

## MONDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2010

The Speaker, Sir Allan Kemakeza took the Chair at 9.37 a.m.

Prayers.

### ATTENDANCE

At prayers, all were present with the exception of the Minister of Mines, Energy & Rural Electrification; Lands & Housing and the Members for West Kwara'ae, Aoke/Langa Langa.

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

#### **Mystery plane crash: East Malaita**

**26. Mr SOGAVARE** to the Minister of Police, National Security & Correctional Services: Concerning the sighting of the mystery plane by the people of East Malaita, can the Minister inform Parliament as follows: What steps were taken by the government to verify the report? What is the finding of the report?

**Hon. TORA:** I would like to thank my colleague Member for East Choiseul for asking this very important question for the interest of our people in East Malaita. We have heard what has happened, and this kind of incident not only happens in East Malaita but it also happened long ago in Makira where people there also told of a similar sighting but there has been no attempt to verify what has been sighted there.

Anyway for the sake of the question asked by the good honorable Member for East Choiseul, I have the following answers from the Ministry and the Police who helped to provide the answers. Bear with me as I am going to take a bit of time to answer this question in order to clarify it.

On Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2010 around 17.45 and 18.15 hours, a number of persons from the villages of Ogou, which is about five (5) kilometres north of Atoifi and 20 kilometres south of Atori in East Malaita, reported that as they looked out to sea towards Leli Island, they saw a small aircraft emitting smoke from the rear and was travelling south. The plane was then seen to crash into the sea. This sighting was also confirmed by persons from Canaan Village as well as from witnesses who also confirmed that a small canoe had attempted to go out to the ocean area of the crash site which was about 4 to 5 km from the mainland, but turned back because of bad weather.

When the Atoifi Royal Solomon Islands Police Force received and confirmed these reports, they immediately contacted the Honiara Radio Communications at the Police Headquarters. This was communicated at 1900 hrs and it was confirmed that all aircraft from Honiara were accounted for. The Honiara Communications Unit took it further by notifying

the PPF Provincial Policing with a view to formulate a plan of approach to respond to investigations.

On Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2010 at 14:20 hours, the same night, the PPF Provincial Policing received the aircraft crash information from the Honiara Communications and therefore notified the Participating Police Force (PPF) Coordinator in Auki, the Maritime Team Leader. The PPF Coordinator in Auki commenced liaising with the RSIPF and the Atori Police. Based on indicative probability that an aircraft had crashed, the PPF deployed a helicopter with Air Support Unit and Forward Looking Infrared capability to search the suspected crash area.

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2010, the search of the ocean area in Atori was delayed and commenced at 0100 hours and with deteriorating weather conditions, the search was shortened and ceased at 0200 hrs. On the conclusion of this preliminary search response by the helicopter, it was confirmed that there was no sighting of any plane debris in the search pattern area. The next step then was to further zoom into the area of interest. At 0200 hrs, a Tier 2 boat departed Auki heading for Malu'u where at first light continued on to Atoifi where it arrived between 0800 hours and 0900 hours. The Tier 2 arrived in Atoifi and met with the RSIPF and local witnesses to the alleged plane crash. The Tier 2 and 3 banana boats conducted sea search of the area during daylight hours between 0900 hours and 1700 hours. There was no sighting of any plane debris, oil trails or bodies in the search area.

The PPF Provincial Coordinator met the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Communications and Aviation, the Director of the Solomon Islands Civil Aviation Authority (SICAA) and Chief Air Traffic Services to discuss the report of the alleged plane crash and the findings so far. They formulated a plan intended action by all parties. It was during this meeting that it was agreed that the SICAA will have "carriage of the investigation" in accordance to the legal obligations and provisions outlined in the Civil Aviation Act 2009 which relates to the legal authority of the Solomon Islands Civil Aviation Authority to investigate and enforce the rules based system under which civil aviation operates. Accordingly, SICAA sent an investigation team to Atoifi to work with the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force. The team consists of SICAA officials, the Solomon Islands Maritime Rescue personnel and members of the Royal Solomon Islands Police supported by PPF personnel. The PPF also provided assistance by airlifting three drums of fuel by helicopter from Auki to Atoifi to assist local boats conducting search of the area. The PPF Coordinator at Auki continued liaison with the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force and the Provincial Police Commander and then travelled to Atoifi to meet SICAA investigation team and assist the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force TO plan and manage the search of the sea as required. Warning orders were issued to the PPF, the RSIPF Disaster Victim Identification, Forensics and National Criminal Investigations Department in preparation and anticipation of locating a crash site and potential casualties.

On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2010, SICAA investigation team arrived on the ground in Atoifi and worked with the Royal Solomon Islands Police and the PPF to investigate the plane crash report. No evidence was found on the sea or land to support the report of a plane crash. The PPF Coordinator in Auki and SICAA investigation team left Atoifi on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2010. A debriefing meeting chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Communications and Aviation was convened where the RSIPF, the PPF, the Solomon Islands Search and Rescue and Air Traffic Services were present. The meeting made a resolution to

terminate the operation and agreed that the Atoifi RSIPF continue to monitor the area for a further 14 days.

As you would realize, the steps undertaken by the various government agencies with the assistance of the PPF are of high standard and well coordinated. It is very thorough and therefore reflects the high cooperation existing within the Solomon Islands Government Agencies and the PPF. It also reflects the urgent response that government agencies can act with the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force taking the initial leading role hence I must commend them for their actions.

In answer to question (b), as already covered in my answer to part (a), which is quite comprehensive, the findings revealed that there is no evidence of any plane crash and no evidence of any plane debris were found and that it is still a mystery.

**Mr Sogavare:** I thank the Minister for his response. I want to ask a supplementary question. The Minister made reference to 14 days put off when after doing those work they decide to put the progress of the search and whatever they were doing for 14 days. After the 14 days what else were you doing?

**Hon. Tora:** I would like to thank the honorable colleague Member for East Choiseul for that supplementary question. After those 14 days my office did not get any further information about the plane crash.

**Mr ABANA:** Thank you Minister for your comprehensive answer. The Minister also said there were similar sightings in Makira. Can the Minister explain what made those sightings similar to the one at Atoifi?

**Hon. Tora:** I mentioned that Makira has similar sightings of an aircraft. One example I can cite is that some people in West Makira way back in the 80s have seen a same kind of aircraft flying above the trees and then plunging down into the bush. That is one real story coming from there. When that plane disappeared into the bush, they could not see anything and so the people ran to the place they thought they saw it going down and searched the place but they did not find any aircraft. They even saw a speed boat when they went fishing at night but when they went closer it disappeared and they did not see it.

**Mr HANARIA:** You would agree with me that this is costing the government when we do not have reliable information for the government to act on. My question is, how reliable does your Ministry assess information of such nature before committing government to involve in a search?

**Hon. Tora:** It is reliable information that comes from people who saw it with their own eyes. When information reached the Police and other relevant authorities, they cannot turn a blind eye to such information but they have to carry out investigations into it. Because if they just sit down after getting information without doing anything is not good because it will only create

complaints and all that from that area. Although the government spent money on that investigation I think it is only proper and is fitting.

**Mr HOUANIPWELA:** This is a matter of interest to some of us. As the Minister mentioned, reports that come pointed to similar sightings in different places and the Minister has just mentioned that it is already a mystery to some people. The Minister's report seems to indicate that this will remain a mystery. I want to know whether the government wants this thing to remain a mystery.

**Hon Tora:** My answer to part (b) of the question states very clearly that there is no evidence and so it will still remain a mystery.

**Mr SOALAOI:** I have two very short supplementary questions for the Minister. I would have thought that if someone says he actually sees the thing then there is no need to waste time to go and find out. My question is whether the Minister of Police knows exactly how many people sighted the plane, and also in the Minister's answer at the end he mentioned that the incident remains a mystery which I want the Minister to explain to us in what ways has the incident become a mystery to our people.

**Hon Tora:** The question asked was already made clear. I have already answered that question in the lengthy answer I have given. If any sightings happen again, I believe relevant authorities will continue to investigate if it is going to cause fear to people in any particular area that sighted the plane. But I do not have information as to the number of people who have seen the plane.

**Mr Abana:** The Minister mentioned that people from Ogou and Canaan actually sighted the plane or something else from a distance of about four to five kilometers. Minister, I did not hear you say whether they actually heard any sound of explosion coming from the impact of the plane going into the sea. I only heard you say that the people only saw the plane ditching into the sea but whether there is any explosion. Can you clarify that?

**Hon Tora:** The information I received was that the people saw smoke coming out of the plane when it seemed to crash into the sea.

**Hon MAELANGA:** Thank you for allowing me to contribute briefly to questions raised by my colleague Members on the other side to the Minister of Police.

I think this incident happened in my constituency and therefore I would like to inform the House that sightings like this have been happening there a long time ago, and when this report came it confirmed that there is nothing and so even those of us in East Malaita are not too sure what this is all about. If we start to think this is an UFO or try to study areas like that you will start to be aware of things like this. We even heard about similar sightings in Makira like my people are seeing lights and when they went and check they find nothing.

It is good that this thing has happened and police report confirms that there is no evidence of a plane crash. I mean for us in East Malaita it is a bit strange to us that such a thing

like that happens but for us to actually know what that is, we do not know. I just want to clarify this to the House so that we know. I do not know about other places but where the incident happened, from my village in the middle of the bush I can look down to the sea and during some of my times in my village I can see this strange sighting. I can see lights appearing which later on disappeared and when people go down to check there is nothing. I just want to clarify this to the House for the information of Members of Parliament.

