man. He has stood along with our leaders through the turmoil years of this nation and from that my people are truly grateful.

My people of North Malaita and my family wish to extend our congratulations for the service of a man that stands with integrity and character. It is my prayer as well that we the leaders of this nation will make the decision to walk the path you have traveled in serving our nation. We wish you great years ahead for you and your family. God bless Sir Peter Kenilorea and God bless Solomon Islands. Thank you.

**Mr. HANARIA:** I also would like to contribute to this motion of appreciation. But before I go any further, in the Are Are context it will be unfair for me as his cousin and brother to praise Sir Peter's achievement more than is required so I will be brief in my contribution.

I would like to thank Sir Peter Kenilorea for his leadership, not only as the former Speaker of the National Parliament but as a leader that has Solomon Islands at heart. Sir Peter has devoted a bigger part of his life in leading Solomon Islands as a nation and through independence. Sir Peter has transplanted a reputation of God fearing and transparent leadership.

In the book of Timothy 3:1, a leader is a noble task, and it comes from your heart, and you must be a man worth of respect and sincere. I found that in the life of Sir Peter Kenilorea. I believe Sir Peter has created a leadership style that needs to be framed for the young generation to see.

Whilst we appreciate Sir Peter's contribution to nation building, I would like to thank him as my brother, teacher and mentor. On this special note, I would like to thank Sir Peter Kenilorea and Lady Margaret Kenilorea who have helped me achieve my long term goal in life to be a member of parliament. My real father could not afford my educational costs in the 1970's, but Sir Peter who is a cousin brother carried on this extra burden. He took care of my education, my school fees, as a student of KGVI Secondary School from 1973 to 1977. I was part of his family, and being part of his family I have learnt a lot from his experiences and his advices to me in growing up in life and also a lot about politics. From that, I have aspired to be a politician in the future. Here I am standing today talking to you as a politician.

Sir Peter I wish to thank you for the impact you have on my life. Now, I am taking a greater responsibility as a Member of Parliament for East Are Are constituency, a seat which you have held three consecutive times and now taken over by someone you have advised and trained. I will try my best to lead our people of East Are Are constituency as you would expect of me, and if I need help I will always come and seek your assistance.

Once again, on behalf of my family and the people of East Are Are constituency, we wish you and your family God's blessings. Thank you very much and I resume my seat.

**Mr TOZAKA:** Thank you for permitting me this opportune time to contribute to the motion moved by the honorable Prime Minister and amended by the Member for East Choiseul to thank the Rt. Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea, KBE, PC, the Speaker for his service to the National Parliament of Solomon Islands.

At the outset, I feel this motion should have been appropriately dealt with at the point in time, the change of guide, so to speak, took place a fortnight ago. But unfortunately time did not permit us to do so hence this introduction now. Nonetheless we will cause embarrassment, we will cause shame to this honorable house if we fail to go through the tradition of officially thanking and farewelling someone like Sir Peter who has done so much for the nation, especially his long outstanding service to our Parliament. Therefore, I wish to take this opportunity on behalf of my people of North Vella La Vella and myself to convey our profound thanks and appreciation to the outgoing Speaker of National Parliament, the Rt. Honorable Sir Peter Kenilorea KBE, PC.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation for Sir Peter's service for eight (38) years in this honorable House where he has undoubtedly demonstrated loyalty, he has undoubtedly demonstrated devotion, he has undoubtedly demonstrated fairness and determination with very hard work in his work. Probably, the most notable display of Sir Peter's positive attitude can be seen as other honorable colleagues have shared in the way he continues to serve our people of the country, in government, the various governments and non-government organizations both in our country and also overseas.

When Sir Peter ceased as a member of parliament in his early years of political career, Sir Peter did not give up; he did not give up! He did not give up there and then as someone would have thought. Instead he continued to avail himself in taking up various high level public service positions in our country.

Sir Peter, in his 16 years of active eventful political leadership has occupied positions, not only on the other side of the House but also this side of the House. He was a prime minister, he was a deputy prime minister, he was a minister of finance, he was a minister of foreign affairs and, of course, the Speaker of the National Parliament. It speaks volume in terms of qualification, volume of experience for the job which we all share to thank him.

For me personally, I have followed Sir Peter's work in the public service, but not very close, not too close as a working colleague until I was the high commissioner in Canberra and he was the co-chairman of the Ceasefire

Monitoring Council (CMC). The Minister for Fisheries mentioned this that we worked hand-in-glove in signing the Ceasefire Agreement in Townsville in 2000, and subsequently the peace treaty that brought RAMSI here, the 'helpem fren'.

Of course, I know him better, I know Sir Peter well as a good friend when I left that job and I myself stood for election and I became a member of parliament for North Vella. Should there be something I would personally remember of this great man in his retirement from the public service, it must be Sir Peter's reputation for talking straight, straight talk! His book as other colleagues have read written by himself, I am sure other MP's have read it, entitled, "Tell it as it is", which means no more going around and in circles but just say it straight. If it is a no then no and if it is a yes then yes. That has been Sir Peter's characteristic. We all know he is never afraid. He has no fear to speak his mind out defending what he thinks is right and good for his people and the people of this country through the media and in his work.

I totally agree with him to that his knowledge and his understanding of parliamentary procedures and the integrity he attempted to apply impartially and in fairness is Sir Peter's strength. Talking about his book again, he said and he mentioned you that you would agree as a former prime minister yourself that the role of Speaker is not all plain sailing.

Before I resume my seat, may I once again take this opportunity to thank Sir Peter for his long, dedicated and outstanding service to our people and country, and I wish him and his good wife Lady Margaret, his family a happy restful retirement and all the best and continuous providence and blessings.

I also take this opportunity once again to express my sincere congratulation to you, Mr Speaker, on your successful election as our Speaker of National Parliament. I am confident that through your capable leadership, the Parliament will continue to function without loss of thoroughness and sincerity like your predecessor Sir Peter. With these few remarks, I support the motion.

*Sitting suspended at 11.45 am for lunch break*

**Mr SOGAVARE:** Thank you very much and I would like to contribute to the motion moved by the Prime Minister, and I thank him for initiating this motion to allow this Parliament, I guess, as the highest executive decision making body of the land in according the former Speaker of National Parliament, and of course the father of this nation, a fitting farewell he rightfully deserves from the people of this country. I mentioned fitting because it is like this: this House has the honor of according our great leaders the same kind of respect they also deserve in their contributions to this country, unfortunately inside the coffin, when lying down in this Chamber, which is too late. The only people who

received this kind of gesture alive have been foreigners and foreign countries represented by their heads of states or their heads of governments. It is about time that this Parliament accords this honor to living Solomon Islanders who are doing so much for this country.

I have the privilege of getting a copy of this book, the autobiography of this great leader, and I must say that I really admire his humility in recognizing there are other Solomon Islanders who also deserve recognition and from whom the generations of today can learn lessons from their experiences, and this is from his own words in his book. For me, I certainly learn, I saw and I did from the experiences shared by Sir Peter in his book and for those of you who do not have a copy yet, I joined the Leader of Opposition to say you better buy it or find a copy of this book. I can assure you that it is a published work worth adding to our private libraries.

But there is one thing that always concerned me about paying tributes and respect to those that have gone before us, and that is to do with the genuineness of these respects especially in a house, unfortunately I will say it this way; in a house that has never taken anything seriously. And I say this with all due respect to Members of Parliament who took their individual responsibilities, roles very, very seriously. I raise my hat and salute them.

It is always the case that issues that come up for discussion in the House were usually sucked out in formalism that they end up losing their significance. I am saying this because in the case of tributes, it is very, very easy for anyone to say all good things about anyone when that someone is already in the coffin or has resigned or is sacked already, and therefore is unable to respond to what people say about them.

I would like to put it this way and I raise these points because my thinking is like this: the last thing the people of this country would like to see as far as the subject of this motion is concerned is for the Ninth Parliament to speak only from its mouth instead of its heart. We should not suffer from this thing called formalism.

Sir Peter would be the first local statesman that this House is now appropriately according the honor of expressing this gratitude to when he is still alive, and unfortunately he is not present here and we appreciate the reason why he is not here. This is history and fitting because of the unique position Sir Peter is holding in the history of our country. I would like to believe that despite of the reservations I have mentioned earlier on that this House is serious. We are an independent nation now with sovereign rights to conduct ourselves as such because of the decision that this big leader had taken at that time. We can now uphold our cultures and our traditional values as people worthy of respect. We can now decide our own destiny, of course, within the bounds of law and

rationality. We appreciate that independence came with its challenges, of course, but I would like to believe that those challenges are challenges that we agreed upon to face, especially in a country that is so diverse. In other words, challenges are accepted aspects of the responsibility in deciding our own destiny.

It would be true to say that the personal contributions of this great man to the service of our country pre and post independence have played a prominent role in establishing the direction our country is supposed to have taken. And the terms 'supposed to' is intentionally used here to suggest that the reality may not be what was desired because other interests have taken over during the course of our journey.

This Parliament must appreciate therefore that this gesture and what we intended to achieve also extends to enabling the people of this country through their elected members in recognizing the outstanding contribution of one great man to the advancement of democracy and good governance in our country.

The active service of Sir Peter to our beloved country had been focused predominantly in the area of developing democracy and good governance. This is not a mistake and I would like to believe that it is by design because some of the greatest challenges this country has faced in its short and colorful history, have been and continues to be in the area of governance and quality of people who are entrusted to take custody of the government system. The country needs quality and seriousness in leadership during the period leading to independence and the years immediately after independence and it got it in the lineup of great men and women under the leadership of Sir Peter and other prime ministers that came before us.

It is also interesting to note what good and challenging leadership can do to a nation. I was already a public servant in the two terms of the prime ministership of Sir Peter, of course, with very humble beginning. As a matter of fact, there are two people in the Solomon Islands politics that I admired the most. One is Sir Peter whom we are respecting today and the other one is the late Solomon Sunaone Mamaloni. The former member for West Makira and, of course, our former three term prime minister of our country. You see, to some of us, it is very clear to most of us who have associated with these two people, Sir Peter and the late member for West Makira is that the history of politics in Solomon Islands has developed two streams of leadership style and political thinking; the Kenilorea style and the Mamaloni style, very interesting. I do not want to delve much into this, but they shaped the political lives of some of us. The two styles, of course, have their own unique charismas that tend towards driving people to action. We were on fire because we were being challenged by the admiration that we have of these two great leaders when they run the government during their different times.

The question, I guess, that we the leaders of today must come to terms with is whether the legacies left behind by those great leaders are carried forward and reflected in the way in which this country is managed today; the legacy that drives the spirit of wanting to achieve; the legacy that moulds the desire of putting the country first before your own business and political interests. Sometimes I wonder what kind of influences are we having on the public service and the people of this country about leadership. How do they see us? What image are we portraying to the nation about personal integrity in leadership and the positions of responsibility entrusted on us? Are we doers of the word or mere announcers of the word when it comes to the principles of good governance. These are tough questions, and personal ones as far as we, the leaders of today are concerned.

Have we been consistent in carrying forward the dreams and aspirations of our founding fathers? What kind of Solomon Islands is in the mind of this great man 32 years ago? And whether we as a nation have achieved these national dreams through successive governments and leadership of this country? These are challenges to you and I as well as leaders of governments after. These are tough questions, but pertinent. We are concerned with the effectiveness of leadership considering the current poor economic status of the country, and amazingly in an environment blessed with bountiful natural resources with strengths 32 years after.

I just want to quickly run through the picture today, 32 years ago, and I want to repeat what I have told the people of this country during the 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our nation's independence at Lawson Tama, when I have the privilege to be the Prime Minister of our country in 2006. And this is what I said in open quotation, *"In economic development, the statistics are suggesting that we are stagnating"*, and I listed down these, which I will quickly run through, *" acres of arable agriculture land in many parts of the country are still lying idle and yet Solomon Islanders are struggling to cope with the demands of the cash economy, and the country's GDP, income per capita and human development indices are suggesting that the country is ranked amongst the poorest in the world. The country is restricted to recognizing only the players in the formal sector and therefore underutilizing the potentials there are in the rural areas after 28years of nationhood and we are not making any progress in improving our ranking in the world as a least developing country. Twenty eight years down and our dependency on aid donors are growing stronger and stronger, even to the extent of allowing aid donors to take control. After 28 years of political independence, the country is yet to focus its human resources, development programs to address its development needs. The country is grossly deficient where appropriate technical experts to support any aggressive foreign investment strategies and because of this our efforts to attract high quality investments have been very low. Twenty eight years out and we are still not sure*

*whether we are pursuing an export substitution or export oriented trade policy, and in the meantime the country is inundated with foreign manufactured goods that we are capable of producing locally and are still complaining the negative trade balance with our trading partners. Despite the fact that the country is blessed with natural beauties and rich historical sites, un-paralleled to other neighboring countries, we are struggling to develop a credible tourism program. The country is desperate to improve its standing in world development as a responsible corporate citizen to contribute to the global efforts to make the world a better place to live in, and yet we have not been able to sustainably develop our mineral, forestry, fisheries and other natural resources. Twenty eight years out and we are yet to arrive at any sensible land reform program that would address the chronic land problem that continues to hinder the county's decentralization program. Despite of the fact that land disputes are on the rise, we continue to entertain a dispute settlement strategy that continues to alienate Solomon Islanders from each other. Twenty eight years out and we are yet to bridge the huge confidence gap that exists between the small but powerful custodians of important factors of production in the formal sector and the huge informal sector in the rural areas." End of quote.*

The sad truth is that the picture is still the same 32 years out. I am wondering and I want to probe into the mind of this great man that what kind of Solomon Islands does this great leader has in mind for Solomon Islands 32 years out. The above only outlined a fraction of the state of affairs of this country.