I think the report given by the Police is very clear and all of us should be satisfied with. All the detailed information we might need from the Police has been given by the Minister of Police this morning and therefore I do not think we should ask the Minister of Police any further questions because it is very clear there.

**Mr Sogavare:** As rightly expressed by the Deputy Prime Minister, I think the question has been fully answered by the Minister for Police. This side of the House only has the duty to ensure our people are safe. What actually happened was reported by the people that they actually sight things crashing into the seas and it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Police and National Security to ensure that we know exactly what is happening. Since this thing has happened and has become public knowledge, I think we should be putting more emphasis to actually establish what has really happened instead of just ruling them off as something that just happens. There are things called UFO so that is the concern of this side of the House. In saying that, I thank the Minister for responding to the question. .

### **Police Retirement Scheme**

**27. Mr SOGAVARE** to the Minister for Police, National Security and Correctional Services: Concerning the retirement scheme for the Police announced by the Acting Commissioner of Police, can the Minister brief Parliament as follows:

- (a) Explain the workings and objectives of the scheme?
- (b) How many officers have been identified to benefit from the scheme?
- (c) How will the retirement scheme affect the level of experience and effectiveness of the Force?

**Hon TORA:** I would like to thank colleague Member of Parliament for East Choiseul for this very important question which is of interest of this House and our people.

To answer part (a) of the question, I would like to begin by saying that I do not know which scheme my good Honourable Member for East Choiseul is referring to. As far as I am concerned, it is just part of a process in which any organisation would undertake to move an organisation forward and it is called a retirement process.

Anyway, I am assuming that the Honorable Member for East Choiseul must be referring to the retirement process which the Royal Solomon Islands Police is currently progressing. But the difficulty with the question asked was, it does not specify which retirement exercise.

For the sake of answering questions, I wish to inform the House that the Royal Solomon Island Police force has embarked with its retirement exercise. This exercise is an ongoing

process done annually. However, this year we realize that there are four categories that differentiate the retirement exercise. Firstly, we have the outstanding age retirement for 2008 to 2009. Secondly, the age retirement 2010 and then the voluntary early retirement capacity issues and finally the voluntary early retirement tension related issues. These retirement exercises will all be funded by RAMSI.

On the outstanding age retirement 2008 to 2009, this category refers to officers that have reached the compulsory retirement age of 55 of years in 2008 and 2009 but due to the financial situation faced by the government they are still at work. There are currently 15 officers that fall under this category which includes 1 superintendent, 2 inspectors, 5 senior sergeants and 4 police constables. The total cost required to retire these officers is \$621,490.35 and they will be paid in accordance with the Solomon Islands Government retirement benefit when their 30 days notice expired at the end of September 2010.

In regards to the age retirement 2010, this category relates to officers who have reached the age of 55 this year. There are five (5) officers in this category which includes 1 Assistant Commissioner of Police, 1 Inspector, 2 Senior Sergeants and 1 Sergeant. These officers will be paid their normal Solomon Islands Government retirement benefits when the 30 days notice expires at the end of September 2010, which already expired. The total cost for retirement for these 5 officers is \$893,490.35.

The next is the voluntary early retirement capacity issues. This voluntary early retirement is offered to officers who have reached their capacity and could not progress any higher in rank and therefore would like to exit the organization. These officers have been given the opportunity prove themselves by posting them to various posts according to either their field of interest or background during the revitalization and succession planning program. But as revealed in the final assessment by the Police Executive, these officers have reached their limit and could not progress any further. Hence these officers fall under this capacity issues category. There are 16 officers that fall under this category and they are aged between 50 and 54. The cost of retiring this group is \$3,049,477.86. When they leave on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2010, this is how they will be paid: Payment of their current fortnightly salary up to their 55<sup>th</sup> birthday; conversions of their current outstanding annual leave to cash; payment of rent subsidy if currently paid to their 55<sup>th</sup> birthday; payment of their current allowances to their 55<sup>th</sup> birthday; NPF employer deduction will be taken off at 5% of eligible amount and along with employer contribution of 7.5% with the total will be credited to their NPF account; repatriation cost in accordance with the Solomon Islands Government calculations as stipulated in the General Order.

Finally, on the voluntary early retirement tension related issues, there is substantial evidence that a good majority of the Solomon Islands community still do not trust and have confidence on the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force. This is highlighted in both the Foreign Relations Committee Report 2009 and the RAMSI People Survey Report. Furthermore, the RSIPF also conducted consultations with the provincial governments and members of the RSIPF in the provinces and it clearly revealed that the main reasons for this lack of trust and confidence is because some members of the Force who were involved in the armoury raid tension related activities are still members of the RSIPF. Trust and confidence by the

community is a significant factor to rebuilding the RSIPF. Without trust and confidence in our Force we will not move forward.

Now at this stage, the number is still yet to be determined for this category. The process has commenced on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 2010 where every member of the RSIPF is invited to unanimously volunteer his or her name or the names of other officers to be considered for voluntary early retirement by way of secret ballot. This simply means that if you feel you are in this category you pick up a form, nominate yourself and drop the form in the ballot box nearest to you. This process concluded on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2010.

A steering committee consisting of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force and the Solomon Islands Government representatives will screen the names volunteered to ensure their inclusion in ethnic related issues. A final list will then be submitted to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for counseling and confidential interview. At the conclusion of these closed interviews, the TRC will inform the steering committee of the outcome. The steering committee will discuss the TRC outcomes and then forward the list of names to the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force Executive to make the offer for voluntary early retirement ethnic related issues, to identified officers. Once an officer accepts the voluntary early retirement offer under this category, the Commissioner of Police will then submit to the Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services as per normal Public Service retirement process.

The objective of this exercise is to achieve the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force strategic vision which is and I quote, "The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force is a leading professional organization of excellence, capable, trusted and accountable". The Royal Solomon Island Force can only achieve this vision by working together in partnership with our communities building confidence and trust in the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force for a safe, peaceful and prosperous Solomon Islands.

On part (b) of the question, I believe I have already answered this question when explaining the four different categories of the retirement exercise. But if you missed it, it is summarized as follows: Outstanding age retirement 2008 to 2009 - 15 officers; age retirement 2010 - five officers; voluntary early retirement capacity issues officers – 16 officers; voluntary early retirement tension related issues - no number as yet.

On part (c) of the question, these retirement exercises like any other retirement exercises in any organization will result in a loss of certain officers with experience. Surely, in our case we will stand to lose these experienced officers. We would lose one assistant commissioner of police, one superintendent, three inspectors, three senior sergeants, at least from the confirmed categories. On the positive side, it would mean the availability of posts within the Force for promotions of officers to fill the gaps and vacancies for new recruitment of new officers. It simply means availability of posts for reorganization of the Force to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of the Force, especially with cascading effect by promoting officers.

Naturally, when officers are promoted they are full of energy because of the satisfaction of being promoted. It means the blood is once again pumping and circulating, providing life to the organization, encouraging other parts of the organization to function properly. As I stated earlier, this retirement exercise has changed part of the process of revitalizing and developing the organization.

**Mr WALE:** Thank you Minister for a very informative response. This voluntary early retirement category – the third category where there are 16 officers, as you outlined, these are retirements on the basis of capacity limitations; they are limited and cannot advance and so they are encouraged to apply for early retirement. What about those who may have similar capacity limitations but do not volunteer under the scheme?

**Hon. Tora:** If you had listened carefully, this voluntary early retirement exercise or whatever retirement it is, everybody seems to be racing for these exercises, the process, because they want to do something of their own in public life before they grow old. It looks like under this category a lot of people have come forward. Although there maybe one outside the provinces, but I think they will still come forward.

**Mr Wale:** The Minister did not answer my question because it is like this. The management, the Police Executive must have some assessments as to who is limited in his/her capacity and those people would be encouraged to apply. It cannot be just opened up, and then the officers themselves as officers will judge themselves as limited in capacity and therefore they apply. I think it is clear that the executive or the management must have some idea on the numbers and officers whom they consider in their staff appraisals whom they feel should benefit under the scheme.

My question that he did not answer is that they must already have an idea on the numbers. Are they confident the full number is 16 or if there are others of such officers did not apply, what is the fallback position because this is an important process to try to revitalize and strengthen the RSIP?

**Hon. Tora:** The executive has made an assessment of the officers. As you have heard me mention in my answers, this category of officers are those that throughout their lifetime in the Force cannot be promoted; they were posted to various divisions in Force to try and upgrade them but they cannot improve. Again, they have the right to remain in the Force but their performances will be continuously reviewed and when the time comes they can apply for retirement.

**Mr HOU:** I would like to say before I ask my question that I commend the government for this exercise as I think this is a very important exercise. The Minister reiterated especially the voluntary early retirement scheme, the scheme for ethnic tension related issues that the presence of officers involved in the tension still in the Force compromises the confidence and trust of the public on the Force and so I think this is a very important scheme.

Usually in such a voluntary scheme, what normally happens is that the people we do not want to retire are the ones who would go. Another thing as well is that experience has shown that sometimes the people who retire, all of a sudden they pop up again in some other capacities wherever they leave. My question is this, I want the Minister to tell us what steps will be taken to mitigate against this thing from happening so that concerns like these are addressed.

**Hon. Tora:** I would like to thank the Member for Small Malaita for his supplementary question.

Under the category the MP referred to, the voluntary early retirement on tension related issues, I think you have heard me say that they will go through the process of interviewing by the TRC. As all of us are aware that the interview will be treated as highly confidential and then their names would come back to the Executive to look at, as I have already stated in my answers.

**Mr Hou:** I thank the Minister's reaction to my question, but I am still not really satisfied with the answer. What I am asking is a general question in relation to the three schemes, the three categories or the three schemes that he announced. My question is this and let me repeat it; usually such retirement schemes, especially voluntary early retirement, what normally happens, and this in government is that when you ask people to volunteer for retirement, it is usually the people that we do not want to retire are the ones who would volunteer to retire.

Secondly, another thing that happens and this is past experience, those people who retire come back inside from wherever they retire from, they pop up again in different capacities, like they reapply to become consultants or they come in again and do other work inside wherever that they had left. I see this happen in government in the part. My question is, I want the Minister to explain the steps the government is putting in place or will be putting in place to ensure this does not happen?

**Hon. ETE:** I would like to give further information to this honorable chamber on this scheme that we know. This scheme is approved by the Police and Prison Services Commission. Section 7 of the Police and Prison Services Commission gives power to the Commissioner to do that. As we know the national constitution 137(2) says that anything approved by the Commission is already final, and so the Police just went along to get this scheme going.

Thank you, the Member for Small Malaita for that question. Sections 71 and 72 of the Public Service Commission Regulation talks about what you are questioning, which says you can terminate your employment on voluntary basis or when you reach the age of 55 or the minimum prescribed retirement age if you so decide.

Section 72 opens it up that if you want to volunteer, you can go on volunteer but being mindful of the fact that a lot of people who volunteer to go off on retirement still have some usefulness in the service. But they went out on retirement because they volunteer and there is no law that precludes them from coming back into the service in any capacity; there is virtually no law to it, it is an open market, people can apply to go wherever they want in the private sector or the public sector.

These people go out on voluntary retirement as opposed to the person who reaches 50, there is a bar on him/her that when he/she reaches 50, he/she will not come back in the Public Service.

I am not aware of any mechanisms that successive governments, previous governments may have put in place to stop such people from coming back into the public service. Many of them I have seen coming back into the public service as advisors or consultants on fixed term

appointments. Many of such people are employed according to the wish of the government of the day as political advisors and positions like that.

This is a very open question to tackle and I may not have answered it really well, but this is what has been happening within the rim of the public service.

**Hon. Tora:** I would like to thank my colleague Minister of Public Service for additional information for clarification of the questions. The question asked by my colleague Member for Small Malaita is on these nationals or our local police officers when they retire who is going to take their place. If I am right the answer is those posts will be filled by our nationals and not foreigners. That is why I stated in my answers that it gives way for promotion and promotion means promotion of local officers within the Force who are going to move up to take up those posts and more recruitments will be made year after year.

**Mr ABANA:** The fourth category involves officers who are involved in the ethnic tension. Minister, you are silent on the number or how many of them. I am to believe that there is some degree of consultations that has happened in these four categories. The question is whether those officers have grasped what is there for them or is ahead of them in this whole process because it will be done on secret ballot, and through the consultations they should be prepared to take on the secret ballot. I want to question their degree of understanding before they move on to the TRC. Because if it does not happen the way they might accept it then they might pull back and the whole thing might not work. But I will leave it to the wisdom of the Minister to give us some answers on this.

**Mr Tora:** As I stated in my answer, this category as yet, we do not know the number, but the process it will take is well coordinated by the executive of the police to the TRC and from the TRC back to the executive before anything would happen, any nomination would happen to anyone of this grouping coming forward and say they would now like to retire under this category. If I do not provide a satisfactory answer here then I will find more information on this, as I am yet to bring a paper to Cabinet to especially consider category No. 4.

**Mr Speaker:** Can we have the last supplementary question as we seem to cover the question very well.

**Mr Sogavare:** Just a last supplementary relating to the question asked by the Member for Small Malaita, and this relates as well to part (c) of the question. If you look at the number of officers who are going to be affected here, there are 15 in category one and 16 in category 2 by way of limitation in capacity. That is already about 35/36 officers and depending on what kind of ranks they are holding in the police and if we talk about the others that will come in, we will probably be talking about more than 100. If those people retire today, what will be the effect on the capacity of the Force in terms of experience and effectiveness?

**Hon Tora:** If this group of experienced officers retires from the Force today, the executive has already identified those who will be promoted to take up their places because they are also experienced.

**Mr Sogavare:** As expressed by some colleagues here, this side of the House welcomes this move to making our Force effective so that our people trust the Force. We are questioning just to ensure that whatever we do does not undermine the effectiveness and experience the Force needs to serve our people. In saying that, I thank the Minister for answering our questions.

**Mr Speaker:** That concludes our question time and we will move onto the next business.

## MOTIONS

**Mr Speaker:** Honorable Members on Thursday, the Prime Minister moved that at the adjournment of Parliament on Friday the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010, the present meeting shall be concluded and Parliament shall then stand adjourned sine die.

On Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October, the motion was amended under Standing Order 8(4) to change the date. The motion, however, now is that at the adjournment of Parliament on Monday, which is today 4<sup>th</sup> October 2010, the present meeting shall be concluded and Parliament shall then stand adjourned sine die. On Friday the debate was adjourned to today.

Honourable Members, debate on the motion continues and concludes today. As I have alluded to on Friday, this is an opportunity for Members to contribute to this broad ranging debate and I encourage Members to make use of this opportunity. May I also kindly remind Members to be mindful of the time, give time also to your colleague Members who have yet to speak on this important motion. So far 10 Members have spoken on the motion; 5 from the government bench and five from the opposition bench. Honorable Members, the floor is now open for debate and I have been asked earlier on by the Member of Parliament for West New Georgia/Vona Vona.

**Mr. VAGARA:** The motion before the House, the motion of sine die introduced by the Prime Minister marks the end of the present meeting, and I would like to thank you very much indeed for the opportunity to join others in the debate of the motion.

I am a new member in this Parliament recently elected by some 1,487 voters of the constituency of West New Georgia and Vonavona, a difference of 160 majority votes from my runner-up, the former member of the same constituency, Peter James Boyers. And thus, in participating on the debate of the motion, it would be proper and with your indulgence, I pay homage to the constituents and to acknowledge and appreciate the support they gave me during the period of the election and up to the announcement of the successful candidates.

The election challenges, the campaigning, the various public discussions and the final debating with other constituents in many villages and the sleepless nights that my campaign team endured were actions that were strenuous and stressful but rewarding indeed. The cost in terms of money and time were considerable and in terms of expenditure I have to work within the limit imposed by the Electoral Commission.

I must now say to my constituents – the residents of the constituency of West New Georgia and Vonavona, thank you very much folks, you have made it possible for me to represent you in the Ninth Parliament of Solomon Islands. The going was difficult, 12 were the contestants and you have made it possible for all of us to gauge our popularity and know our position in the constituency at this point in time. To my Election Committee whose guidance and wisdom made everything possible, thank you very profoundly for your unwavering support. To those who doubted and still doubt me, my maturity and competency and whom I failed to earn your votes, I am still your representative and we can work together in the next four years: “Leana hola koa ghamu doduru” (Thank you very much to all of you).

Allow me also to make a very brief parting remarks/farewell remarks to the Rt. Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea. I was to have offered words of thanks to the Rt. Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea when the Prime Minister introduced the motion, the motion that recognized the Rt. Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea’s contributions to the country but time did not permit me to join others on the same debate. However, I wish to make my short remarks on this and to tell you all that I too, on behalf of my constituency wish to record my heartfelt appreciation to one of the founding fathers of Solomon Islands. In order to appropriately acknowledge the many contributions made by this great man, one has to be well versed about his biography and in particular about the various responsibilities he assumed and the leadership he provided, and that is worthy of our commendation.

I must immediately admit that my understanding of his leadership and contributions were through primary school history and other brief information from the Honourable Member for North New Georgia whom I understood was his student at King George in the 70’s. The curriculum in the primary school grade 6 included Solomon Islands basic history including the government and the events leading up to the independence of Solomon Islands. My learning of the government then includes the various ministers who were at the helm of our nation previously including others, some of whom had eternally gone. The Rt Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea, I learned, was our first chief minister who with a parliamentary delegation successfully negotiated with the British Government for our independence in July 7<sup>th</sup> 1978. On this Independence Day he became the first Prime Minister for the first parliament of our country Solomon Islands. I was not yet born then rather I was born four years later. Thus the history of the independence of Solomon Islands is also the history of the Rt Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea; both intertwined. In other words, the Rt Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea is Solomon Islands and Solomon Islands is the Rt Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea. You cannot omit one from the other. This is a fact that history cannot betray.

His assertion to serve the country in higher administration and later on in politics demonstrates his keenness to serve his countrymen and the country selflessly. No words adequately expressed would be sufficient to describe the many contributions and achievements he has made for all of us and the country, both as a public officer and as prime ministers in past governments. His services as the Director of the Forum Fisheries Agency extended his contribution to the Pacific Forum countries, and is a manifestation of the trust and confidence the region has on him and to which he responded well as he provided leadership with vision, commitment and dedication in the service of the Forum countries. He was the first local director in the regional institution, a true son of Solomon Islands.

The peace negotiation that he involved in negotiating for reconciliation and building bridges between the warring parties during the ethnic tension to find peaceful solution to the tension made it absolutely clear his love for a peaceful Solomon Islands is unmatched indeed. He is above and beyond ethnic animosity.

My colleagues who commended him for his contributions and leadership have given sufficient acknowledgement about his service as a politician, administrator, a regional director of the FFA and as an individual, and I share this as well. At this point of commendation of Rt Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea, it would be a failure on my part should I not offer my thankful voice to the people of Are Are and the province of Malaita. And so on behalf of my constituents, I thank very much the people of Are Are and people of Malaita for your son whom I have the privilege to commend today.