I quoted some statements when I had the opportunity of addressing Papua New Guineans during their function at Sea King, and I quoted a statement of one of their academics, and this is very true for Solomon Islands as well. He said this, and I want, instead of putting Papua New Guinea, I will replace it with Solomon Islands because it really addresses the situation in Solomon Islands. I will quote it verbatim but use Solomon Islands instead.

"Solomon Islands now faces another global challenge and this time not economic and political colonialism but scientific and global advancements and the challenge of staying relevant as a nation. The character of the global landscape that Solomon Islands is confronted with today is a world that is driven by technology and information and yet we are still very illiterate and ignorant about such challenges. Worse still, many leaders are still very illiterate in science and technology. Their judgment and decision making on policy and development planning is therefore dictated by their level of scientific and technological illiteracy" End of quote.

What this person is concerned about and even suggesting is leadership quality and standard of leadership in our countries must change and improve with the changing environment in a globalized world. That is what he is talking about. Does that ring some bell? These statements describe Solomon Islanders through and through, 32 years out. They are talking about quality leadership in

every aspect of the term. Interestingly, the very issue we wanted to acknowledge about Sir Peter today, at least the spirit of that argument.

The challenge for this country is to stay relevant in a world that is mad on competition and the fittest survive. I say this because it is like this, why I am raising those issues. This is to do justice to the direction and aspiration that Sir Peter and our other founding fathers have established for this country when they led this country into political independence in 1978.

We have certainly lost our way. It is very clear that Parliament and its capacity to make sound decisions using other countries as yardsticks have probably deteriorated over the years. I served under all the post independence governments, like you, Mr Speaker, of Solomon Islands since I entered the Public Service in 1974. I also have the privilege of leading two governments; 18 months in 2000 with you as my deputy prime minister and almost 20 months in 2006. It is interesting to note that this country has achieved more in the first 10 years of its existence than the 32 years put together. Interesting, very interesting!

Sir Peter and our other pioneer leaders can take credit for that. What may have gone wrong? Have we stayed relevant in a fast changing world? These are heart searching questions that we leaders of today must come to terms with. If the truths were to be known, over the years the responsibility for the custodianship of government system has been taken very lightly is something we are taking merely as objects of politics.

If that is not enough, Parliament unfortunately has become over the years, an institution where conflicting political ideologies, personal aspirations, egos and dubious interests of powerful forces are entertained, and we make use of this foreign decision making process we adopted which functions on creating differences and we contend the opposing views on matters of national interests. At the end of the day, what happens is that Parliament as the people's voice on matters of governance and development achieves very little and at worst, nothing. As a matter of fact, one of the greatest achievements, I guess, of the Solomon Islands Parliament is political instability. Because of this, I believe it is very appropriate that Members of Parliament should pause for a moment and review the road that we have been travelling on over these last 32 years going 33 now. And, of course, we normally did that on independence, but I think we have an excellent opportunity to do that right now. There can be no better places and standard upon which that reflection is to be premised and measured than the outstanding leadership and contribution of Sir Peter and others to the dreams and aspirations of this country when they led us to independence on July 7<sup>th</sup> 1978. Indeed there can be no better place to recognize that contribution than on the floor of the very institution that stands up for democracy and good governance and, of course by members of the executive government and

institution which Sir Peter has had the honor of heading from 7<sup>th</sup> July 1978, an independent country to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1981 and again from 19<sup>th</sup> November 1984 to 1<sup>st</sup> December 1986.

It is also most appropriate that the full membership of this legislature participates in this vote of thanks. I guess for the reason that we are the species of human beings that this great leader has more dealings with during his outstanding years in Solomon Islands politics.

I want to quote a great leader here, Mikhail Gorbachev, a great leader of the former USSR. This is what he said, "Every age gives birth to its own heroes." This is interesting and a statement of fact, and is normally established by records of history and no one can deny this no matter how much you want to argue over it. It is true in every country and Solomon Islands is not an exception. I would like to believe and I am sure the present and future generations of Solomon Islanders would also agree that Sir Peter is one hero of this country.

In noting the concluding comments in his book, the introduction of his autobiography, I want to believe and probably endorse his observations when he says that he was born at the right time to be part of the late colonial and independence generations. But he says 'luck', that is what he says but that is where I want to err on, and with due respect. It is not by 'luck' but it is by 'design'. I said this because if there was a time in the history of our country that we need political decisions that are guided by sound judgments, it has to be the period leading to the country attaining political independence in the years immediately following the 7<sup>th</sup> July 1978. Sir Peter came into the scene and became a very important influencing factor in shaping the history of this country. I believe this happens at the right time and not by luck.

Sir Peter will be remembered for a number of important landmarks, right from the word 'go' in the history of our country. Firstly, for making the decision in accepting Great Britain's offer to allow Solomon Islands to obtain nationhood as early as 1978. Now, this is a pertinent statement because it is like this. Getting independence is not as easy as people would like to think because you are dealing with vested interests. And allow me a little bit to dwell on that area.

There are clearly mixed feelings amongst colleagues of Sir Peter on the prospect of the country attaining political independence on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 1978. I want to delve into that depth of wisdom that is in this man. It is not easy at this time and the only comfort, I guess, that we can recognize here was that the move for independence was in line with a comprehensive decolonization policy of Great Britain. Otherwise, we would have to fight for independence. We did not fight for independence, it was given to us. But even so, it would be too simplistic to take that argument as reflecting the genuine spirit within which independence was granted for a number of known reasons.

And now I want to bring in another great leader of this country during his university days. I am saying this because the opposition leader then, the late honorable Bartholomew Ulu'ufalu during his university days and also there is another document that exposed some issues which really caused concern to our leaders was the 1957 Commissioner Allan's report of the Special Lands Commission expressing some serious sentiments about colonialism. They implied in their report that this is something the country must get out of. The Allan's report commenting on the promulgation of two policies; the vacant and waste land policies of the colonial government observed that the motives for declaration of Solomon Islands as British Protectorate were not entirely humanitarian, and the late Ulufa'alu argued that the declaration was part of a strategy employed under the colonizers' expansionary policy to secure more land to resettle what they considered unwanted population. That is powerful, powerful statement as early as when we go into independence.

I do not want to go at any length discussing this matter but suffice to say, there are serious evidences of forced migration as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The British Child Migration Scheme is a scheme that spanned almost 350 years from 1618 to 1967. Children were considered risk at homes or were called "street Arabs" or victims of broken homes were exported to colonies and mainly to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Zimbabwe and the Caribbean. These children were labeled 'unwanted'. This is fully documented by Bean and Melville in a published work they did in 1989.

Britain had also implemented an inter-colony resettlement scheme, and this involves resettlement of people from colonies that they considered vulnerable to negative effects of overpopulation due to shortage of land. Solomon Islands had a fair share of this policy. I am not sure whether it dawned on leaders at that time that there is a real fear that Solomon Islands could become over populated by reasons of resettlement too soon. The long term effects of such a policy is the distortion that such a scheme could have on effective management and availability of land for development and settlement purposes, which should be dictated by the normal population growth of the country rather than the artificial growth caused by resettlement.

Now, it is anybody's guess what else could have been decided by the colonial government if they still rule the country. I would like to believe that the country was saved from further burden on this matter because of the decision that our leaders and especially Sir Peter for taking our country to independence. The people of this country will be forever grateful for this wisdom of this great man.

Of course, land and how the colonial government deals with this issue is clearly an issue leading to independence. Again, I must admire the wisdom that

guided the way the pre-independent government that Sir Peter led and how he handled this matter.

We note that by the time the Decolonization and Select committee on Lands and Mines was given the task to recommend a possible policy on lands in 1974, almost 3,698 square kilometers of land is alienated at that time, and the Decolonization Committee came out very, very clear: return all alienated land before independence. The nation understands that the leader of the opposition then, the late Bartholomew Ulufa'alu had serious reservations on the country jumping into independence before we clearly define a number of issues, the predominant one being the issues surrounding alienated land and landownership.

Without seeing through the eyes of wisdom, one could be easily tempted to agree with that view because of what the country has had to go through 22 years out during the ethnic crisis. One of the demands of the people of Guadalcanal was the return of alienated land to indigenous original owners.

The decision for accepting independence without addressing the issue of alienated land and ownership of land is a move clearly guided by divine wisdom. It boils down to a choice between complying with the resolution of the Decolonization Select Committee on lands and mines to return all alienated lands and risk the country collapsing on attaining independence or delay it and come up with a mechanism that will address the concerns of the select committee without being seen as rejecting it.

We need to appreciate it that all the developments we rely on to sustain the new country economically at that time were all happening on alienated land. It would have been a disaster if Sir Peter had concurred with the popular view taken by the extreme anti colonialists on that day during his time.

I think we can thank him for his wisdom which our people are convinced is divinely granted to people who surrender and acknowledge the leadership of the Almighty in the affairs of mankind. And allow me to quote in his book where he says this: "Without the eternal sovereign sufficiency of God I could do nothing". That is what he said. "Lest I forget that, I do hereby happily declare that to Him are all glory, power and praise". There cannot be any better proof of the source of success of this great man. It is a conviction worthy of emulation.

Of course, when he takes over government he implemented a series of long term development plans; the 7 year series of plans. The long term development plans have now gone. The only long term plan this country has ever had, as I mentioned, is the series of 7 years development plan adopted by this great man after independence.

It is interesting to note that the issue of the consistency and continuity of good programs occupies a good portion of the debates in this House for many

years. But I think we have ourselves to blame. Again, the country lost its way after the expiry of the last national development plan which covered 1985-1989. The country adopted what is called the program of action approach, to guide our development strategy.

As this House would know by now a major weaknesses of this development strategy is that it is not based on any long term national development plan neither the appreciation of the constraints and weaknesses inherent in the structure of the economy to guide the process of policy formulation. Sir Peter had already figured that out in the direction he wants to set this country, but we fall out of the way.

I simply cannot understand how governments later on, after him had the idea that our country does not need a long term development plan. This is one of the visions of this great man that we are going to farewell.

In terms of development too, you see unlike Fiji where the colonial masters handed over that economy, an economy that is fairly developed in the sense that the country has a fairly developed and well structured institutional arrangements to support the important functions of the country, Solomon Islands virtually started from the scratch.

As a matter of fact, Solomon Islands would make a good study on what genuine effort on development is all about because all we had to start with in terms of economic base, you know what, are copra and logs, the commodities that the country traded on since we were declared a protectorate by the British government some 85 years before we attained our independence. Cocoa was only introduced in the 1950s.

It takes wisdom and careful planning to steer a country with a very narrow economic base. I am sure Sir Peter had it all charted up in a series of long term development plans referred to earlier. It is interesting to note that the country has yet to graduate from dealing in primary products 117 years after we were organized as a protectorate in 1893.

Two lessons came out of these observations. Firstly, the wisdom of long term planning which Sir Peter personally believed in. I believe the country would have graduated from dealing in primary products if we had been guided by long term direction. We failed.

My second in raising this issue is to demonstrate, I guess, what true leadership and determination to achieve is all about in a situation where one is provided with very little or no options to achieve a desired goal. This reminds me of the determination of Sir Peter when he was still a little child, in his book is very interesting reading, he had to swim. A preacher came to his village to preach that night and he did not make an altar call but he asked anyone wanting personal prayers and counsel to go to the ship. And Sir Peter and I think four or

five other boys went and stood on the seashore, the ship anchors out there but it anchored in one of the taboo places, which is a traditional shark sanctuary, and the only way to go there because there is no canoe is to swim across to reach the ship. Yes, they swam across to reach the ship to receive Christian counseling from that Pastor, Pastor Malcolm, the name of the Pastor who came in that ship. That is courage and determination. These are little things but they shape a leader.

My first official encounter with this great man was when I was the Commissioner of Inland Revenue in 1991. Of course, he decided to leave politics to join the Forum Fisheries Agency as its Director. His meeting with me at that time was to establish his tax status because the post enjoyed some diplomatic status and obviously the incumbent of that post is entitled to a number of privileges and immunities; one of them was tax exempt status. I had conversation with this great man in my office and little did I know that I would depend on his wisdom and that of other senior leaders and statesmen 10 years later to chart our country through one of the gloomiest periods in the history and with me on the helm of leadership as its Prime Minister exactly 22 years after Sir Peter leads this country up to independence.

Thank you, Sir, you were also there as Deputy Prime Minister and took the lead to negotiate the peace process. Of course, all of us have interesting backgrounds that contribute to our collective resolve and determination to ensure that peace returns to our beloved country. The experiences were very painful and personal in many cases.

As Sir Peter rightly intimated, made reference to or imply in his book in the introduction to his autobiography, he implied “we will wait until the other leaders and citizens pen their life story to fully understand the driving force behind their overwhelming commitment together with other caring Solomon Islanders who were not afraid to put their lives and reputation on the line to ensure that our country does not fall apart at the risk of being criticized as militants, sympathizers of criminals, power hunger and so forth’.

Sir, you and I can relate to that. Only eternity, I guess, will attest to the faithfulness of these unsung heroes who did not desire earthly rewards and recognition for their unselfish contributions. God who sees in secret Himself will reward them. Likewise there are actions and decisions that people will never understand immediately either deliberately or honestly until they are placed in their true context, very often in the future.

I am again encouraged by the statement by this great leader of USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev who said this: “Time and not the snap judgments of contemporaries, delivers the verdict on an individual service to history”. How true! Contemporaries are the last people to recognize their peers’ worth because

of a number of reasons. Firstly, either the system is blinded and tainted by dirty politics, self-centeredness and corrupt judgments that it influenced people to willfully ignore outstanding performances or it considers an even treating actions and decisions as out of norm. Secondly, it may be the case that people simply cannot place their actions or decisions in context. Probably this is their honest position.

Unfortunately it is often the case that when somebody is already in the coffin that the system hypocritically recognizes their worth in society and their great contribution to the nation. Great leaders in this country have gone to their rest without being accorded the recognition they rightfully deserve. They will remain unknown until the Lord who sees in secret will reward them. That is how sick the system is.