The people of Are Are and the people of Malaita in general have over the past years produced leaders who serve with high distinctions. To the family of Honourable Sir Peter Kenilorea, thank you for the understanding in the course of your father's national service. On behalf of my constituents, once again to Sir Peter Kenilorea, thank you very much for all that you have done for the country, and I pray that the Almighty would continue to give you strength and good health as you retire from the service of the people. In my language I would say, "leana hola" (very good).

Let me now turn to the Motion of Sine-Die. The end of a meeting sine die is preparation for another because for the time being the government has nothing for the Parliament to deliberate on. Government business or agenda will be put to parliament at a future meeting is what we are agreeing on now. I have no objection to this, only a steady mind to agree to meet about nothing.

We have, at this meeting, passed two very important bills, namely the Customs Valuation Amendment Bill 2010 and the Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2010. The passage of these bills gave the new government encouragement to work towards improving services for the people.

The Customs Valuation (Amendment) Bill 2010 will see the replacement of the free on board method of shipment or calculations of import duty, cost insurance and freight charges. This new arrangement is considered by the government to be of advantageous to the country and fair to the importers. Additionally, the amendment can allow regulatory measures that would seek from importers compliance to certain requirements and that duties are reasonable and to the equivalent cost of the goods entering the country. Thus, the passage of the Customs Valuation Amendment Bill 2010 enables the government to regulate imports and should there be weaknesses we might find in time, we can always amend the Act for improvement through the same process.

I would also like to mention that the passage of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2010 shall enable the country to continue to function on the sectors that are short of financial resources. It is pleasing to note that the government is making up for the shortfalls in the original estimates of 2010, shortfalls that Parliament should not deny otherwise we will fail our own people. There are 13 ministries that are beneficiaries of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2010 and these are important ministries and each ministry has its own allocations. The total authorization for Parliament is \$177.8million roughly. From this total authorization

expenditure, some \$20million is additional expenditure for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and External Trade. The amount is for a right purpose.

The outgoing government must be commended for the wisdom to have Solomon Islands own building, the Solomon Islands Chancery in Canberra, Australia. This will be the second Solomon Islands own overseas high commission office after Papua New Guinea. This office, the Solomon Islands High Commission office, shall give importance to our country and it is our frontline to the Australian Government on matters that are of interest to both countries and their citizens. I must also commend the government for continuing the project, and in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade for its vision and wisdom to locate Solomon Islands in the Australian Capital Territory, Canberra.

I now turn to the Munda domestic airport in the likelihood or in the hopes of it becoming a second international airport for Solomon Islands. I do not intend to make an issue out of this, but merely to make brief comments and perhaps to assist and guide the new government in its priorities. The lead question that I wish to ask in order to guide the government in its future planning and prioritization is, what benefits does the supplementary appropriation has on my constituency, West New Georgia Vona Vona or on other constituencies in Solomon Islands?

I do acknowledge that my constituency might benefit indirectly on this supplementary appropriation but not directly. However, that which directly relates to my constituency is the intention to convert or upgrade the Munda domestic airport to international standard as appeared in the original estimates 2010. There is an allocation of some \$10 million in the original estimates. The fact it does not appear in this supplementary appropriation is more reason that the money is still unspent and that the government is keeping with its promise on the conversion of the domestic airport into international standard is well on schedule.

The project is long overdue; it was conceived in the Sixth Parliament and here we are in the Ninth Parliament. It is not good enough to talk about economic infrastructures or raising revenue for the country without putting in place the means of generating revenue. Perhaps, the new government will prioritize this project and have it built within the lifespan of this Ninth Parliament. Yes, you can make a difference by working on this project.

The development of this country is the development of the people of the country and the development of the people of the country is the development of people of our constituencies, mine included, and many of these people are the youths of today. Often I heard that the youths of today are the leaders of tomorrow. This observation must be worked on to enable the youths to be leaders of tomorrow.

I was happy indeed to learn from the Minister of Home Affairs, the Honorable Deputy Prime Minister's response to a question I raised a week ago in relation to the Football Stadium that was supposed to be built or is in the process of being built early next year. Beach Soccer and Futsal are new codes that we are now playing and in a very short span of time these two codes landed us in the World Cup Tournament in previous years. Solomon Islands is considered to be the champion of these football codes because of our success over other teams in past years – the most recent was the Oceania Football Confederation (OFC) Futsal Championship in Fiji a couple of months ago. The young generation has something to look forward to in sports and especially football. I am pleased to note that the Solomon Islands

Football Federation (SIFF) is working on the project and have indicated that the project will be funded by the Oceania Football Confederation.

I would like to suggest that the government assists the SIFF on this. I have information that the government and the people of Libya are ready to assist Solomon Islands and to build the same stadium. Solomon Islands was unknown in Libya but the futsal match between Kurukuru and Libya during the Alfatah Confederation Championship in October 2009 made the people of Libya know Solomon Islands as a country, in particular the match Solomon Kurukuru led until the second half by which time Libya equalized. The near embarrassment of the Crown Prince of Libya was saved in the last minutes when the host country scored the winning goal and has the result stood at 5 – 6 in favor of Libya.

The skills and professional manner these young lads demonstrated in the tournament won the hearts of the people of Libya. On finding that the Solomon Kurukuru does not have any futsal facilities yet stood against the might of other futsal giants of the world, the likes of Iran, Uruguay and Guatemala, won the hearts of many. It is on this admiration that I am given to understand that Libya is keen to help Solomon Islands build a futsal stadium.

I suggest that our government seeks from the government of Libya confirmation of this offer so that we can have a futsal stadium equal to international standard. It is only right that this be done on government to government basis – after all Solomon Islands has diplomatic ties with Libya, and I am sure that Libya will advise us of the truth and perhaps agree to build the stadium. I leave this very important matter in the capable hands of the new government.

I have said time and time again in my campaign before the election, and I have suggested in many discussions in private and in public that the interest of the youths must be aligned with the interest of the country. I heard in many places during the campaign, and I want to say it loud and clear in this public domain as well that the development we are talking about is for the youth of this country. This is our generation, this is our time and this is our future that we are talking about. The youth of today can look after the old; let us there help the youth to help the country and its old citizens.

I have said what little I have to say. The sine die motion is straightforward and a timely call for us to wind up the meeting. Other comments of mine can wait for another time or in the next meeting. I must now thank you, Mr Speaker, for presiding over this meeting and the support your office continues to give us. Your election to the Speaker's position is a trust vested on you because of your sincerity, simplicity and capability. Thank you very much.

To you the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, thank you for your understanding and support for making this meeting successful. To you the Hansard ladies thank you for recording our comments. For some of us, the hansard records will be a source of information and guidance. To the secretariat of the committees, the induction program was educational and the various lectures and power point illustrations about the Standing Orders, the role of parliamentarian in leadership etc. made things easier for people like us who are new members of parliament. To all ladies in the cafeteria, the auxiliary staff, thank you very much for everything that you have provided for us.

To you colleague Members of Parliament, although I am half your age and younger, thank you for accepting me as your equal and thank you for your friendship. I wish you well as you return to your people and constituencies. Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to

contribute to the motion and I beg to support the motion. As I said earlier, government services must continue and payments must be made to where they are due. Thank you and I beg to support the motion.

**Mr WALE:** It is an honor to speak after the youngest brother in this House, it makes me feel young and also to assume some of his youthful energy, passion and wisdom, perhaps to my contribution this morning. I also wish to thank the Honorable Prime Minister for the motion to allow Members to freely air their thoughts on a wide range of issues and perhaps room to waffle a little bit as well.

I was also interested in much of what the Prime Minister said when he moved the motion. Obviously, what the Prime Minister said is important for government policy and is therefore worthy of our careful consideration. We have truly been primed for release of the government's policy intentions tomorrow.

I said last week that this side of the House is very, very keen to see the government succeed and also to see each Minister succeed because for the government to succeed it means this country will also succeed. It is in all our interest in that of our people, of government and that of our democracy and the institutions that our democracy stands on that government succeeds at the priorities it sets for itself. However, it is mostly up to the government itself to ensure it is successful and the responsibility for any lack of success must rest squarely with the government.

The Opposition is very keen to support the Government in its endeavors to move our beautiful country forward as we face the challenges of the present and chart the course for our future. We are in this one ship together. We on this side of the House will do our utmost not to allow the ship to be taken on a wrong course, to be run aground or sink either by design or by default. Clearly, our support to government will mostly be in maintaining a high level of scrutiny of all government intentions and actions. It is important to our country and it is certainly necessary to government that this be the case. The human condition requires it.

The use, abuse, misuse and lack of use of executive power must be held to scrutiny to protect everyone involved - the people and their nation's state. The people are keen to know the intentions and actions of their government. They are also entitled to know that such intentions and actions can stand the scrutiny required to ensure the best outcomes are being pursued by government in its policy intentions and actions. Even Ministers in government need scrutiny to help them remain focused on the government's own declared policy intentions.

On that note, it seems to me that some Ministers in Government do not want to be scrutinized in Parliament. I find this rather comical. Why stand for election to Parliament if that is your attitude? Why accept a ministerial appointment if that is your natural disposition? Would you prefer that Parliament scrutiny of Government be removed from its functions? Because by implication that is what is being suggested by those who treat parliamentary scrutiny with disrespect and/or prefer to do without it. It ought to go without saying that there is nothing personal in being scrutinized by Parliament.

Further, for Parliament to be effective in scrutinizing executive government, it means the Opposition must be effective. The Opposition cannot be effective if it lacks access to accurate

information. Parliamentary scrutiny of executive government is only effective to the extent of the Opposition's effectiveness; otherwise Parliament is reduced to a rubberstamp.

Further, you are personally responsible in ensuring that Parliament does not become a rubberstamp for the executive government. The people own this Parliament through the constitution and you have an obligation to the people to ensure that their Parliament will be respected and will remain impartial so that it can hold executive government to account on its actions and intentions. This is a role you are eminently qualified to do and one I am sure you will do well.

The honorable Prime Minister spoke about his reflections during his years out of Parliament and the conclusions he reached leading him to proposed fundamental changes to the constitution. Even from the various statements that have so far been made by the Prime Minister, it is still not clear precisely what form such changes will take. The issues as outlined by him are definitely important issues that are constitutional in nature, and I suppose in time he will be able to outline in greater detail perhaps his proposed changes and their implications. He must take the time to do this properly.

As I heard him speak last week, I reflected on our system of government, our version of the Westminster Parliamentary Democracy, at least at the way it has evolved so far. In most Westminster Parliamentary Democracies, political parties go to the people during an election with a clearly articulated set of policy intentions. The reason for this is foundational to having a vibrant participatory democracy. For Parliament to remain relevant, it must be responsive to the people. This is basic to ensuring the people determine what Parliament will do and can hold government to account in an election for not fulfilling their mandate.

The mandate for executive government to pursue certain policy directions through Parliament must in the first instance come from the people in an election. We go to the people and inform them of what we think government should do over the next four years, at least but hopefully for a longer period than that and we explain why we think this is the right direction.

We allow the people to question and criticize such policy intentions and the outcomes of the elections are then assumed to reflect the people's mandate on the policies that have been placed before them. Government should not do what it did not seek the people's mandate for. Of course, this is probably putting it too simply, however, there is a fundamental principle at stake in this. We must be careful not to assume for ourselves any national mandate that was never given by the people nationwide. It is not enough for one or two constituencies' election outcomes to be the basis for a claim to a national mandate. Further, I wonder what we mean when we say that our people have given us their mandate that has been bandaged around here. By definition, mandate must be given for a specific purpose or objective to be pursued. By definition, mandate assumes that the one giving the mandate is the master and the one seeking and when granted, executing the mandate is the servant who must give an account to the master for it. That, in a nutshell, is the basic relationship that is assumed in the word 'mandate'.

The way the word mandate had been bandaged round in this House, almost seems to suggest that our people have given us a blanket approval to come to Parliament, perhaps become part of executive government and do whatever we think is best by our own judgment solely. It is rather like a signed blank cheque given to us to spend as we think best. Of course, we are required in large measure to exercise our best judgment as we make day to day decisions

in government in light of the best advice and the best information before us. However, the relevance and legitimacy of government policy must, as of necessity, be rooted firmly in the people. This is part of what we mean when we say that democracy must be bedded in the people.

There is a certain level of arrogance on our part when we assume for ourselves a blanket mandate to use as we wish. By implication we are saying that the people do not need to be involved in setting the direction of this country's government and its vision or we are saying that the people are incompetent to participate meaningfully in the policy dialogue and process. We assume for ourselves a blanket mandate so that after an election, we are at liberty to go way beyond the boundaries of any mandate that was given to us by the people. It smacks a little of elitism but this has been our situation for quite a while now.

Where and how did the Prime Minister obtain a clear national mandate for the fundamental reforms he is proposing? Of course, in our current circumstances, it is probably difficult to obtain a national mandate on a body of policies simply because there are far too many independents in the House and the relative weakness of political parties in our system. Further, the first-past-the-post electoral system presents its own contribution to the lack of legitimacy to the mandate of individual MPs who are elected with less than 50% of the registered votes. In our case, this is probably the vast majority of MPs in the House. There are, of course, other challenges that contribute to this general but fundamental weakness in our leadership selection process. All of these points to the obvious need for serious reform and reform I am happy to note the Honourable Prime Minister has pledged to pursue in Parliament.

The development prospects for Solomon Islands still remain uncertain. The regulatory reforms brought in by the CNURA Government under its umbrella policy of making Solomon Islands the best investment destination in the South West Pacific is the start of a shift in the right direction and this government, I hope, will continue where we left off. However, per capita income has not improved since independence. It is clear that we will not be able to achieve the MDGs by the deadline of 2015. Our dependence on foreign aid has sharply increased.

It is still the case that although most Solomon Islanders agree that government is important, they do not, for the most part, see or feel governments in the villages. This points, generally speaking, to the lack of effectiveness of government. Government remains weak, ineffective and constrained mostly to Honiara and the urban centers. The government's ability to create employment and deliver reasonable quality health and education services and physical infrastructures such as roads, wharfs, bridges and so forth has been constrained by this ineffectiveness. The relative lack of respect for the rule of law and corruption are still seriously undermining government's effectiveness.

The statement by the Minister of Finance that we must now aim in our fiscal management to build sufficient reserves each year in the budget is the right step. We condemn ourselves to perpetuity of unsustainable budgetary position when we leave very little for the following years. This situation might have arisen as a misconception of the balanced budget approach, a misconception that assumes that all revenues collected in a year must be fully spent in that fiscal year. The government has clearly demonstrated that it can be disciplined as in the case with its debt servicing obligations. The same level of discipline is required to ensure that a

reasonable level of reserves is built up to give the government room to move in difficult times, but also have cash available for important strategic projects deemed priority by the government.

With regards to donor funded programs and RAMSI, it needs to be said that capacity building by TA advisors has not worked as well as we would like it to. As the TA component, generally speaking, is a sizable component of aid funding. There is need to further dialogue with our partners to see how we might get better and more effective capacity building in our institutions for indigenous Solomon Islanders and achieve value for money at the same time. We should not fear and must not make them fear capacity building through inline positions. The Prime Minister's announcement that he would like to hasten RAMSI's exit will hinge on whether there is effective sustainable capacity building in our institutions of state.

On that note, I wish only to say that none of us, none of us wants to see RAMSI remains in this country forever, nor do I think our friends in the region who are part of RAMSI. However, while it is a good sign that we are ambitious for an early exit of RAMSI, we must also be realistic that the capacity of our institutions are robust enough, especially the Police. Our ambition for an early RAMSI exit must remain our worthy policy intention that must drive our efforts at capacity building with urgency and resourcefulness. This country will be ready for a total RAMSI exit when the Police as an institution are ready. That is the bottom line equation. Further, recent arrests for corruption in the magistracy point to troubling concerns in an important path of our judiciary. Our institutions are only as good as the people tasked with the offices.

The memories of our recent past are still fresh and vivid and the days when a few people used the Treasury at Finance as their private quarry are still as vivid as it was yesterday. Although it is arguable, fear of the law may have increased since RAMSI's arrival but respect for the rule of law has not. There is still much, much more yet to be done. We must not trifle with the people's feelings and fears in these matters, however, petty or inconsequential they may appear. This is a matter in which the government needs to be sensitive to all sections of our national community, and I am sure that the Honorable Prime Minister will be.

The great need for good quality physical infrastructure is one that calls for greater focus both in Government and by the donor partners. Resources have been spread too thinly across too many fronts over the past several years and we do not have very much to show for it. The same total resources would have achieved far more over the same period of time had it been targeted and focused that only a few strategic policy fronts each year. This is a very difficult discipline to master, but one that we must strive for. We aspired to it in CNURA, Mr Speaker, yourself included, but we lost sight of it in the detail. This represents an important prerequisite to sustainable economic growth for our country over the long haul.

The severe capacity limitation in the transportation sector and in the Ministry of Infrastructure Development in particular, must attract serious attention and resources by the government in the first instance and also by our donor partners. The Ministry of Infrastructure Development needs more technical personnel and much greater funding to manage the increasing demands of the growing economy on poorly planned and constructed infrastructures.

Perhaps the most important sector that requires sustained but increasing government investments is the Education Sector. Our investment in this sector is still inadequate. By the

end of the decade no Solomon Islanders should be illiterate. The curse of illiteracy must be eliminated, not only within the adult population, but also in our formal school system where illiteracy still exists. It is unfortunate that this is the case.

Our education system must, in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, be deliberately and strongly oriented to the sciences. Much of our future prospects as a country lie in this, and in building a literate, informed and skilled populace. The right investment level sustained over a generation will yield very good results. We are almost assured of that. However, this must be a deliberate policy decision on the part of government, if it takes the long term and generational view.

We know what a reasonable quality of education looks like; we use to have it, let us aim to regain it. I have said much on this subject in the last House, and as part of the last government started some steps toward these objectives and will allow the Minister to stamp his own mark on this sector. I am keen to continue to assist him in this all important sector however way I can.

When we talk of the long term and taking the generational view, it must point the government to the great need for a national development plan. As you are aware, CNURA has initiated the process for forging a national development plan and I hope this government will continue and complete it after meaningful input and participation by the provinces and all key sectors of our society and economy. Taking the long term view is now no longer an option for Solomon Islands, and taking the long term view necessarily imposes discipline on government in terms of strategic expenditure and development goals and strategies. This kind of long term planning will greatly assist government to also produce targeted multiyear budgets that will provide much greater clarity both to government and also to donors and the people of these beloved islands about where the government wants to take the country.

On the spending resolution, the Minister of Finance asked not to be pressured to speed up the tabling of the 2011 Appropriation Bill to the early part of the first quarter of 2010. I suppose we can safely assume that he wants to spend the full first quarter under the resolution and not under the government's own budget proposals. The argument advanced was that the 8<sup>th</sup> months from the day the government was formed to the end of April is not a long time to be getting it right whatever it is supposed to mean. Eight months is too long by any one's estimation, however, the government can be assured that they can take as much time they need to get themselves right. We, of course, hope that it will be sooner rather than later for the sake of our country.