Going back to the outstanding contribution of this great man to peace keeping, I am impressed, again after reading his autobiography. It is not an outcome of chance as I mentioned already that exist during the period of the ethnic tension. One has to be a heathen to miss that point in a Christian country that believes that God rules in the affairs of mankind. He was born exactly on time on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 1943 because the country needs him 35 years later to lead the country to independence and to become an important player in the peace process 22 years later, 57 years later after he was born.

The country, of course, is indebted to him, the co-chairman, Paul Tovua and yourself, Sir, for outstanding leadership in guiding the Ceasefire negotiations between the warring parties in Honiara. Sometimes I feel a bit too small in directing you, the elderly people, when late at night I had to send you, Mr Speaker, to go and have the ceasefire agreement signed by a militant leader who did not sign it, and you took your responsibility seriously. And, of course, as well as the Townsville Peace negotiations in Townsville, which you Sir Peter, Paul Tovua, and the others led our group over there and I was in Honiara monitoring you people when the negotiations was going ahead. The Marau Peace negotiation in Honiara, Sir Peter competently shouldered all those responsibilities at great risk to his life bringing, of course, fatherly spirit into the negotiations. You were there present, Mr Speaker, and so you understand what I am talking about here. Sometimes negotiations broke down because people did not agree on certain points. There was all this fatherly love, 'please, let us come and continue to talk, talk and talk'. The people of this country will be forever grateful.

Yes, peace is here, but the real challenge facing us now is to sustain it. You have done your part, and you are now sitting down on that chair now, Mr Speaker, looking down at us breaking our heads down here. This is where I am

most uncomfortable; we have yet to effectively address the issues that really matter to sustaining peace in this country. I will just leave it there.

I want to bring this contribution to a close. The term of Sir Peter as Speaker of the House since 2001 were marked with great achievements that, I guess, would go down in the history of our parliamentary democracy as probably unparalleled. The challenge is on you now, Mr Speaker, to step into that big shoe. The effectiveness of Parliament as the highest decision making body of the land was brought to greater height.

Parliament as the highest accountability institution of the land is more transparent now than ever before. Our people have direct access to Parliament through the live broadcast and telecast of its proceedings. Parliament has indeed lived up to what it is established to do – an institution of accountability.

The reports of Parliament as required under the terms of reference of the various Standing Committees are of the highest quality. Parliament is fully and professionally advised on matters that needed the advice of the Committees before they come to Parliament for deliberations.

Members of this House must also thank Sir Peter for pushing the new extensions that will provide for our new offices, all in the interest of making parliament effective. We also acknowledge the improved communication, internet facilities, library facilities and Services which will help Members to research issues that come before Parliament for deliberation.

Members of Parliament, we do not have any excuse whatsoever to be ignorant of issues that require the attention of Parliament. Sir Peter has made a tremendous improvement to Parliament and its functions. At least he can retire with the comfort that Parliament is better placed to be an effective institution of accountability in the land and better placed to take up where he left us in the quest to seek better solutions to address socioeconomic problems that continue to haunt this country.

In closing, I want to revisit the point that I touched on briefly earlier on. I believe that this recognition, this tribute must not be something we just utter from our mouths, but it must come from our hearts. I believe this Parliament has the duty to appropriately recognize the services of former prime ministers and speakers. I am not saying this because I am a former prime minister; far from it. We are talking about recognizing that office. What I am saying is it would be hypocritical of this Parliament to pay lip service only to the outstanding performance of this great man through a government sponsored motion, for us to just come and be in hot air here. We must mean what we say otherwise we would become victims of formalism that I have been talking about on matters that Parliament should put human touch to its outcomes.

It defies all common sense and morality for this country through its elected members to simply forge the tremendous contribution of this great man to what we are as a nation today. I must thank Queen Elizabeth and the President of Taiwan for recognizing the contribution of this great man to our country, on behalf, of course, of their realms, their country, their people but they are not Solomon Islanders. They are not, they are foreigners. It is foreigners that recognize them, not us.

What I am referring to here is the lousy retirement benefits that the former and first Prime Minister of our country and an outstanding Speaker of this Parliament is entitled to under the current package. There is basically nothing. It is nothing short of insult to a leader that the people of this country held in high regard.

I therefore call on the chairman of the House Committee to immediately reconsider the retirement of former Prime Ministers and resubmit the same to the Parliamentary Entitlement Commission for consideration and approval if we are serious to pass the motion today and we will translate this to him. There is also a need to improve the Speaker's retirement benefit. That one too is lousy. Head of the legislature, head of the executive, we did not recognize them. We took the brave move in 2006 by recognizing former Governor Generals and now they are sitting down easy. They deserve that.

Parliament has the duty to accord this great man the fitting farewell he rightfully deserves.

I want to say this to him, probably he is listening out in the radio that he has lived a full and outstanding life. Sir Peter has lived a full and outstanding life that has been a blessing to many, many Solomon Islanders including this one and the region.

A career in public service both domestic and regional and Solomon Islands politics that spanned a period of 39 years to date, 40 years. That is an achievement that Sir Peter has all the reasons to be proud of and for us to recognize appropriately.

In his own words he said this: "I have lived an exceptional life of service to our country and the region." I want to fully endorse that statement he made. He recognized that outstanding career as something that comes, a divinely ordained wisdom given by God to him. Throughout his book that man continues to attribute all the glory and praise to God who gives wisdom. I wish him and of course, Lady Margaret the best of health and may they continue to bless the lives of people that they come into contact with.

Sir Peter, of course, will continue to be my hero and also mentor. He will go down in the history of this country as a fitting model of what true Christian leadership in politics is all about. I beg to support.

**Mr SOFU:** Thank you for giving me this time to talk. First of all, I would like for thank you for recognizing me to participate in this very important motion moved by the Honorable Prime Minister. As this is the first sitting of the Ninth Parliament, I again wish to congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your election as Speaker of the National Parliament. I believe that you are our referee, the referee of 50 Members of Parliament, and I know with your experience you are able to do it.

I wish to also thank the Honorable Prime Minister for seeing it fit in moving this motion to allow us, Members of Parliament express our appreciation to this great man. I think everything about this great man, my colleagues, Ministers of the Crown and others side have already expressed, and so I too as the representative of the people of East Kwaio Constituency, who are not here, but I am here to register our vote of thanks for the good work Sir Peter has done to this nation, especially during his time in office as Speaker of the National Parliament from year 2001 and 2010 when he left us.

It is customary that anyone doing a good thing for us is not forgotten, we ought to thank him for what he has done for us. And in this case, Sir Peter has done it and he deserves our appreciation. And so I also wish to join my colleague Members of Parliament who have already contributed to this very important motion, and I am going to be brief.

I can remember when we won the elections and we went to service at the SSEC church, Sir Peter gave a short statement but a very challenging one. He said: "Members our time is really hard not like today. I was taken by surprise when I was chosen as the Prime Minister. But the same people who are behind me, I later have difficulty with them, but it needs understanding, dedication and commitment. During our time too, remunerations were too small".

I totally agree with the statement echoed by the Member of Parliament for East Choiseul. Because of the nation, Sir Peter continues to lead during those difficult times. It was not easy, but he put his country first. This is a legacy for us the young people, especially someone like me who is not really experienced, and is now talking today, whom he has put for me to emulate. And I was fortunate, since I came in 2006, Sir Peter was the Speaker and I learn a lot from him. I would like to thank him, and like I have said already, all the good deeds about this great man have been said by my colleague Members of Parliament on both sides of the House, but I would like to register the voice of East Kwaio on this very important motion.

Sir Peter told those of us who were there at that time at the SSEC Church area that national duty is very important. I am really happy to hear this kind of statement from our father and our leader. It encourages me a lot when he said it

is not going to be easy because we have just started but we must put our nation first. Every good thing he has done for this nation, especially during the course of time the country went through hardship, you were there Sir Peter. You were there and you gave your hand. You were always on standby and readily available to step in, and this will make us not to forget us. You have left behind things that we, the young leaders today must follow. I know it is not easy. You are a father to this nation, and you deserve to be called the father of this nation.

Some of the debates ensuing from 2006 and onwards on this floor were really heated up debates, and once I remember our Prime Minister at that time, the Member of Parliament for East Choiseul once asked him to go out from the seat there. It was really hot at that time. Do you know what he did; he just sat down there, looked at the Prime Minister at that time and smiled. He was smiling when there was very heated debate coming from both sides of the House. I learned a lot from that, it was a very good experience. Sir Peter just smiled and laughed. I was sitting right behind the Prime Minister at that time, and the Prime Minister also laughed. You see what a great man, a man of understanding and a man of wisdom. Thank you Sir Peter for all the good work you have offered to this nation. I believe you have left the post of the Speaker of the National Parliament, but I understand that a person like you, you are there. You are ready and always available for any national duty called upon by the government.

Our other national leaders like Sir Peter have already died who are the architects of our constitution. Only a few of them are still alive and one of them is Sir Peter. I agree with the Member of Parliament for East Choiseul that we need to thank them when they are still alive because when a person is laid in here before he is thanked means nothing because he cannot hear it.

I thank the Prime Minister very much for seeing it fit in moving this motion so that it gives us opportunity to express our words of appreciation. In case, I take up other people's time to talk I want to conclude. Finally on behalf of my wife, my children and my constituents of East Kwaio, we want to wish Sir Peter, his good wife Lady Margaret, the children and grandchildren God's protection and many blessings in whatever they do. Once again thank you and I support the motion.

**Hon. MEWA:** I wish to thank you, Sir for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this very important motion. I intend to be brief in my contribution to this motion. Like the previous speakers, I too would like to make a few remarks on this important motion, but before I do so, allow me to thank my good people of Temotu Nende Constituency for their confidence me in electing me as their representative to this house for these four years at this Ninth Parliament. I

just want to assure my good people that as their representative in Parliament, I want to say to all of you citizens of Temotu Nende Constituency that the election is over and as your duly elected representative, I ask all of you whether for me or for other candidates in the recent elections, let us put our differences aside and work together to address the many challenges facing the constituency and the country as a whole.

I also wish to congratulate you, Mr Speaker, on your election to the post of Speaker of this Honorable House. I did not have the opportunity to congratulate you on your election, so I think it is fitting to do so on this occasion when I have this opportunity on the floor of Parliament. Your victory is not by any chance and accident. As a former Prime Minister and a long serving Member of Parliament, you have the necessary experience to take up the post and to guide the deliberations in this Honorable chambers and the business of this Honorable House in the next four years. Congratulations Mr. Speaker!

I also extend my warm congratulations to the Member for West Honiara on his election as the Deputy Speaker of the Honorable House. I have all the confidence that he will ably support you and deputizing you in the discharge of the duties of this high office. Finally, I too wish to congratulate the good Prime Minister on this floor of Parliament on his recent election victory. I wish him God's blessing as he leads to confront the many challenges facing our nation today and the next four years.

Turning back to the motion before this House, allow me to salute the outgoing Speaker Sir, Peter Kenilorea for dedicating most of his life to the services of our nation. Sir Peter was the leading figure in leading our country to attaining our political independence some 32 years ago. He has since continued to grace our political, regional, public office and the parliamentary scenes after independence.

Sir Peter not only served this Parliament but has served in many areas of public life in Solomon Islands and the region. He has been one of the most important faces of our nation since independence. This Parliament and our nation must be grateful to Sir Peter and our other leaders for the important role they played in leading our country to achieve political independence on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1978. Sir Peter has played a leading role in mapping our country towards achieving political independence. Sir Peter led the delegation to London which endorsed the constitutional framework that led to our independence. Our current constitution came from that London meeting. It is therefore fitting that Sir Peter is often described as the father of our nation, Solomon Islands. He has led this country to attain our political independence and in so doing became our first Prime Minister. Therefore, he served our country either as Prime Minister or as a minister in various capacities. After leaving politics he became a servant

to our pacific region by becoming the director of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency. Later he took up the post of Ombudsman, taking up a vital role in one of the integrity institutions of our government system. As Speaker in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Parliament he has taken on a very important role in ensuring this Honorable House performs the important role it is mandated by our constitution to perform. During his time and with the support of donor partners, important developments have taken place to enable the Parliament office to support Honorable Members become more effective in carrying out their parliamentary duties.

Sir Peter himself has highlighted what has taken place to support Parliament as an institution in carrying out his duties in his farewell speech to this chamber on the occasion of the election of yourself, Mr Speaker. I wish not to repeat what he has said, however, I wish to acknowledge the many contributions he has made to seeing that systems and processes in Parliament are improved to enable Members of Parliament carry out their parliamentary duties more effectively. I acknowledge and thank him for leading and ensuring those changes take place in our Parliament.

As the Speaker, Sir Peter was automatically chairman of the Electoral Commission for the past eight years, a position which you have now taken over by virtue of your position as Speaker. During those years, Sir Peter has presided over the conduct of two general elections, the first one in 2006 and the second in 2010. Both national elections have been held successfully. As Chairman he has been instrumental to ensure our country holds free, fair and credible elections. While his Commission have strived to continue with reforms to our electoral roles to ensure we achieve the best outcome electing our representatives to Parliament. He has been instrumental in recommending changes to the National Parliament Electoral Provision laws, which if passed by the Parliament would have assisted in dealing with some of those outstanding issues which still persist in the recent National General Election. Mr Speaker, with yourself at the helm of the Election Commission, I have all the confidence that your Commission will continue the good work that Sir Peter has undertaken during his time as Chairman of the Electoral Commission.

Sir Peter has also played a very important role in trying to bring peace to our country during the social upheaval period that we often refer to as the ethnic tension period, and indeed in bringing back peace to our country. He has taken on the role of co chair of the Peace Monitoring Council. He was involved in the various meetings to bring the warring parties to the negotiation table. I salute him for playing such a vital and important role. Indeed he is one which our country needed at its time of need.