Regarding the budgeting process, it has been said and I must re-emphasize the need to review the process and put in place better discipline to ensure that contingencies warrants and supplementary appropriations do not become pretext for the lack of setting more accurate budgets and the use of adhoc and arbitrary basis for setting ministerial spending levels. I need say no more on this matter but I am sure that this is something the Minister will be looking for ways to resolve so that the 2011 budget does not suffer the same problems. This has been a problem for far too many years and it is only right it is resolved now.

The Hon. Prime Minister spoke on the animosity generated by the elections. I have to agree with him that this is a very sad feature indeed of our elections and it has the propensity to become even worse in our society. After the elections we hear of, for example, landowners shutting down or damaging water supplies, destroying food gardens, cutting down fruit trees

and so forth for those who voted for someone other than the choice of themselves. This is a very sad thing indeed in our communities. And these very same people and the communities they are a part of, are also usually part of strong Christian churches. It seems our Christianity abandons us during elections.

This could be said for candidates as well. It seems that because elections are part of politics, candidates and voters alike give themselves the permission to deceive each other. Politics is dirty they say and so deceptions, hatred and the vices are condoned. Voters seek money or other benefits from the candidates and in turn candidates make all sorts of promises with perhaps little intention of fulfilling them. The lack of capacity, of course, to enforce the Electoral Act only serves to exacerbate this problem.

Further, the evil phenomenon that is called the devil's night, which is something that is relatively unheard of before has now become a cancer that directly determines these elections. Right thinking Solomon Islanders must be troubled by this evil. We must not allow evil to give birth to leadership for this country. Leadership that is born out of evil will also give birth to evil. That, we can be assured of. We must therefore do everything we can as soon as we can to eliminate this evil, and we can deal with it by appropriate electoral reform. But over the long term the role of mainstream education is the key to ensuring that our people demand good leadership and governance and accountability. If this demand for better governance and leadership does not initiate in and from the people, we will continue to have leaders who will continue to conduct themselves outside those requirements.

Politics need not be dirty. Politics need not be conducted with deception, suspicion, hatred and other corrupt vices that currently plague us. Politics ought to be honorable and it is up to us to clean up politics. Can the people of these beloved islands, the beautiful islands expect a lot in that direction from this government and from this parliament? I should like to hope so, and I will be looking for it in the government's policy document when it is issued tomorrow.

The Honorable Prime Minister also posed the question of whether we are dismantling state owned enterprises for this country's benefit or whether it is for the benefit of foreign interests. This is a valid question that we must continue to hold before us as we make policy decisions. Conversely, we also need to understand that in today's globalized world business knows no borders and we need not become paranoid about that either. We do need to be careful but we need not be paranoid. We want these state owned enterprises to be profitable, self sustaining and not reliant on the government budget and providing the services they were established to provide at affordable cost. It is good for the economy and for service delivery to the people. The age of the government owning, directing and managing business is well and truly over and we would be well advised to resist the temptation to backslide into it.

The statement by the Minister of Finance regarding Soltai fishing seems to me appropriate in this matter. If I remember correctly I think he said that we have the choice of either keeping the company government owned and loss making, employing less people and its assets and ultimately its shares worth very little if anything or that we allow private investors with the funds and technical expertise become seriously involved and even the reduced government shares in the company worth more in a number of years than what the whole company was worth under full government control and the company, of course, employing

more than doubled the number of workers, more cash is flowing through the local economy and spurring other economic opportunities and activities.

The Prime Minister's question points to a more basic question which is, what is the place and role of government in the economy? The answer to that question at independence and for the first two decades or so has clearly been the establishment, control and management of SOE's by the government. However, in today's context, this cannot now be the case. In this matter, I hope that the Honourable Prime Minister will take the advice of his Finance Minister who is well steeped in these matters.

I was very interested in the Prime Minister's comments about political appointees. Government must have political appointees, and contrary to popular belief and the way that the media casts it, it needs more rather than less political appointees. However, the quality of such appointees is the pivot on which the whole thing turns. Government needs political appointees to ensure a strong sense of urgency into the impartial and indifferent public service and, of course, the two should work closely together. What we have seen over the last several governments, however, is a disease and the Hon Prime Minister has not cured it either.

The power brokers in a government always determine who the political appointees are, and the Honourable Prime Minister should look at the names of his own political appointees because it does say a lot about this. Further, how many of the Prime Minister's political appointees are really qualified for the important task of driving government policy with strategic urgency? Maybe one or two, we hope. These are not new problems nor are they only related to this government. Successive governments have all suffered this curse.

In the CNURA Government, some political appointees were even appointed without the then Prime Minister, the honourable Member for North East Guadalcanal knowing about it or even Caucus or Cabinet, and these are not appointments of highly qualified people that the country really needs in these trying times either. Mostly, these are people who have generally failed in their former vocations in some way. Their only qualification is usually that they are cronies or pets of a power broker. These same people would find it difficult to get employment elsewhere. I see that the Hon. Prime Minister has some of the same people as his political appointees and I pray that this same curse does not extend to the Prime Minister's appointees to Permanent Secretary positions.

The Prime Minister needs the best talent around him and in his political office and not the pretenders he has appointed. Whether a government appoints 20 or only 10 or even 30 political appointees, as long as they are not the right people to ensure effectiveness of government, the only difference will be in cost to taxpayers. There will be no benefit to taxpayers that we can talk about in such arrangements. There is nothing personal in my comments on this matter. My comments are more an expression of disappointment, as my hopes were set rather high by the Prime Minister's own statements and commitments, pledges to serious reform. I hope it is still not too late for the Prime Minister to do something about this.

Of the many serious matters the Prime Minister spoke about, perhaps the most fundamental relates to us Solomon Islanders owning Solomon Islands. He asserted that under our current constitution we do not really own Solomon Islands. I have to admit I am at a loss as to precisely what he meant by that statement. But this is such a fundamental constitutional issue that I am duty bound to give the Prime Minister ample time to appropriately articulate his

policy intentions on this matter. I am sure that once he has articulated it in policy that it will become clearer and we can engage more productively in debate over it. At present, my thoughts on it are more a reflection of what I do not know with regards to his statement, and so I run the risk of creating unnecessary questions that I am sure will be addressed later during the policy formulation process. However, neither can I gloss off the Prime Minister's statements.

Have I been fooled into thinking that we, Solomon Islanders do actually own Solomon Islands because this has been my mindset since independence? My parents and my primary school teachers all taught me as a young boy that at independence we own Solomon Islands. So who has owned Solomon Islands since independence if it is not us Solomon Islanders? Is it the former colonial masters or some modern neo-colonial power? Is it the Solomon Islands state? If so, who owns the Solomon Islands state? Is it not the people of Solomon Islands together? It must be clear to us all that we own Solomon Islands together – really own it, not just own it in perception. We do so by owning the constitution and owning the state created by the constitution. It is precisely because we own the constitution and the state established by it that we also have the power to change them.

We know the people of Solomon Islands have struggled with this sense of ownership of Solomon Islands. Our people more readily identify with tribal and language groups than with the broader and conceptually more nebulous concepts of government and the state. This has significant implications for our society and governance. In a nutshell, it is because of this sense of lack of ownership of the state that our people feel detached from it and therefore fail the basic role of a responsible citizenry in requiring and demanding accountability from the state and from those who occupy and wield it. Therefore, statements that we do not really own Solomon Islands are misleading and imply that we can also therefore abdicate our responsibility for Solomon Islands and all the challenges it faces and all that comes with it. But perhaps the Hon Prime Minister's statements were meant to be understood more narrowly in relation to land and land-based resources. This is for the Prime Minister to further clarify.

For Solomon Islands, if it is to remain as one united country, it needs a stronger rather than a weaker state. It is, therefore, incumbent on the Hon. Prime Minister to ensure that any such reforms will strengthen rather than weaken the state. This is not incongruous with the objective of social justice for our land and resource owners – the two objectives are both legitimate and compatible.

He said he will be the happiest Prime Minister if he can carry through this reform. If this reform will weaken the Solomon Islands state, there will be little ground for anyone's happiness. As I said earlier, I will allow the Prime Minister as much time as he needs to properly articulate his intentions and to bring it to this House so that we can all engage more productively and meaningfully in debate on it.

There is much more to reflect on from what the Hon. Prime Minister said last week in moving the motion. But as others are yet to speak, I am obliged to keep my reflections brief. I look forward to the government's policy document as an outline of its intentions. The government must be assured that we, on this side of the House, will do our utmost best to support them for the good of our nation.

In closing, it would be remiss of me not to offer my congratulations to you, Mr Speaker, on your election to that honorable chair. Further, I would also like to thank my good people of

Aoke/Langalanga for reelecting me to once again be their voice in this House. I, of course, under God's grace and guiding hands will do my best to speak honorably with their voice and in their name. I support the motion.

*Sitting suspended for lunch break at 11.43 pm*

*Sitting resumed at 1.33 pm*

**Hon TORA:** Thank you for recognizing the Minister of Police and Member of Parliament for Ulawa & Ugi Constituency.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this traditional sine die motion. Before I continue, may I on behalf of my good people of Ulawa/Ugi Constituency, congratulate you on your successful election to that post as the new Speaker of our National Parliament. Congratulations. I would like to also congratulate the honourable Prime Minister for being elected as the new Prime Minister of the Ninth Parliament of Solomon Islands. Congratulations must also be extended to all Members of Parliament for being successfully elected to represent their constituencies for the next four years. These four years will soon be gone very quickly. We will soon be on our way to our people, trying to convince them to vote us back here to this House. I always admire our people for being so diplomatic with us. In fact, some do not speak their minds instead make their own judgments quietly in their minds, something I really admired. But what the people always wanted to ask us is what have we done for them? What have we done for the country? What have we done to improve their living standards? What have we done to ensure they have the basics of life right there within their reach? What have we done to reduce the cost of living? And what have we done to simply make life easier for all of us? We are now in this House so let us be reminded that we can either build this nation or destroy it, it is our decision, and it matters to a lot of our people and country.