I may not be personally acquainted with Sir Peter. As a new Member of this Honorable House my only encounter with Sir Peter in this Honorable House was when he presided over the election of yourself as Speaker. Whilst that is so, as a public figure, I and the many people throughout the country know what Sir Peter did as well as when he was Speaker from the various meetings of the Parliament which he chaired and the various interventions he undertook to clarify issues concerning Parliament and his office in the Chamber and through the media. I can tell from where I was outside this House then that he has been an impartial Speaker of this Honorable House during his term as Speaker from media reports on paper, radio and television. I have observed that he has tried his utmost best to ensure Members are given the opportunity to contribute to debates and speak on issues affecting their people, constituencies and the nation as a whole.

As Speaker, he ensures that the conduct of the proceedings of meetings in this Chamber is done to ensure matters and issues are debated vigorously in a decent and appropriate matter. He has also tried to ensure proceedings in this Honorable House is done in an effective and efficient manner by ensuring he makes ruling on matters raised by Members of Parliament during debates and other proceedings of Parliament.

While I do not have a first experience of Sir Peter's role as Speaker, I can say that my observation and what I have heard and read about him from outside Parliament is that he has done very well indeed. Other colleagues who were in their second and third terms will be in a better position to recount what had transpired in this Chamber when Sir Peter was the Speaker.

Finally, let me on behalf of my people of Temotu Nende constituency congratulate Sir Peter Kenilorea for his outstanding and dedicated service, not only to this Parliament in the last eight years, but to the country Solomon Islands in the last 36 years or so. I wish him well, his wife and family God's blessing. While he maybe out of the limelight, I know we can still count on Sir Peter if and when the country needs him. With those few remarks, I support the motion.

**Hon TAREMAE:** Thank you for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this important motion because I too was elected to this Honorable House by the people of Central Makira Constituency. I rise to join Honorable Members of this House to contribute to this motion of appreciation. I thank the Honorable Prime Minister for this motion.

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September, Sir Peter made his farewell remarks after officiating at the opening of the Ninth Parliament Session and your election as the successor. Until his retirement, Sir Peter has had a colorful political and

public service carrier that spanned more than three decades. His political career began in 1974 before independence and ended a few weeks ago.

Sir Peter is a man who has given his working life to serving this country. In his honor this motion is most fitting and deserving of a great leader, a pioneer and the founding father of this nation. This motion gives the opportunity for Members of Parliament to respectfully express their appreciation and those on behalf of their constituents of the long, dedicated and excellent service to the National Parliament of Solomon Islands by Sir Peter Kenilorea.

With respect, I join Honorable Members to express my profound gratitude and on behalf of my people of Central Makira constituency to Sir Peter for serving the National Parliament of the Solomon Islands faithfully and tirelessly for two terms from 2001 to September 2010. With honor, although I did not have the privilege of being a parliamentarian during Sir Peter's time as Speaker, I have always admired Sir Peter as a national and God fearing leader who carried out his duties with dignity, credibility and honor.

I also support sentiments and salutations expressed by Honorable Members who are honored to serve as Members of the Seventh and Eight Parliament under Sir Peter's able leadership as Speaker. They have spoken well of him as a man of high standing and integrity and as a man of great leadership qualities. In addition, many have also spoken well of Sir Peter's contribution towards the growth and strengthening of the capacity of Parliament and running of the parliamentary work during his two terms as Speaker. In his farewell remarks, Sir Peter spoke of difficulties since 2001. However, under his leadership Parliament was able to assist in bringing back normalcy in facilitating the necessary legislation to support RAMSI intervention. This also marks some of the major contributions that have reunited this nation.

Sir Peter's retirement from public life marks the end of an era of distinct type of quality leadership that many of us today and also Solomon Islands citizens for that matter need to emulate. These leadership qualities are found in the person of Sir Peter. Sir Peter is truly the founding father of this nation. In his farewell remarks he referred to his term for the last eight years as Speaker of National Parliament. That was just part of Sir Peter's legacy. Mr Speaker, I thank you for Honoring Sir Peter's invaluable contribution to our beloved country for taking Solomon Islands to independence in 1978.

Sir Peter also had a distinguished political career. Before he entered politics, Sir Peter also served in other institutions of the government and in the Forum Fishery Agency. He is also recognized both internationally and regionally as one of the paramount leaders of this nation. We respect and honor Sir Peter's contribution to Solomon Islands.

In my humble opinion, Sir Peter has served this nation with excellence, dignity and respectability. In so doing, he is in a class above most of us. He has become one of the finest statesmen of our beloved Solomon Islands. Therefore, I join this House in bidding Sir Peter and family a big thank you. We salute Sir Peter and wish him a well deserved retirement. With these few remarks, I support this motion.

**Hon. ALEX:** Thank you for allowing me to contribute to this motion of appreciation. It is with great admiration and respect that I make this speech to officially appreciate and farewell the outgoing Speaker of the National Parliament, Sir Peter Kenilorea, on behalf of the chiefs and good people of my constituency. In delivering this speech, I am thankful for the chiefs and good people of South Vella Vella constituency for mandating me to speak on their behalf.

I know that as a country, Solomon Islands is old but as a nation Solomon Islands is only 32 years of age. Sir Peter as our captain, we gained our independence from our colonial masters on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 1978. Under his intelligent captainship we were able to conquer the unfriendly waters of nationhood. The MV Solomon Islands is still sailing today, but just now it is sailing under the able captainship of Prime Minister, Danny Philip. I am proud to be a crew on this sailing boat.

Sir Peter is a man of God. He feared no men but God. He loved all men like God. He loved his country Solomon Islands and worked for none other but for the service of his people, Solomon Islanders. Sir Peter is a father to more than half a million people of Solomon Islands. On retiring from politics his fatherly advice to us was for us to stop begging, but we should live or exist by the very sweat of our own brows rather than depending on hand outs. As individuals, we know that begging may give us food for today but it will definitely give us hunger, starvation and famine for the next 20 years. As a community we know that begging may give us shelter for a week but it will definitely give us more rain, storm and thunderstorm for the next 50 years. As a nation we know that begging may give us national income for this quarter, but it will definitely give us more pain and heartache for the next 70 years. Begging is not good for our national sovereignty. The multiplier effect of begging is adversity and adversity leads to absolute poverty. Can we not beg then but instead use our quality wisdom to lead this country to joy, peace, progress and prosperity. The onus is on you, Mr. Speaker; the task is upon us, leaders of today.

Sir Peter is retiring from active politics but his wisdom will always linger on. His fatherhood will always be treasured by the people whom he loves so much, the people of Solomon Islands. Sir Peter may not have set foot on my

constituency but the chiefs and the good people of South Vella Vella recognize the difference he has made to their individual lives. When there was turmoil in the country, Sir Peter was champion of the Peace Monitoring Council. When there was political instability in the country Sir Peter was defender of our young democracy.

It is sad to see the father of the nation retire from active politics, but without him life must still go on. The people of Solomon Islands must continue to live and persevere to make a difference to their respective lives. Although Sir Peter is retiring from active politics, I am glad to say that he is leaving the control and command of this country in capable hands. We have a lot term politician and former Prime Minister as head of the legislature. We have a veteran politician as head of the executive. We have a prominent lawyer as head of the judiciary. On top of them is the very capable head of state and experienced lawyer and judge by profession. Under their control and leadership, let us work together in unity. Let us preserve together in oneness and let us prosper together as a country of all equals. Under God we are equal, under the law we are also equal. This is the message that Sir Peter is leaving with us behind.

Can we respond positively to the call to live on the very sweat of our own brows and overhaul the machinery of rural development in our sovereign country? Can we relook at our role as law making agents? I believe that the writing is clear on the wall that we need to go back to the principles of no pain no gain. We need to go back to the basics of Christianity: let us till the land and multiply.

The chiefs and good people of South Vella Vella salute the father of the nation as he retires from active politics. We wish him and his family every success in their lives as they enjoy his retirement. Thank you Sir Peter for the living example! Thank you for the lesson that you have been teaching us. Thank you for being a role model to all leaders of today. Enjoy your retirement and may God richly bless you and your family. With this message from the chiefs and good people of South Vella Vella, I beg to resume my seat.

**Mr. TOM:** Thank you for allowing me to also contribute to this motion. Undoubtedly, Solomon Islands as a nation has just crossed over from being a youth to adulthood in its nationhood development. At the age of 32 years, Solomon Islands finally steps into adulthood when wisdom and integrity should now become the cornerstone for nation building advancement. It is natural that there will always be a time of transition in our lives when the baton of responsibility is passed on to the next leader or runner in this life marathon. And as in any race what transpires at the finishing line determines what happened during the race by the individual runners.

With this analogy, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Rt Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea for the invaluable contributions he has made to this country and its people. Yes, we are all born leaders in our own rights as many always claimed. True as that may be, it is also true to say many of us take longer than others to show the kind of leaders we are. Integrity is a catch word we all want to look for in any leader, and after sometimes in this Parliament as national leaders, our actions to some extent have to match our words.

Sir Peter, in my view, is among the few such leaders, not only this country but the region has ever produced, whose life has become an icon for us leaders of this nation, especially the younger generation.

With a family of eight children, the younger one whom I am led to understand had gone to be with the Lord. Sir Peter was not immune to the many problems we all leaders and fathers have always experienced in our daily chores, yet to produce three lawyers, a teacher and administrator, a large family whose children are obedient and all love the Lord, is in my view what all of us have always wanted for our own families. I strongly believe the difference this great man has is the fact that he loves the Lord. There are stories that we can all read in the scriptures about certain individuals who made great difference in their own times. We read of Joseph, Daniel, Mordecai, and one thing common about them was that everything they touched prospered, and the scripture went to justify the reason for their successes and that was because the Lord was with him. With no slightest doubt Sir Peter could very well be counted amongst these godly leaders of their times. Our biggest challenge is how many of us could be counted as equals with such a people at a time as this when everything is out of control and immoral indicator is a level higher than ever recorded in the history of these lovely happy isles of Solomon Islands? This is a kind of leader this country desperately needs. Thank you, Sir Peter for sharing your life with the people of this nation.

It is evident that Sir Peter is a person who loves his God. His loyalty to his God influences his loyalty, diligence, honesty, faithfulness and commitment to everything he does at the work place and at home with his family. The differences he made in everything he touched or did were possible because his God has always been with him. He does not sway with the crowd. He believes in integrity, honesty and respects the views of others, a simple humble man who relates to everyone who crosses his path, from a family level to the apex of leadership nationally, regionally and internationally. Sir Peter always demonstrated a true character of a servant, a person who always has a place of others in his heart, regardless of one's status.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to come to know such a person like Sir Peter. It is a wonderful experience and one of a lifetime. I am pretty sure that there is

still a lot of good in a person that nations can draw from him. On that note, I strongly recommend that wherever possible we must continue to fully utilize his wealth of experiences for the benefit of our younger generation. Yes, I could go on for another hour to admire the life of this God given leader and the kind of leadership he has lived and demonstrated if you allow me to, but I do not wish to take any more time from others who may also want to speak on this important motion.

In so doing, I wish to also express my deepest gratitude on behalf of my family and the people of West Kwaio whom I represent to thank Sir Peter's family, Lady Margaret and children for allowing Sir Peter to freely execute his duties for the benefit of the people of this country. As a teacher, a district commissioner, a chief executive officer, a Member of Parliament, two times Chief Minister and two times Prime Minister, a Director of the Forum Fisheries Agency, an Ombudsman, Governor General acting on numerous occasions, peacemaker, and a Speaker of Parliament for the eight years, Sir Peter not only touch the hearts of men and women, youth and children of this country but I also believe the pacific region as a whole. He is a person who stands equally tall amongst other leaders, both in the region and beyond.

Having said all these, I am sure it is not premise of me to question what good thing could we as leaders of this country and the people we represent do for such a person as Sir Peter. This Parliament during the prime ministership of colleague Member for North East Choiseul, Honorable Manasseh Sogavare had approved a life salary, vehicle and other benefits for holders of the Governor General's position. Why would such benefits be denied of such a person like Sir Peter? I hold that it would be a mockery in what we all would be saying in this House about this outstanding person if he is not treated in the same manner. It will be a gross injustice the government would commit if it fails to do the same as it had already done for the holders of the head of the state's position. This is a man who worked so hard to build this nation, even longer than some who have hold the Governor General's post. We even called him the father of our nation, would we not give him the same treatment? I personally hold the view that he deserves more than just empty flowery speeches like what we are making here. On that note in closing, I wish to strongly recommend that Sir Peter be treated the same way the government has already treated the Governor Generals. Once again thank you Sir Peter for being an example of a leader this nation is looking for. With these few remarks I support the motion.

**Mr GARU:** I rise also to join my other colleagues, firstly to congratulate you for your successful election to the speakership chair, and I do so on behalf of my good chiefs, elders, church leaders, community leaders, men, women, children

and all the people of West Guadalcanal constituency. Your successful election reflects the support and confidence you have commanded in this honorable Chamber. Indeed it is a beauty of our democracy. We pray that our good Lord grants you his blessing and wisdom to rule with truth and in justice.

May I also on the same manner join my other colleagues to thank and acknowledge our outgoing Speaker of Parliament, Sir Peter Kenilorea for his long and distinguished, dedicated and committed service to the government and people of Solomon Islands, the region and internationally, in politics and various governance capacities he has taken up in this country.

I can still vividly recall when I first heard Sir Peter's name being mentioned and that was during my primary school days. As I still cannot confidently read without assistance, I was very dependent on my two good ears. It was a general knowledge session and we were tested through routine morning quizzes. We were constantly being pre-warned to listen to the radio news, the current affairs programs and as much as we can to read our newspapers. The year was 1979 and the newspapers and radio in those days were very rare to be found in the rural communities. Although slightly rephrased that same question is still being asked today in all primary schools in their secondary entrance exam papers each year and as well as in their preparatory revisions. The question was then phrased as, who is the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands? The same being rephrased today now reads who is the first Prime Minister of Solomon Islands? I can remember answering that question that morning without a name. Our paper was swapped with our colleague students in class for correction, and unfortunately none of us got the answer correct.

The answer as we were told was none other than our very own Sir Peter Kenilorea, the outgoing Speaker of Parliament. From that day onwards I began to have interest in this name, and as such I have come to have a very close following of Sir Peter's journey as a secret admirer, so to speak, and follows on throughout his political career, his exit in politics, other honors and distinguished careers that were blessed through him.

It is not my intention here to repeat the chronicles of Sir Peter as we have heard from other colleagues, as all else go down in the history of our beloved nation, Solomon Islands and will be passed down from generation to generation as all these were well documented. But rather to do Sir Peter justice for his love, loyalty dedicated to community service to Solomon Islands and his people, I join my colleagues also to thank our good Lord, our creator God for His gift for us of an honorable father and son and leader of our beloved nation Solomon Islands.

On behalf of my family, the chiefs, elders, community leaders and all my good people of West Guadalcanal constituency, we thank you Sir Peter, we thank your good parents, relatives and family, your community, your tribe, the

Church, the people of Are Are and Malaita for raising and nurturing such a fine and good model father. May God continue to bless and guide you in your next chapter. Thank you Sir Peter. With these remarks I support the motion.

**Mr MANENIARU:** Thank you for giving me this opportunity before my other colleague MPs. Thank you for allowing me to also contribute very briefly to this very important motion to express appreciation to the outgoing Speaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea moved by the honorable Prime Minister this morning. Thank you for the insight of our honorable Minister to move this fitting motion.

On behalf of my arahas of West Are Are, my Church leaders, my community leaders, and my people of West Are Are who are related to the outgoing Speaker, Sir Peter, I would like to also join other colleagues to deeply and heartedly express our gratitude on behalf of the people of West Are Are to Sir Peter and also Lady Margaret Kenilorea for the services they have rendered and accorded to this nation, Solomon Islands, our government and our people.

Sir Peter, since 1974 as we have already heard wholeheartedly committed himself for the building and molding of this country. He contributed largely to democracy that this country continues to enjoy to this very moment, and he did that in his capacity when he joined the Public Service as a public servant, as a Minister, as a Prime Minister, and in the last eight years of the Seventh and Eight Parliament a Speaker of the National Parliament. Indeed, Sir Peter Kenilorea rightly deserves to be called the founding father of Solomon Islands.

Sir Peter, we are the people of West Are'Are are truly proud of you as you are one of the outstanding son and chief of Are Are. We want to thank you Sir Peter for the leadership, contributions in the work you have done for the country, in the work you have done to help our chiefs in Are Are one way or another and as a father also for the Are Are people

The legacy left behind by Sir Peter in our communities in Are Are, I cannot see what time nor do I know what time God is going to bless us again with another such a son, a chief and leader. We will continue to pray because only God Almighty can give such a leader for our country and our communities.

Sir Peter in his 36 years of service has remarkably performed outstandingly in his contribution in building this nation as aired by other colleague speakers and indeed will go down in the history of our country's politics. The contributions of Sir Peter cannot be measured, its value cannot be measured as well and we cannot compare. It is an achievement of a unique leader, and we thank God for giving us such a unique leader Sir Peter for our country, especially during his time in continuing to help mould our country and our democracy.

I also would like to recall an incident that occurred in 1986 after Cyclone Namu hit our country, Solomon Islands. Disaster assistance came, relief efforts went to our people throughout the country in areas badly affected. Sir Peter was the Prime Minister then. One help came for him and his people who were also affected by the cyclone disaster. It was talked about as normal in our country, especially also in Honiara but what did Sir Peter do, he resigned from the post of prime minister, and that was all for the sake of transparency, accountability and democratic leadership. I see that as a challenge for us as leaders, especially those of us young leaders who have just joined this honorable House and Parliament for us to take genuine and sincere decisions when we are demanded of it to make it in the best interest of our people and our nation. That is what Sir Peter did in my humble and sincere view.

The trend we are going at politically where a lot of issues were a challenge to our leaders in the past and which they also made decisions. I would like to encourage us to actually take up the challenge to recognize who we are representing in this honorable Chamber when making decisions. It is our people and our nation that has to be at heart, and that is basically what has already been aired out by other Members when they continue to express their gratitude and appreciation for what Sir Peter has contributed to this nation. He made decisions that are transparent and accountable, and puts the country and our people first. And that did not come easy because as we know, as our founding father, it was prayer that held him together at that time. He has been led and guided by the hands of the God Almighty in making such decisions that we have seen and heard that we might think is easy but it is not easy. There are situations when we are challenged that are beyond our human capability. There are impossible decisions that we would come across and that is when we have to leave the impossibilities to someone who deals with impossible decisions, and that we have recognized as reflected in decisions made by Sir Peter and in him as a person. I wholeheartedly admire Sir Peter in his decision making situations.

Allow me to touch a bit on how I admired Sir Peter in his Christian, which really helped me as a Christian on how I should relate to people and relate to my God. This nation, which we talked about too much as a Christian nation, a lot of decisions we are making is questioned in that regard. I would like us not to just talk in here on lip service as stated by the honorable Member for East Choiseul but we must talk from our hearts when giving our appreciation to Sir Peter because he is leaving a big task ahead of us as we take on the responsibility of leading our people and this country, our beloved Solomon Islands.

Sir Peter in politics has really helped our country to move this far despite of challenging times we are going thru. We have already heard that we need someone with a fatherly love. He has this spirit of a father and Sir Peter actually

demonstrated this at a time mostly called for or badly needed. It is high time that we also think seriously about the challenges as young leaders of this young nation that whether we are going to follow those footsteps and how we are going to achieve it, is my challenge and our challenge.

I also would like to commend Sir Peter for his positive contributions to the Church, the Christian growth and development inside this country. In communities especially in Are Are, Sir Peter is a household name especially in the Christian churches. In his Church, the South Seas Evangelical church, I would like to thank Sir Peter for his contribution and his family. We need to have someone that we look up to that we can emulate in our lives, and especially our families. I am sure we will not be mistaken or go wrong if we follow Sir Peter. I really admire Sir Peter as a model for us to follow in our Christian strive.

During the two terms that Sir Peter served as the Speaker of the National Parliament, we have witnessed the true representation of parliamentary democracy. Sir Peter has now left this Honorable Chair to your hands, Mr Speaker. On that note, I also would like to join other colleagues that on behalf of my chiefs and the people of West Are Are we congratulate you in taking up that role. We entrusted you with the work that Sir Peter has left in your hands for you to lead our country and our Parliament this term that is in front of you now.

I also would like to join other colleagues to also thank your deputy and congratulate him on behalf of my people of West Are Are for being successfully elected to be your deputy. I also would like to take this opportunity to thank the Honorable Prime Minister for his successful election to him to lead our country as our Prime Minister.

Sir Peter possesses the kind of quality and characters that we really need to look at. He is a father of peacemaker in our country. He is a person that is fair to everyone. He does not discriminate. He is a person that we can approach and access. He is a man who always puts his integrity first and is full of wisdom, accountability and transparency and a man of authority. We have been talking about those qualities and so it is high time that we must try to put in our system and we need to follow the footsteps that Sir Peter has left for us, my colleague MPs.

Sir Peter is also a true magnetic leader that when he goes into leadership, he goes into any situations, any environments, people are attracted to him, people want him to talk and make contribution and makes decision, and that is something that we as leaders need to look up to. Those things come and I believe God blesses him and we need to recognize that real factor.

I just want to recall an experience as a new politician and MP for West Are Are that when I came and we go into lobbying, it was a very interesting experience for me as a new politician. The only thing I came in and focus on is

that I think of Sir Peter. I think about working in the public service and I tried to see who the icon leaders of this country are that I should try to emulate when I came into this responsibility of helping to lead this nation. I have this person in mind and because he is also from Are Are and my people of West Are Are highly respect him, and that gives me comfort when we went into those challenging times. You know what I am talking about my colleague MPs. It is not easy and when I look at Sir Peter, I see how he went through his political life, it was a challenge to me, but I take it as a challenge if he made it, we can also do it too or we can follow.

It is a lesson for us, but I guess it is not something he experienced when he came into politics, but right now maybe we have every variety of influences that are giving us very different challenges hence very different decisions we can arrive at.

I also want on behalf of my people of West Are Are to join the Honorable Member of East Choiseul and Honorable Member for East Kwaio who have called on us to ask the rightful authority to look at what could be the appropriate and fitting present that should be accorded to this man. When we called him our founding father it is a big thing and in our customs, there are ways of appreciating that. Therefore, I on behalf of my people do join my two other colleagues to call upon the Government to consider what we can accord to this man who is the founding father of our nation Solomon Islands.

Finally, but not the least, on behalf of my people, the chiefs, church leaders and people of West Are Are, I want to thank Sir Peter for molding our nation Solomon Islands. The people of West Are Are with all the chiefs fully salute Sir Peter. He is our icon, he is also our chief in Are Are. We also want to thank his good wife, lady Margaret Kenilorea and his children for fully supporting him. A strong leader has a good wife supporting him to do good work, and that is exactly what lady Margaret accorded to Sir Peter. We pray that Sir Peter will continue to receive blessings from the Almighty on him and his family and on the work he is going to take up as he retire from politics and we pray that God will continue to bless him always. With those few remarks, I beg to support the motion.

**Hon. TOVUSIA:** Thank you for allowing me to talk on this motion of appreciation this afternoon. On behalf of East Guadalcanal constituency from the bottom of my heart and that of my constituency, the chiefs, church leaders, we want to say thank you to the Rt Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea and his beloved wife. Much has been said about this big man, the Rt Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea, and so I on behalf of East Guadalcanal constituency would also like to acknowledge the good things Sir Peter has done during his time. I as the newly

elected Member for Parliament for East Guadalcanal constituency, during my young age I used to hear this person in control of parliament, and I like the way he rules when making respectable decisions that have meaning when I listened to the SIBC. This is a man of wisdom.

I believe Sir Peter also has gone through not an easy life. We have heard other colleague Members talking about a lot of things that Sir Peter went through. I just want to register my thank you to him. A lot of things have been said and a lot of things have been expressed here by other colleagues, which I wholeheartedly agree with. I think he has gone through criticisms at times, as mentioned by other colleagues where maybe politicians ask him serious questions like that. Thank you Sir Peter for being smart by making the right decision!

I think this Ninth Parliament has achieved a hardship of a long time here in this country, Sir Peter Kenilorea. Importantly, I would like to express in here that I believe Sir Peter has been blessed by God. He is well looked by the Almighty and has received big blessings from the Lord so his decisions, his ways and how he leads this country have been all a blessing. I believe of us in here cannot deny this. His retirement has made him leave behind many good things. I think those are examples that we as leaders are now in. I agree with some colleagues to say that it has to be inside of us to see the Rt Honorable Sir Peter.

With these words of thanks, I want to thank you Sir Peter for your time, your decisions, your wisdom and knowledge and thank you for leading the country until now as you retire. I finally want to say that from the bottom of my heart and the hearts of my people of my constituency, we thank you and may God bless Sir Peter and his family.

**Hon. ONIKA:** Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to say a few remarks to the motion. To begin with, allow me, Mr Speaker, to congratulate you for your election as Speaker of Parliament. The Speaker of Parliament is second to the Governor General and takes charge of this Honourable House. He is a symbol of democracy, unity and nationhood. Our country comprises many cultures but united under one constitution, one parliament, one flag and one anthem. To me, the Speaker of Parliament is also a symbol of unity as he is responsible for guidance and practice in this Chamber. In this regard, those elected to occupy this Honorable House must ensure that democracy reveals in this country. This means one must be fair in ones rulings and have the respect of Members of Parliament as well as the public. These are but a few qualities a Speaker must have.

Mr Speaker, there are people out there who have potentials to hold this position, but I have trust and confidence that you will perform your role with

fairness and dedication as did your predecessor. At this point, I wish to pay special tribute to the outgoing Speaker who had contributed greatly to the development of this Parliament, especially for the manner in which he had performed his role with dedication which earned him the respect and the admiration of the people of this nation. He should be an example to all of us in how we should dedicate and commit ourselves in serving our people. Therefore, before I resume my seat, I wish to take this opportunity to thank my people of East Central Guadalcanal for the trust they have placed on me to represent them in this Parliament in the next four years. I would like to tell them that I will not let them down but I will do my best in carrying out my duties and responsibility as their MP. In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor. I would like to thank him for his contribution in the last Parliament.

There are different groups in this Parliament but the fact remains that we all serve one country. Let us leave aside our differences and gather our strength as a people with one vision. This is the vision to unite and develop our nation Solomon Islands. Thank you and may God bless Solomon Islands. I support the motion.

**Hon. FUGUI:** I rise to join other honorable Members of Parliament of this House to confer accolades to Sir Peter Kenilorea as one of the founding fathers of this nation, a fine statesman, a great orator, a fearless writer, a family and a personal friend. I shall be mostly anecdotal in my brief comments.

There is something to say about the Are Are spirit that many of us should appreciate and possibly cherish. Not that Are Are is unique but the Are Are spirit that helps one to forge on despite difficulties; the Are Are spirit that encourages one in debates and contestations; the Are Are spirit that prepares one for the many challenges in life so that it fulfills the sentiments of one of my closest colleagues when he said, "Are Are people are born lawyers." Whether that is a compliment or otherwise is left to individual discretion.