I am going to emphasize and encourage every one of us in this House to join hands in moving this country forward together. Whether you are in the government or the opposition or the independent, we must all work constructively together assisting the current government under the leadership of our newly elected Prime Minister, Danny Phillip, to set the directions forward for this country.

We have seen our development partners and donor countries playing their part in terms of projects and capacity building for our locals. They have tried their best to help us. We need to capitalize on these windows of opportunities offered to us. We need to tell them nicely how we want things to be done. Again, we must work in partnership and complementing each other. By now, we should all notice what our international friends are trying to do. I believe they do want to see us enjoy an acceptable level of living.

It is time we stop criticizing each other and show our people that we want this country to move forward. I love this country and we all must love this country to really care about this country. There were others who have been here before us too who loved this country. They have tried their bit and left. We are now here trying our best but is it really our best? Are we doing our best? I am urging everyone to start working together to move this country forward.

I am very supportive of the Honourable Prime Minister's call in his earlier statements when moving the sine die motion. We need to be able to be looked up to by our people and be judged for achieving something worthwhile for the country, leaving a legacy when we exit this House. I strongly believe that this government as you have heard from the Prime Minister will embark on positive reforms, reforms that will make a positive impact for this country.

My colleagues on the other side of the House, we need you to double check our decisions and suggest to us how best we can go forward. I am very encouraged that we, on the government's side have not only started talking about it, we have started doing something already. We all know what the problem is, and that is there is not enough money for our operations, so we need to look at our revenue sources. At the same time, we should also relook at our spending. Do the basics right by looking out for specials. We need to review our traditional spending items to see whether they are really value for money. Let us do something that will help the country improve.

In this regard, I must thank everyone for their contribution and support which saw the passage of the Customs Valuation (Amendment) Bill 2010 which seeks to ensure that the calculation of import duty is consistent with the existing Customs and Exercise Act. I am also very pleased with the recent confirmation by the Minister for Fisheries that we are going to improve our revenue collection with our fisheries agreements. That is the sort of action we need to embark on; we talk and make things happen. That is the right spirit.

So far I am very pleased with the contributions by both sides of the House and this reflects our seriousness of making a difference. I am proposing here that the theme for all Solomon Islanders now, no matter where you are and whatever you do is, "Let us **MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!**" It means we must work that extra harder! We need to do that because the current geographical complexity of our islands makes it so hard to develop this country. That is why after 32 years of independence, only Honiara is easy for development. That is why we are all here. That is why we have an influx of people migrating to Honiara from the provinces and that is why we are facing rising problems in Honiara.

The other day we heard the Minister for Provincial Government talking about strengthening of provincial governments in the nine provinces in his contribution to this motion. Yes, I fully support his call. We need to develop our provincial centers. Just imagine us having nine provincial centres the size of Honiara. We do not need to be all in Honiara as is the case now. Everyone will be happy to be in the provinces working hard to ensure they develop their provinces. I am urging all my colleagues to seriously start work on how we could improve the current status of our nine provincial centres. The Honourable Premiers would be listening eagerly to what we, the National Members have to offer.

In terms of my Ministry, the Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services, we are now checking the status of our Police Housings and Police Stations in Honiara and throughout the country very seriously. I am asking the Minister for Finance to be with me in supporting my Ministry's endeavors to improve and build new police houses for police officers throughout the country.

As you would all be aware, currently my Ministry has two sets of houses being built at the moment. Those that are built and funded by the Solomon Islands Government are those that are now being constructed funded by a funding arrangement under the New Zealand

Government and the Australian Federal Police. On that note, I must thank both the New Zealand Government and the Australian Federal Police for their continuous support towards the police housing project. Currently, under the Solomon Islands Government funded houses, four houses have been built in Gizo, and presumably these houses will be opened on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

In order for law and order to be maintained throughout the provinces, police officers must be present in the provinces. I am glad that with the new houses currently being built, police officers will be deployed to the various stations throughout the provinces to be with our communities.

On the area of policing and law enforcement, I wish to acknowledge the good work currently done by the RSIPF, not only on the success of the National General Elections, but also during the days before the election of the Prime Minister. I would like to also commend them for some progress in the following areas:

- Improving community confidence – as demonstrated through increasing numbers of Solomon Islands citizens willing to report crime to police;
- Improved capacity and capability of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force. As you would note, focus from now on development of human resources, management style as well as undertaking community based policing models. I want to see that we are ready and up to it before RAMSI would scale down its operations.
- Protect the Sovereignty of Solomon Islands. I must commend the Government of Australia for the ongoing defense programme under which we have the Pacific Patrol Boat Program to assist us in the patrol of our maritime waters and will continue to do so.
- Reduced Crime. Current progress has been very successful where the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force with PPF have vigorously promote community policing and crime prevention awareness targeting communities around the country. Honiara residents probably have witnessed some of these programs already.
- Providing emergency response and management. As we have seen already with our quick responses to the tsunami and the reported sightings of plane crash in East Malaita.

With regards to Correctional Services, we will be constructing a new Correctional Centre in Gizo to serve the people of Western and Choiseul Provinces. One was newly opened last year in Auki, Malaita Province. The correction of Solomon Islands will continue to ensure that we will strive to maintain our correction centers to international standard. There are more yet to be done.

Looking ahead towards the future, I will not preempt on what the government will highlight in its Policy Statements which will be launched tomorrow, but I am looking forward to seeing the focus of our government's policy statements to see how we could align our programmes to our sectoral policies. For now, I am looking forward to another year of working together with our various government ministries and agencies, alongside my very good development partners and RAMSI on what outstanding issues are yet to be addressed and how we could progress together forward.

I must also salute the Republic of China for its continuous support and strong convictions that Solomon Islands will be a prosperous country in the future. That is why it is always supportive and always remains by our side even in hard times.

I would like to also thank our good government officials who sometimes work long hours sometimes under pressure to ensure that we, the national leaders achieve the goals we set to achieve. I must thank them for putting up with us, politicians and I am urging all of us with my proposed theme of "let us make a difference! I would like to thank your office, also the Clerk and staff of Parliament, the auxiliary staff, specially the secretariat who are always up to date with their work in preparation for our meetings. I would like to thank them for their time and good work. Well done.

Finally, before I resume my seat, please allow me this opportunity to convey to my good people of Ulawa and Ugi my profound appreciation and heartfelt thanks for the trust and confidence they have in me to represent them in this Parliament for the third time. I can assure you all that I will try my utmost best to deliver fair and equitable services in order that we can make a difference in our constituency within this mandated four years you have given to me. With these few remarks, I support the motion and I resume my seat. Thank you.

**Hon MANETOALI:** I also thank the other colleague Ministers and Members of Parliament for giving the opportunity to me now to take the floor to contribute briefly to this traditional motion moved by the Honorable Prime Minister, the first Sine Die Motion of the Ninth Parliament of Solomon Islands.

My contribution will be brief and will be in three sections. The first will be congratulatory and acknowledgements to some individuals or groups of people that deserve a bit of appreciation as far as I am concerned. Secondly, I shall make some general comments on the work the Ministry of Culture and Tourism is currently embarking on, and thirdly I shall raise just one important issue that I consider important as far as our debate in this House is concerned.

I would like to firstly congratulate our newly elected Prime Minister, the MP for Rendova/Tetepare. Indeed, it was not an easy road for your election to be the political head of our beloved nation. After spending a few weeks with you, I can confidently say in this House that you are a leader who is genuine and has a heart for the welfare of our people. Hence, I call on both sides of this House to support our Prime Minister as he leads us. I know that if necessary support is provided to his leadership, he can deliver the developments needed for our country. Let me use the slogan used by the current President of the United States of America, "yes we can," which simply means not him alone or the government alone, but all of us joining hands we can achieve the political, economical and social aspirations of our country.

I would also like to congratulate you as the newly elected Speaker to this Honourable Chamber. With your many years in politics, I am certain that you are capable of controlling and directing the debates and discussions on this floor in the next four years. Fellow colleagues, we have seen in the last two weeks how our Speaker has controlled our debates without fear or favor, and therefore you deserve my appreciation. I would also like to congratulate all of us who have won our respective constituencies in the last August 4 elections. We need to congratulate each other as the road to this House is not easy. It is a tough journey with all the

criticisms and sleepless nights we have finally ended up here today. Along with that, I need to thank our immediate family members who at times have to swallow all the pressures that we pass onto them before, during and after the elections.

Allow me to thank my good people of Gao/Bugotu constituency for the trust and confidence they have in me to represent them for the second time to this House, especially my special thank you to the 2,479 voters who have ticked my symbol in the last election, for without your support I would not be standing here today. I will continue to do my best in serving Gao/Bugotu constituency, the Isabel Province and our country Solomon Islands as a whole in the next four years, so that the number people who tick my symbol will further increase or doubled up next time.

I must thank the good people from the four corners of this nation and all walks of life who have participated in the last elections. You have exercised your democratic rights to put us into this Honourable House. To those candidates who have contested, I thank you for challenging us, unfortunately because of the system only 50 Members have to be in Parliament, otherwise your contesting demonstrates that you are also care and concerned about the future of our nation.

We now know that there are a record number of petitions in the last elections. My professional view is that petitions are part and parcel of our electoral system, hence there is no need for panicking or angry, but let our justice system takes its course. We have the three arms of government; we have the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. Check and balance; the legislative passes laws and the judiciary interprets the law, hence the petitions are before the courts to interpret the law that this legislature passed, especially our election laws. This is part of our democratic system.