That being that case, when Sir Peter entered formal education at the age of 12 years, many of us sent our children to school at age 5, the brain has two sides and it takes between 7 to 8 years for those two hemisphere or for the two sides to fuse, and I think the parents of Sir Peter whether by design or default, put Sir Peter to school at the right time, at 12 years so that they can think for themselves first and then obey the rules of the school, and that is why it is very important as we can see its result, of the person we are talking about today.

That being the case, when Sir Peter ended formal education at the age of 12 in 1955, he was destined to succeed. We thank God for His guidance that has enabled Sir Peter from his humble beginnings at Rara village, East Are Are to the citadels of power and today as one of the finest statesmen the country has so far

produced. If one is to describe Sir Peter's life journey, one is inclined to use the word successful. Underline the word successful.

I would like to register Sir Peter's success under the 3 F's – family, faith and friends. Under family, Sir Peter is one with the successful fathers. He has brought up a successful family indeed. As a former politician, bringing up children in a government house that buzzes with members of their constituency, coming in and out almost every day is no easy task. All Members of Parliament can attest to that, even the present members of parliament can attest to that. It is neither easy nor hard also. But despite the rough and tumble of politics and the incessant demands of members of East Are constituency, at that time when he was a politician, Sir Peter managed to bring up three lawyers, a medical doctor, a teacher and a few other professionals in his household. That is a huge commentary of success for any father. All fathers would cherish such a successful record and I salute Sir Peter for such success.

For the second 'F' – Faith, Sir Peter is noted for his abiding faith. It is abiding faith because it is a kind of faith that is seen rather than one that is merely spoken of or shouted out. It is a lived faith. All of us are better off for such a great man with such abiding faith, there is no question about that. The result is what we reap in terms of having a founding father that is still with us today even when others, other founding fathers have naturally passed on.

The third 'F' comprises Sir Peter's friends. Had Sir Peter entered a different career line, I am quite certain that our story would have been different. But as a former politician and having friends in politics or in the citadels of power, so to speak, kept Sir Peter in the national and international limelight during his years in politics and during his parliamentary life. This life ....

**Mr Speaker:** Point of order Minister of Environment, Conservation and Meteorology. I will allow the Prime Minister to move the motion of suspension.

**Hon. Philips:** The time now is 4.30pm and so I seek your consent to move a suspension of Standing Order 10 in accordance with Standing 81 to allow business before the House to continue and to be adjourned by yourself under Standing Order 10(5).

**Mr Speaker:** Leave is granted honourable Prime Minister please.

**Hon. Philips:** I move that Standing Order 10 be suspended in accordance with SO 81 to permit the continuation of the current debate on the appreciation motion and to be adjourned by the Speaker in accordance with Standing Order 10(5).

**Mr Speaker:** Honorable Members unless any Member wishes to speak on this motion.

*The motion agreed to.*

**Hon. FUGUI:** Thank you Prime Minister for the appropriate intervention.

The third F, if I can repeat myself, comprises Sir Peter's friends. Had Sir Peter entered a different career line, I am quite certain that our story would have been different, but as a former politician and having friends in politics or in the citadels of power, so to speak, kept Sir Peter in the national and in the international limelight during his years in politics and during his parliamentary life. This is a privilege life indeed. It is a life where resources that are available and opportunities that come our way are rarely seen by ordinary people. It is a life that one makes friends not only in the country but also abroad. It is a life where we are friends in high places so that even when we fall ill we have access to medical facilities that most people are not privy to. Sir Peter is doubly blessed because he has you and me as friends, and that is important.

On that high note and to remember Sir Peter's contribution to the country, I would suggest and support the suggestion from the MP for Aoke/Langa Langa who wisely suggested having a leadership school and an institute dedicated in Sir Peter's name. But closer to home, I would also suggest that Parliament ensures that every time it puts out orientation for new Members of Parliament, Sir Peter's wisdom, experience and counsel be sought.

What I am saying is that Sir Peter's legacy should be made permanent as part of Parliament as an institution. As we thank and farewell Sir Peter and family, I wish Sir Peter and Lady Kenilorea God's guidance, strength for now and for years to come.

Mr Speaker, finally, on behalf of my constituents of Central Honiara, allow me to congratulate you as the new Speaker of Parliament. I am sure that with your experience, knowledge and insight you will discharge your duties with no less distinction than what you have given in other offices that you have held. With those few remarks, I support the motion.

**Hon. SIGOTO:** Thank you for giving me this privilege to contribute to this motion of appreciation in recognition and respect to Sir Peter. As the newly elected member for Ranongga/Simbo Constituency, and a newly appointed Minister for Health and Medical services, I would like to take this opportunity to contribute to this very important motion moved by the Honorable Prime Minister this morning. This is an appropriate and timely motion that enables this

honorable House to express its appreciation of the service to the National Parliament of Solomon Islands by the Rt. Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea, the outgoing Speaker of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands who has held this honorable position since December 2001.

I am so honored to contribute to this very important motion on behalf of my constituency of Ranongga/Simbo. I also had the opportunity and the privilege to represent the Ministry of Health and Medical Services to say thank you and to appreciate the services given to this country by the outgoing Speaker. The appreciation and gratitude I will express towards this motion rightly so goes beyond the time when this great leader and gentleman has contributed to the National Parliament, not just as the Speaker of this highest house of the land but also as a Member of Parliament and the founding father of our beloved nation Solomon Islands.

The fact that the Rt. Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea was among the group that took us from the colonial era into independence, and being part of the very group that helped draft the constitution, proved beyond doubt the capability, the capacity, knowledge and experience that enabled him to fulfill his role as Speaker of this honorable house. Therefore, I am honored to take my stand today in this honorable house and to humbly express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to Sir Peter for the great contribution he has done so well and superbly in managing this National Parliament over the last 8 years. With the knowledge skills, etiquettes, and being a draftsman of the constitution himself, he was able to successfully carry out his roles and responsibilities. I wish you well in his future endeavors and may the Almighty God continue to bless him and his family as they live their private lives.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my good people of Ranongga/Simbo Constituency for giving me the mandate and opportunity to represent them in Parliament. My sincere thanks, gratitude and appreciation goes to all the chiefs, the elders, the church leaders, women, youth and children of all the villages and communities of Ranoga/Simbo. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my professional colleagues and friends that I have worked with over the last 30 years in the Ministry of Health and Medical Services. Thank you for your dedication and commitment you have demonstrated despite the huge challenges you face in your work while delivering health services to our people. I have experienced together with you all the challenges that we face in the delivery of this very important service to our people, especially those in the remote rural areas.

To my colleagues and friends in health for the last 30 years, I as your newly appointed Minister of Health and Medical Services do promise to work together with you to address the challenges that we had faced in the past so that

we can move forward in improving how we can deliver a total package of health care to improve the health status of our people and to improve the standard of care and quality of life.

Finally I want to take this opportunity to wish Sir Peter and his family all the best and I wish them God's blessing as they continue to live and serve this country. Thank you and I support this motion.

**Mr FOLOTALU:** Thank you for allowing me to contribute with other colleagues in this honorable house. I also would like to thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion. Also, having this chance I would like to congratulate you, Mr Speaker, for your election as Speaker to the National Parliament.

On this final moment of giving Sir Peter our appreciation and gratitude for the awesome, dedicated services rendered as the head of the legislature and serving this nation as one of our great leaders, I wish to thank him for his leadership qualities that brought dignity, credibility and honor to this Honorable House and to this nation.

Sir Peter is referred to as the father of the nation. He has portrayed excellent leadership and great servant hood. Indeed, St. Paul describes such leaders in the word of God, the Bible by saying "There are thousand instructors but not many fathers". Sir Peter is one of the fathers of this great nation. He has a fatherly heart for this nation. People with a fatherly heart are people who care for the people of the nation. They are mindful of the people and the affairs of the nation. People like that are real fathers.

I just wish that we have a thousand fathers in this nation then Solomon Islands would have been that different. It is instructors that we have many of them, about thousands and thousands of them but not many fathers. So Sir Peter is truly a father because he has a fatherly heart.

Sir Peter has portrayed nationalism and patriotism in his leadership style. Sir Peter has left a leadership pattern and should be an inspiration for our young leaders of today and tomorrow. He has set a platform for this nation that young leaders should capture.

With these few remarks, on behalf of my family and on behalf of my constituents, as citizens of Solomon Islands and the Christian people of the Lau/Mbaelelea constituency, we wish Sir Peter an enjoyable retirement. May the enabling grace of God that brought him this far keep him in the power of his love, God's love. With these few remarks, I support the motion.

**Mr SANDAKABATU:** Mr Speaker, I came to know Sir Peter quite briefly when we were members of the Constitutional Review Congress along with the Honorable Prime Minister. Indeed, thank you for giving me this opportunity to

contribute to this humble, honorable and sincere motion of giving credit due and a hearty farewell to the founding father, the former Prime Minister and former Speaker of Parliament Sir Peter Kenilorea. At the conclusion of his appointment as former Speaker of this Honourable House of National Parliament and also most humbling as he makes his final exit from political career. Indeed, Sir Peter to me and my constituents is a person of highest caliber in all spheres of public life, adorned with wisdom, knowledge, skills and attitudes, ethical values and Christian principles that forms the hallmarks of his political career and personal life. These qualities will certainly be missed in this Honorable House.

On behalf of my good people of North West Choiseul and my family, I extend my most sincere and humble appreciation for his astute leadership and wisdom so well demonstrated in exercising his honorable duties as Speaker of Parliament during the Seventh and Eight Parliament of this nation.

On the same note, allow me to thank him for his well renowned leadership from the day we achieved independence as a sovereign nation to the day he retired from political life two weeks ago. During his term of office, our beloved country has experienced both enjoyable and times of trying. The well remembered darkest moment in our history was the 2000 ethnic tension. This has resulted in many unfortunate losses of lives, destruction of homes and properties and the ensuing mistrust amongst our people. Our country was on the brink of irreparable social and economic disaster. However, with Sir Peter at the helm as Speaker of this Honorable House and working tirelessly with the Seventh and Eight Parliament, a new dawn of hope, peace, prosperity and progress began to settle in. This nation is very grateful for his most capable leadership as Speaker of Parliament.

Finally, before I resume my seat, my people of North West Choiseul, myself and my family would like to thank his good wife and wonderful children who have been tirelessly providing that homely and behind the scene support and care all these years so that at the beginning of his day he stood well as a well groomed and mentally alert to lead this honorable House without falter. I further extend my gratitude to his good people of Malaita Province, his constituency and his kinsman in giving this nation a son worthy of praise and remembering as a good leader that most certainly will be remembered in decades to come. May he retire peacefully and with joy knowing that he has done an excellent job for his wonderful and beloved country, Solomon Islands. It is my hope that his successor and I am certain as well, Sir Allan Kemakeza will maintain his great works. May God continue to bless him and his family. With that, I support the motion. Thank you.

**Mr KEALOE:** Thank you for giving me this opportunity for me to contribute to this motion moved by the Prime Minister, on behalf of the people of Malaita Outer Islands who elected me to represent them in this Honorable House. Firstly, I would like to thank you for your election as Speaker of this Parliament. I also thank the election of the Honorable Prime Minister. Also, I would like to thank the Honorable Prime Minister for moving this motion.

The people of Malaita outer Islands would really want to thank Sir Peter for looking after this nation. We are very thankful for looking after every Solomon Islander. I cannot say anything further because every good thing has been said already by my colleagues, so on behalf of my people I want to thank you.

**Hon. HA'AMORI:** Thank you for allowing me time to also briefly contribute on the appreciation motion moved by the Honorable Prime Minister. First of all, I would like to thank the Honorable Prime Minister for moving a very important motion to allow us share our appreciation to someone who is the pioneer of this country and for working tirelessly in building this nation.

The first time I saw Sir Peter was in Kirakira in 1978 during the first independence celebration. That time I was about 11 years of age and I do not think that one day I would be wearing his shoes. I never thought that one day I will follow his footsteps and live by his leadership styles and principles. Despite of me being a new comer in this Parliament and not serving under the leadership of Sir Peter, I would like to take this chance for the sake and on behalf of my two predecessors and my province to thank Sir Peter.

Sir Peter was once upon a time a district commissioner for Makira/Ulawa Province. The late Benedict Kinika was the backbone of Sir Peter during his third year as the first Prime Minister of Solomon Islands. David Sitai was also a parliamentary colleague of Sir Peter, and I want to take this chance on behalf of those two great leaders to show my appreciation and also that of my people of East Makira to Sir Peter for the services he rendered to this nation.

I will not be long but on behalf of people of East Makira I want to say that people from East Makira always choice parliamentarian and always believe in Sir Peter's vision and wisdom. I think if we had come in with Sir Peter at the last elections and he lobby for Prime Minister, I would have supported him without any conditions. That is how I value the leadership style of Sir Peter.

To conclude, I wish Sir Peter and family a very happy retirement and may God continue to give blessing upon them, with these few remarks I support the motion.

**Hon. SOPAGHE:** I rise to contribute to the debate on this very important motion that is now tabled before Parliament, and that is the motion of appreciation to one of the greatest founders and leader of our independent country and one while we can call the founding father of this independent country of Solomon Islands.

It is in this regard that I want to express my sincere appreciation of the leadership of the outgoing speaker of parliament Sir Peter Kenilorea. I on behalf of the people of my constituency would like to thank Sir Peter Kenilorea and his good wife, Lady Kenilorea for the contribution he has made to the many facets of development and growth of our country prior to and post independence. In this regard, I would like to make a few comments in regards to my appreciation of Sir Peter Kenilorea for his leadership quality in this House and in the political development of Solomon Islands, and in many other sectors that he has forged best with us as a teacher, a public officer, a church leader, a first Prime Minister and politician and a former Speaker of Parliament.

In debating this motion of appreciation, some basic reminders are needed about this great leader and one of the founding fathers of this country. In this regard, I wish to pose a few questions. What makes someone a leader? What is it about being a leader that some people understand and use to their advantage? What can you and I do to be a leader, and what some probably needs to know and do? These, in my view, are the very questions and parameters that Sir Peter Kenilorea must have considered to stand as one shining example of what this country needs to lead it forward.

A leader is a person who has vision, a drive and a commitment to achieve that vision and the skills to make it happen. These are all the qualities we have witnessed in this great leader of our country. Today we pay him tribute for what we have all experienced and benefited from Sir Peter Kenilorea. He is a leader that sees a problem that needs to be fixed or goals to be achieved. It maybe someone, something that no one else sees or simply something that no one else wants to tackle. In this House and in the country we have witnessed and benefited from you, Sir Peter Kenilorea practicing these qualities in the many facets of your leadership styles and today. I join the other colleague Members in thanking you Sir Peter Kenilorea for being a visionary leader.

We all know that it is not enough to just have a vision or to be a visionary leader if one does not have the drive to see the vision through. Lots of people including us in our role as MPs see things that should be done, things that should be straightened and great steps forward that could be taken and it stops there. What makes a leader is that he acts, he take steps to achieve his vision. We could ask ourselves it is our passion for the idea, an inner sense of drive or some sense of commitment. Whatever it is, it is the strength that led leaders to

move their visions forward despite of obstacles, despite of what people may say it cannot be done. It is too costly. We tried it **before or does more** exercise. A true leader perceives and moves forward. This House today is now enjoying the results of this great leader achievement because Sir Peter Kenilorea is a visionary leader that sees things through.

We also know that there are traits and skills that set leaders apart from other people. Some people are born with qualities, and others develop them as they improve as leaders. These are not magic bullets, but are things we can do and be if we want to be a leader. Not only is Sir Peter Kenilorea a born leader, but he has also worked at it and we hope to live by your example in taking this great nation forward. There are many traits of a leader as there are lists of what makes a leader.

In my observation, as a Member of Parliament now serving my second term as having observed Sir Peter Kenilorea as our leader, I am confident to say that Sir Peter Kenilorea is a leader with integrity and we know that in all you have pursued in this House, you have done so because it is the right thing to do. It is not ego driven, it is a people patient leader and someone who understands the differences that make people acquire and is able to use those individuals skills to achieve the goals, it is positive and encouraging at all times.

In terms of skills, Sir Peter Kenilorea is a leader who lives beyond the personal traits of a leader. He has specific skills he has mastered over the years which makes him a great leader to be thanked by all of us today. These are effective communication in the move forward to work towards the goals for which we are elected. He is a leader who motivates his staff to support and knowing which bullets, bottoms to press when plans ahead to ensure everyone is moving together towards a goal that has been set.

With these few remarks, I thank Sir Peter Kenilorea for all that he has done for this country and this House. Your achievement and leadership style will continue to act as benchmarks for this country and for this House. I on behalf of my constituency thank you Sir Peter Kenilorea and Lady Kenilorea for all that you have done for our country, and I wish you well in your retirement. May the Lord richly bless you both. I know this nation appreciates all that you stand for and have done.

**Hon. MANETOALI:** Thank you for this opportunity to join other colleagues in this debate.

I rise on behalf of my people, the chiefs and elders of Gao/Bugotu Constituency to contribute to this very important motion. Let me join colleague Members of Parliament who have contributed to this motion by thanking the

former Speaker of Parliament, the Rt. Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea for his unsurpassed contribution in serving this country.

The last nine years as Speaker have been a real challenge for him, challenge not only from the critical debates in Parliament but also from national issues that continue to affect and threaten the people of this country and institutions of government. The last nine years had seen governments come and go. Some Members of Parliament likewise have changed through the electoral process. The ethnic tension, a dark period in the country's history had come and gone. Sir Peter had weathered those changes and challenges in ensuring that the credibility of the institutions of good governance, especially Parliament are upheld at all times.

Colleague Members of Parliament would agree with me that as Speaker of Parliament, Sir Peter Kenilorea had brought a great deal of credibility and vigor in the level and quality of debate in Parliament. That certainly must be a benchmark for our Parliament and its processes. Sir Peter's rise to prominence is not an accident. Those of you who have had the chance of reading his autobiography would have learnt how he became a good student, a good teacher, a good administrator in government, good and devout Christian and excellent Speaker of Parliament. His path in life must be a good model for Solomon Islanders who aspire to serve this country well and with distinction. His last nine years as Speaker of this Parliament has been truly a blessing to this nation. Many of us must put an effort to follow in his footsteps.

May I, my family, my people of Gao/Bugotu constituency and my Ministry of Culture and Tourism, offer our heartfelt appreciation to our former Speaker, Sir Peter Kenilorea and his family for his service and dedication to this country! I wish them all the best for the future.

With these few words of appreciation, I support the motion and resume my seat.

**Hon. ETE:** Thank you for allowing me to talk a bit on this very important motion to express my sincere appreciation and that of my people of East Honiara constituency, as Minister for Public Service and the entire employees of the crown to extend our vote of thanks to Sir Peter Kenilorea for the many contributions to this Parliament and most importantly in the development of this nation. I would like also to thank the honorable Prime Minister who saw it fit to have this motion moved to allow Ministers of Parliament express their appreciation to Sir Peter and his contributions to the development of this nation and more so parliamentary democracy.

We all must appreciate that our country has distant this far and to this level of maturity and it was collectively the result of the efforts and contributions

of your predecessor. I noted from his book that he was a man from Are Are raised in Rara village, educated at KGVI, then to New Zealand and returned to serve in the Public Service as a teacher, an administrator, a magistrate, a lands officer and a finance officer.

The election in 1976 did enthrone him as a leader and it was no surprise that he stood unopposed and became the Chief Minister. He led a delegation to negotiate with Her Majesty's Government in London in 1977, and as a result he was a signatory to what is known today as the Lancaster House Agreement that saw the birth of a new nation in 1978. Probably there was re-independence or independence at that time. The current independence constitution was a book he took from a departing empire and gave to the people of Solomon Islands, something that Solomon Islanders have craved for since the Marching Rule, and in light with the 1962 the decolonization program of the British Government.

He was elected our first prime minister, a position he held for two terms, a Leader of Opposition, an Ombudsman, he also served as Director of the Forum Fisheries, co-chair to the Peace Monitoring Council when militia was pronounced in this country in 2000, a Chairman to the Electoral Commission and a Speaker of Parliament for an inclusive eight years. I acknowledge the decisions, advices and participations and all the discussions, meetings, forums, assemblies where his contributions have made this country mature. I am sure we have realized the benefits of Sir Peter's contribution to this country.

The economic benefits that we now harness are things that your predecessor has also contributed. On that note, I appreciate the Solomon Taiyo now Soltai, the coconut plantation through what used to be the subsidy scheme, the CDC now GPPOL, the forest plantations in Kolombangara Shortlands and Vanikoro. I can recall vividly the Jeanette Diana case, as it was Sir Peter who, with a vision in 1985, negotiated the lifting of the trade embargo by the superpower, our big brother, the United States of America. All these are developments that the father of this nation has personally participated in towards the growth of this nation.

His term as Speaker of Parliament saw many developments in this House, both in its administration and also in its physical appearance. We saw the success of the UNDP program and the securing of funding for Members of Parliament office complex that we will enjoy at this Ninth Parliament. Sir Peter has set the standard of what the Speaker should do, and I recall him to be fair in the administration of the Standing Orders and in the course of ensuring that parliamentary practices are maintained, upheld and practiced in this Chamber.

Words alone cannot describe the many contributions the former Speaker has done to parliamentary democracy and for architecting the path this country has taken over the last 35 years. He deserves a sculptor or a monument to be

erected somewhere around Parliament to commemorate the commitment of a great man who has united this nation with different race, different language, different ethnicity and underneath a subscription that reads, 'the father of independence'. He is a true leader with a colorful history, a career in government and parliament and must be recognized. His exit from public figure leaves a legacy in parliamentary democracy and practices and socioeconomic development of this country.

As a new recruit to this Honorable Chamber, I am very, very grateful to be part of the procession that witnessed this great leader's departure. On behalf of my constituency of East Honiara and the Ministry of Public Service, I wish to register here my most profound gratitude that Sir Peter, you are a true statesman and a comrade who is determined to see our children enjoy peace and tranquility in this beloved Solomon Islands. I say this in the spirit of a true Solomon Islander. Thanks be to God for this great man, a great leader and may God continue to bless Sir Peter with your lovely wife and family in your future endeavors in life. With these few remarks, I support the motion.

**Hon HA'AMORI:** Thank you indeed. I too would like to contribute to this motion. I do not contribute to this motion because it is a parliament motion but because it is fitting and worthwhile that we should say thank you to this man. Whether it is through a motion or not, we still owe this man our depth of gratitude.

I would like to thank the Rt Hon Sir Peter for his service to the people of West Makira. As we have heard from his history, he arose as one Solomon Islander recognized by the colonial administration of his time. He rose through the ranks of DO to the DC, and in his capacity as district commissioner he served the people of the eastern district, which Makira is a part of. I believe at that time when my people of West Makira saw that we had a DC that has the same color of skin as us, they were very happy indeed and thought 'we are going to be alright'. This nation has been put together and lived together alright all these years because of a great man like Sir Peter.

I had the good pleasure of coming across a Japanese proverb which says, "Seek not after the man of all, seek what they have sought", which means, and I am very fearful that any statement I am making today is going to flatter this great man because flattery is one of the most debased things a man can do to another person, but rather I would like to truly on behalf of my people appreciate what he has done for Solomon Islands.

We want to say thank you to this man along with the others for bringing independence to this country. Independence is something where during that time, many of us did not really know what it means but because of the vision of

people like Sir Peter, it was brought here. It was actually a great act because we did not know then what was going to happen to this country in getting independence. All we knew was that we were looked after by some white people and they seem to be helping us with some things. But then we took that leap under the leadership of a great man like Sir Peter, and we from West Makira really appreciated this assistance of moving us out from that particular era to a new era.

It is my view that Sir Peter at that time would have wanted us to be an independent united Solomon Islands. I do not believe that he wanted to hear of any other independence other than an independent Solomon Islands. I believe that that is what all of us sitting down in this Honorable Chamber are supposed to work hard towards that we keep Solomon Islands as an independent Solomon Islands but not just one part of what used to be an independent Solomon Islands.

I also want to thank this big man in his capacity as prime minister. I believe that during his term some of their policies and bills that he was responsible for and nurtured and facilitated have helped to actually clear the pathways to progress, not only for Solomon Islands but also for our people of the West Makira constituency.

I also would like to recognize his role as the Speaker of Parliament in allowing our voices to be heard. Sometimes how we express what we would like to say in this Parliament may sound funny to you. Our previous leaders may have expressed things that make others to feel bad in this House, but through the able speakership of this great man our voices were heard.

I would also like to recognize also on behalf of my people that in his capacity as the holder of constitutional and civil posts, we are also happy with his contributions and would want to sincerely thank this big man. To cite one of the many assistance he granted to Solomon Islands including us, is the return of peace and normalcy to this country. I am not saying that he was the only one who did it, as there are other great people too, but we recognize at this point that he is one of the key players in the return of peace and normalcy to this country, which is something that caught us by surprise it happened, and we were also confused as to how it happened.

Before I sit down I would also want to say that one of the things this man leaves behind that is worth taking note of is to do the right thing when it is fitting to do so. Most of us, supposing we truly follow Sir Peter's politics, as the Honourable Member for East Choiseul alluded to today, I think most of us should also resign because this man has also reached a point where his name was on the line and he did the honorable thing at that time. Since that time until today I am yet to hear of anyone doing that. This man leaves behind him such a great act that we should think seriously about. One thing that I believe can also

be attached to this great character is the fact that he made tough decisions. I would like to think that we too should emulate him by making tough decisions in the interest of our people of Solomon Islands.

Finally, I want to say thank you, and because most of us do not understand English, many of us do not know how to express ourselves and so on behalf of the people of West Makira, I would like to say this to Sir Peter: "*tagio kaerahadi*". On behalf of my people of West Makira Constituency I thank this living legend, the right Honourable Sir Peter for his service to the people of West Makira Constituency. With these few remarks I support this motion.

**Mr HOU:** I would like to thank the Honorable Prime Minister for bringing this important motion to the House for debate. Like my honorable colleague for West Makira, I will contribute to this motion not because it is a motion that I have to contribute to, but it is something that I feel is important for us to recognize; this House and also Solomon Islands must recognize Sir Peter's contribution.

I am not going to repeat well-known things that have been outlined by previous speakers; I will not bore my Honorable colleagues and yourself with the facts. But I would just like to say that indeed Sir Peter is an extra ordinary man in his own right. He has left us with a legacy that is not only outstanding, but he with our founding fathers has left us a country while still very young are united and a strong democracy. This is what I want to thank Sir Peter for. But I want to add, lest we forget that this achievement did not come easy for people like Sir Peter and our founding fathers because they worked very, very hard to achieve this up to what we now have today.

Sir Peter and our founding fathers have done well in pulling together and cementing our nation of many islands. We, as the present House and indeed the current crop of leaders have a challenge, challenge to retain this heritage, challenge to maintain this country as a united people and a united nation. That is the challenge we have. This is what we must think seriously about.

At a personal level, I think of this great man that he is not just a leader, he is more than a leader. For me he is a mentor, a teacher and a great encourager for me. In fact, before I even consider campaigning or think about the election, he was one of the first person whom I consulted, and his advice to me was, 'if you think that way, that is something good you are thinking about'. His advice to me was just that. I realized he is a man who does not spoon feed his advice. That is one thing I learn from this man. In fact, it was that advice I took which made me finally won the election.

The first time I met this great man was way back in 1984. At that time I was a young person given the task of leading our young people in our local

church, the SEEC Central Church. He is one of the persons whom we the young people are trying to emulate because before us he was also in that leadership role. Indeed, since then I have witnessed that this great man has exceptional leadership character, full of wisdom. And when I am talking about wisdom I have the privilege of reading his autobiography, in fact, I came and took one copy in 2009 which I read, and in his book he recalled an interesting incident when he was trained as a teacher in New Zealand. That incident at that time was when he was out as a trainee teacher posted to a school where the behavior of the students there were so rowdy that no teacher can control them. And here he was taken to this classroom of rowdy children and he asked himself what he would do to control those students. He thought to himself that he is not the same colored skin as those students, but just a trainee teacher. One of the things he wrote that is really interesting to me was when he told the students that he came from a place in Solomon Islands that can eat human beings. He left it at that but he told them that he came from a place that can eat humans. At that time, those students, even to hold a paper or just to shift around did not happen. In fact, he said the children brought foods like biscuits, cakes, coffee to him, something that they did not normally do, so much so that, as it were the "sickness" infected the whole school and everyone became very well behaved. I thought about this and it shows to me that he demonstrated wisdom.

To this day, I really admire this man, he is indeed a very unique man. How he blended family with the community and church responsibilities, with national responsibilities is hard for me to understand and hard for me to comprehend. But Sir Peter has been able to do that and he continues to do that; blending his family responsibilities with national duties, church duties and community responsibilities. Indeed this man is a very unique man.

His sense of judgment, as I see it, is sound in every sense of the word. I had the privilege of serving with him in one of our local schools, we served in the board of management in that school, and it was during that time that he lost his last son in one very, very tragic accident during a school event, in fact, a picnic on a Saturday. As you can imagine, when they knew that this boy was lost, he and his immediate family were under tremendous pressure. You could understand that when a child gets lost in a school event like that, the school board and the school administration were under immense pressure because the community and every family member pressurized us. But what made me took courage and it shows this man why I said he is exceptional is not only this leadership he demonstrated to us in the board during that period, but how he counselled everybody that pressurised him to do something, like to payback and something like that. In fact, what he did was something that led to a stronger

administration and a stronger board that we greatly appreciate. So this man, of course, is very exceptional.

I think among the many notable characteristics that Sir Peter left us is that of servant hood. This is one characteristic that I really covet, but it is so difficult to me, but I really covet it. But I think it is not enough to admire his achievements, his personal character and integrity of this very exceptional man. What I think he has left us is this, as it were, standards that we who comes after him, those of us who find ourselves in this Honourable House must try to emulate his fine examples because if not, the statements that we are making now will be just mere words.

In that connection, I would like to stress and reiterate the remarks that have been made by my colleagues who have already spoken on this motion, especially my honorable Member for Aoke/Langalanga and my honourable colleague Member for East Choiseul for the outline they gave about Sir Peter's example as a true leader, especially in Parliament that we must ensure the integrity and the respect of Parliament, of this House remains intact. This is one very critical aspect of parliamentary democracy, one that I believe Sir Peter has worked very hard to achieve; one that I believe he has achieved with a lot of work and he has passed to us, so we must take it on.

This is the challenge I want to take from the life of this man, from his example that we in this House, some of us, at least, are aspiring MPs who want to do a second term, we want to do good for our constituencies and for our country. We want to be referred to as national leaders and, of course, we are already national leaders. But the challenge and question that I want to ask is, how many of us can compare to the qualities demonstrated by this great man. How many of us can truly live up to the Solomon Islands national motto, that one up there, *"to lead is to serve"*, a motto which Sir Peter and all our founding fathers have helped coined but continue to live? How many of us will demonstrate that quality? Indeed the question is how do we live up to the expectations of our people?

I want to support the views of other colleague Members, and especially the Member for East Choiseul and the Member for East Honiara that I think it is good for something fitting in memory of this great man to be put up. My honorable colleague for East Honiara suggested a statue to be put up in his memory, and I think that is a good thing.

I am winding up now, but I just want to say that on behalf of my family and my very, very good people of Small Malaita, we want to sincerely thank Sir Peter for his outstanding contributions to us in the southern region of Malaita Province and to the country as a whole. Sir Peter has definitely earned the

respect and high regard from all of us in Small Malaita, and we want to thank him.

To you Sir Peter and Lady Margaret, we wish you a good and a happy retirement and we wish you God's blessings on you and your family in whatever the future holds and whatever endeavors you are going to take up or you find yourselves in, we want to wish you God's blessing.

With these remarks, I support the motion.

**Hon. SOALAOI:** I shall be brief in my contribution to the motion because after listening to all the good things my colleague Members have been saying, I fully endorse the things being said by my colleague Members of Parliament. I must thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion as it gives us the opportunity to do justice to our former Speaker in expressing our appreciation to what he has done to this country and this Parliament.

One thing I really want to congratulate this man for is that he has made history by becoming the first prime minister of an independent Solomon Islands. He was the first person to become prime minister of our country and that history will never be changed but will remain history as long as this country stays together as a nation. Sir Peter, I congratulate you for becoming the first prime minister of our country and a Solomon Islander. I am happy we do not have a first prime minister who is from another country. Our colonial masters started us off and I am very glad they did not become the prime minister but one of our own who is now referred to as the father of this nation became the first prime minister. Sir Peter, you have my respect for becoming our first prime minister.

I would like to think that I know the secret behind this man's success, and I only wish that we follow and emulate. Because we will say all good things in here but it will not do any good for us if we do not do what he does. I think the success behind this great man is really the fear of God. We talked about him as having wisdom, and the Bible also tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. As I listened to what have been said on the floor of Parliament about this very exceptional leader, there is one thing I can pick out, and that is he was a man and is still a man who fears God in his life. You know very well that some people come into politics and when they go out they were not the same as when they came in. But Sir Peter was truly exceptional, he came in as a God fearing leader, he went out God fearing and he is still a God fearing leader today, and I have very high regard for this man who remains a fine example for us, leaders to look up to, especially when the challenge of leading this nation becomes very challenging. I believe that Sir Peter leaves behind a legacy that will benefit all of us if we date to follow his style of leadership, and really find out why he did what he did and why he was so successful.

I heard about Sir Peter from my childhood days as a primary student and had the privilege of meeting him when I was elected a Member of Parliament in 2006. The past four or so years have been very challenging years for me as a new Member of Parliament, and I can only say that without Sir Peter's guidance I would not have been able to learn the things I now know. I think I have learned a lot from this great man and I would like to salute him for what he displayed, especially his humility, his patience, his perseverance, his commitment and his determination in serving this nation. Also, on the floor of Parliament I really admire his experience, and his composure, especially in guiding us Members of Parliament when debates get heated up. I was fortunate to be a Member of Parliament during times when the floor almost got out of control, but I really would like to thank him for remaining so composed and because of his experience he guided Members of Parliament very successfully even in difficult times.

Like I have said already, it would be really good if we follow what he does, and it would also be a good thing for us to envy that kind of leadership style. I hope that some of us in here will one day be referred to as great leaders. We must believe in ourselves, and that is the only reason why we come into this House. We must believe that because our people expect a lot from us, just like this nation did to Sir Peter during his time in politics.

I can only say that he was a great politician and also a great Speaker of Parliament. During his time, we have seen a lot of progress in Parliament in terms of committee work and the overall administration of Parliament and also the physical development of Parliament like what we are starting to see happening outside of Parliament. I can only say that truly Sir Peter is a father and also a true champion of true service to this nation.

Before I sit down, on behalf of my good chiefs and people of Temotu Vattu Constituency, I would like to wish Sir Peter and his family well in their future endeavours as they start to live a normal life. Of course, I know we are going to need Sir Peter when the need arises, but I on behalf of my people wish to wish him well in his future life. Also at this point in time express our sincere gratitude to Sir Peter for his outstanding service and contribution to nation building and the advancement of democracy and good governance in Solomon Islands.

Finally, I do not know whether Sir Peter would accept what I am saying about him but I have great respect for this great and exceptional leader, and I can only wish that I do some of the things that he was able to do. With those few comments, I thank you and I support the motion.

**Hon. Philip:** Thank you. I acknowledge the presence of the Minister for Police and National Security and also the Member for West Kwara'ae, nevertheless the Speaker has made the ruling and so we will have some more opportunity during the motion of sine die to make our remarks. But thank you for the opportunity to make this concluding remarks on this motion that I moved this morning following the amendment proposed by the Member for East Choiseul that this House expresses its appreciation of the service to the National Parliament of Solomon of the Rt. Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea, Speaker of National Parliament of Solomon Islands since December 2001 and for his outstanding contribution to nation building and the advancement of democracy and good governance in Solomon Islands, and secondly that this resolution be communicated to the Rt. Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea by yourself, Mr Speaker.

It has been a full day and we have talked about nothing but Sir Peter. But why did we spend the whole of Parliament's time just to talk about Sir Peter Kenilorea. That is exactly why I want to explain the reasons why I put this motion so that we spend the whole day thinking a visionary person, someone who has seen light at the end of the tunnel, not only after independence but before independence. We are going to draw some moral charge to this. Right now as I speak, I think I was the only one left who had the privilege and the honour of serving under the leadership and the prime ministership of Sir Peter Kenilorea. Job Dudley Tausinga, the Member for North New Georgia was on the opposition bench at that time, and I have the great privilege of being able to see and experience the leadership of a person I admired most in my life.

He welcomed me as a 29 years old parliamentarian in 1985 and appointed me as the Minister for Education. He showed me a number of things and one of them was referred to by the Member for West Are Are as showing leadership in a crisis moment when pressure was exerted on him he resigned in Cabinet and gracefully handed leadership over to one of us, asked the Governor General to summon Parliament, we went into Parliament and changed leadership. That was one of the cleanest change over leadership that I have ever seen in history in my life in Parliament where we are inside now. But I think the motion highlighted that we are dealing with a vision, we are talking about someone who has expressed and pronounced leadership in this country at the very early stage of this country's independence. We are talking about someone who has a reason to be in parliament, and I think that is a challenge to all of us as to why we are in parliament right now? For what? It gives us an opportunity to search deep right into our own motives why we want to be in parliament at such a time as this.

I was able to join Sir Peter in the third House or the third Parliament, and as you can see history in the gallery up there of those people who served in the early times. The Member for East Choiseul mentioned something about the first

10 years of the history of this country has brought something so pronounced, so tangible and so real to this House. The plantations, the big economic things that are happening in this country, the Soltai, the plantations here in Guadalcanal and the provinces is asking us again as to why are we here. If we cannot be like them at that time then we must think again very carefully and seriously as to why we come to Parliament at such a time as this.

The first, the biggest and the most proliferate financial institution in this country, the National Provident Fund is not a motion moved by someone who has had a colorful academic record but just a simple village man who was a simple teacher, I think, I am not sure about Anthony Saru, but he was a man of vision who has established and we have seen something at the end, somewhere down the line this country would need in its development aspirations. And so the moral of the story we are discussing today is just that. If we cannot bring a gift of some kind to Sir Peter today, let us learn from his legacy. I keep at heart the sentiments expressed by the Member for East Choiseul that there will be appropriate mechanisms by the appropriate bodies to start having a look at some of the things that must due to senior citizens of this country. I think there is a culture that is brewing that people in this society no longer recognize senior citizens. It is a question of recognizing, and if this motion falls short of anything, then we in this House, it must start from us to give recognition where it is due. In that sense I would like to take this moment just to wind up this debate to say that we have seen the life of Sir Peter Kenilorea, a life, history and legacy that will go in the annals of the history of this country and into the citadels of power and leadership in Solomon Islands. I hope that today we have truly convinced ourselves of what we want to be like.

Sir Peter is a role model to many of us who have the privilege of being able to serve under his leadership in those days. But the challenge remains, it remains with us. None of his leaders understand too that 20 years down the line, we will enter a phase of social bankruptcy. From 1978 to the year 2000 is about 20 years. If we do not know yet why we are here then we are well placed in post conflict Solomon Islands. There is a vision and a purpose for all of us to be in Parliament. Those are the morals I would like to draw out. If we are here because we want to bring this country back onto the road of success, then we must avoid those things that brought our country to its knees, into social and economic bankruptcy only 20 years after independence. It is an awesome duty, a very serious one. I am asking that question myself too, as why I should come back to Parliament after 25 years. It is mind boggling, it is a question that must haunt all of us, for the reason as to why we are called to this place at such a time is this.

I just simply want to thank every one of us, Members of Parliament from both sides of the House who have contributed to this motion expressing their appreciation to the life of a person whom they also recognize even though matter they did not serve under his leadership, but they know that he is a great man that this country has produced. The people of the southern region of this country must be proud for producing a leader born out of this country in their constituents in their areas. They have taken this country this far.

To me, personally, it was rather ironic I think to see a man who welcome me during my debut in Parliament in 1985, and when I came in he took his exit, as if to say 'boss, you take over I am going away now" I was pretty emotional about that in the beginning, but I think we can still continue this House having the same confidence, Sir, in you as the new Speaker of Parliament we support you and will continue to support you in the life of this present House.

We have come this far and Sir Peter will be there, I hope you will communicate all these to Sir Peter to let him know that we are thinking of him, Lady Margaret and the children who have supported this great man. Without them, he cannot do it too. The Minister of Environment talked about the strength of the family that it is important to all of us to make delivery of our responsibility in this country. Without further ado, I would like to join the chorus and the standing ovation and appreciation of Sir Peter for a life that is fully lived and a life that lives a legacy behind. As I have said, his life and his legacy will go into the annals of the history of this country and will be remembered for a very, very long time to come. At this moment he will also take a well deserved retirement to be with his family. But I am sure he is still very conscious of public life and he will be there as a source of advice and admonition to all of us in any case that we as individuals or collectively as Members of Parliament can ask him to give us some assistance on leadership in that sense.

Without further ado, I just want to say I support the motion and resume my seat.

*The motion is agreed to*

**Hon Philip:** I beg to move that this House do now adjourn.

*The House adjourned at 6.05 p.m.*