Let me come to the second part of my contribution. As I said earlier, I will make some general comments on some major issues in the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. This is because our policy statements are not yet formally announced. Firstly on tourism - all of us know that the current level of tourism development in our country is far behind to that of our neighbours. For example, if we could just take one indicator, the number of tourist arrivals in this country is indeed quite embarrassing, even smaller pacific states have more tourists than us. Why? It is very expensive to travel to Solomon Islands. The airfare is very high as compared to travelling to other countries and also our lack of proper infrastructures. However, we must never give up as the potential of this sector is huge and real.

My Ministry is coming up with a comprehensive plan to address the key fundamentals as to why it is so difficult to move this sector and then we must tackle these problems head on. Tourism is the way forward for Solomon Islands. We have beautiful people and islands. People want to come to our beautiful country and see for themselves hence we must put in place infrastructures needed for tourism. Logging is slowly dying out hence tourism is the answer. One thing is for sure and that is tourism is here forever, it cannot die out.

On the cultural sector, in my view, a neglected sector, but a very, very crucial aspect of nation building. I have personally witnessed our culture just a few weeks ago in the 4<sup>th</sup> Melanesian Arts Festival held in New Caledonia. It was an eye opener to see the strength of our culture. Our traditional dances, crafts, arts, music and others were second to none. The diversity and uniqueness of cultural heritage, if harnessed and promoted properly, will be a

really money spinner for our economy, and this is not a dream but a fact. We need to organise more cultural festivals, for example, constituency cultural festivals, provincial and national level. This is to keep our culture and our arts alive.

While on the subject of culture, I wish to inform this House and the good people of this nation that Solomon Islands, our country will be hosting the 11<sup>th</sup> Pacific Arts Festival in 2012. The Ministry has set up a high level taskforce to plan and organise this historical event. Historical in that it will be the first time for this country to host some six to seven thousand people from our region and around the world for a period of two weeks; a largest gathering we will ever experience in the lifetime of this country.

Two years is not long considering the preparatory and planning required for the event, hence I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to our donor partners, the private sector, the NGO's and the people of Solomon Islands to support the government to host this important event. I strongly believe if we successfully host this event that will be the turning point for our beloved country. In short, what I mean here is that for the past decade, our name and image abroad was and simply not good. For example, we are known as an ethnic crisis nation and also a failed state, corrupt and other negative issues, but some of these people do not know the other side of our life.

We are a people with warm hearts who are but always welcoming to our guest. For example, in our villages when guests or strangers come to our villages, we always treat them more special than our families. This is exactly what I count on. Let us all cooperate together to organize the Arts Festival and show to the region and the world our true culture and colors. I am very positive that we can host one of the best or the best Pacific Arts Festival in the region. I know there are other pressing needs of any government like health, education and infrastructure developments, but we must not forget the hosting of this historical event. We must always visualize the Pacific Arts Festival in our minds up until 2012.

Before I move on, let me mention a little bit about economic growth centre. More than 80% of the country's population engage in a predominantly life of subsistence farming and a few cash crops for their survival. The urban services must be brought to the rural areas through the establishment of economic growth centres in each of the constituency so that the rural populace could actively participate in the economic development of this nation.

Economic growth centre is a centre where all traditional local produce such as timber, copra, cocoa, fish, fresh vegetables and fruits are sold. Business people may be encouraged to set up wholesaling, tourism facilities, local marketing networks and banking services. Infrastructure and other economic services will be put in place, such as roads, airfields, wharves, storage facilities, mini hospitals, and police stations. The rural people would be taking very active role in developing and making good use and benefiting from their own natural resources.

Solomon Islands comprises of islands which are geographically divided by vast stretches of sea, however, we are a nation. The only way forward for the people to equally participate in the economic development of this country is through establishing economic growth centers in each of the constituencies throughout Solomon Islands.

Let me now turn to one important issue that I feel I should raise here as this is our first meeting. This motion allows Members of Parliament to say anything they consider vital to the

development of this country. I have a lot of burning issues but because of time I will mention only one as I think it is more appropriate to raise in this first session, and that is how we debate sometimes in this house. In the last house I have observed some of the debates in this House to be personal and character assassination. In my humble view we will not move this country if we continue to have such personal attacks while debating on this floor of parliament.

The reason is like this that we attack each other on personal level, you when a new government is formed we find each other on the same side of the house, either in the Opposition or the Government side. As you know, our political party system is not yet developed so you will find at times political rivalries ending up in one team, but previously they have argued on and personally attack each other, so let us stop debating issues at a personal level here in this House.

Let us have lively debates on policies and bills, not on ethnic background, not on age, not on health, not on skin color, not on regionalism or past behaviors. No. I appeal to honorable colleagues to grow out of this type of debate. Let us put our energy to discuss issues that are paramount to the development of this country. I am raising this at this point as we have four years to go and I feel we should not entertain such personal attacks as we progress into the lifespan of this Parliament.

Before taking my seat, I would like to sincerely thank the Clerk and your staff for another job well done in ensuring that the first meeting of the Ninth Parliament is successful and may the good Lord take good care of us until the next meeting. With those few remarks, I support the motion.

**Mr FOLOTALU:** Thank you for allowing me to contribute briefly to this sine die motion. First of all, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion of sine die. Secondly, I would like to congratulate every Member of Parliament or each Member of Parliament who have been elected to the Ninth House. Whether you are on the government side, the independent or the opposition, I just want to congratulate every one of us because even though you are on that side or this side, but when photos of the Ninth House are put up all of us will be under the one same group so I would like to congratulate every one of us. When our people look at our history they will see that some photos look nice and some look a bit old now, but even though it is so, I am under the Ninth House including all of us in here. Sadly, some of us might not finish this term or some of us would complete it, nevertheless we are all under the Ninth House.

Thirdly, I would like to thank the people of Lau/Mbaelelea constituency for electing me to this Ninth House. We came through a very rough and tough road. These are very unique people in that we can set special histories like burning of ballot boxes and things like that. People of Lau/Mbaelelea can do peculiar things and they can do special things or create special histories and so I want to thank my people, the 2,370 voters who believe in me, trust me and mandate me by electing me to this honorable house. It is a significant thing for a person from Mbaegu to go down to a different constituency and people there put their trust on him. That is something significant and so I really want to thank the people of Lau/Mbaelelea Constituency for electing me to this House. I also want to say to my people of the Lau/Mbaelelea Constituency that even though they might suffer from persecution or people do not love them

or want them, just forgive them. Put these offences to rest and let us move forward. That is what I want to assure my people of Lau/Mbaelelea Constituency.

Since we have taken over the government, I am happy and want to congratulate the Prime Minister for his election to the post and also you, Mr Speaker, upon your election as our speaker of this House. I also thank the government for taking up the power now. As we are in this transition period, I look forward to the launch of the government's policies. I do not know when they will launch the policies, and I am yet to know the name of this new government, like the last government is called CNURA, but this new one, I am yet to hear its name.

**A Member** (*interjecting*): It will come out tomorrow.

**Mr Folotalu**: Oh, we will hear its name tomorrow, and it may be on rural advancement or something like that, I do not know. Now that the other side has the number, please sit down and come up with policies that are conducive, policies that will work, achievable and meaningful to the development of Solomon Islands.

The government side should stop lobbying and start to work because you now have the number. Do not come and lobby us; lobby us for what? You have the number so go ahead and work on the policies. One day one of my friends on the other side came and tried to lobby me by saying 'Walter, you come over', he asked me to go over to the other side, but for what should I come over there for. All ministerial portfolios have already been allocated, so what else should I come over there for. If you want to win my heart you must come up with good policies that will draw me to your side. Make good policies that are conducive. If you give more money to cocoa you will win my heart. If you make good policies for infrastructures you can win my heart. If there are no good policies, what will I come over for? Make policies that are conducive, policies that are workable and policies that are achievable. Otherwise we come up with policies that only look good in the computer and that look colorful only on paper but when it comes to implementation they do not work; policies that are rural oriented. As we know the rural population is about 80% and so we should have something that suits them and something that can work.

We will all agree that logging is depleting so what else are the substitutes? The Minister of Tourism has just confirmed to us that there is potential in tourism. We too have seen it. As a farmer I have seen potentials in cocoa. If you come up with policies, increase the rural livelihood funding, increase it. This subject has come through a lot of criticisms, but I am telling you that the RCDF is a good thing and rural livelihood too is a good thing if we, Members of Parliament use them wisely. If we build empires in town with it then it will not help, there will be no impact in the rural areas. I have seen this in the last 18 months that I have been here through a bye-election. I have seen this working since seven vehicles and pickup trucks for the association. I established associations, plant or grow more than 300 hectares of cocoa. I used the rural livelihood and the RCDF to buy and do those things and so it works. The RCDF is a good thing.

I think if we are to make a census or conduct a poll to show who agrees with these funds, if 400,000 people in Solomon Islands are summoned to come here, maybe only 100,000 will oppose it, those people who always write in the media. But if you summon the whole

population, the rural populace, if they come and we get a poll of them, I tell you there will be 400,000 people supporting the RCDF and the Rural Livelihood Funds. Only a few people in town oppose it, maybe those who come and ask the Member but he did not give it to them and so the next day you see them writing articles in the papers saying these funds are not good, but this is good as this is the only fund that reaches the rural population, the RCDF. I see it is a good thing.

If the government can increase the Rural Livelihood Fund to \$2million a year, you will surely win my heart because it is for the people. Otherwise you just talk about good plans like us in the past and nothing is done. Once there was a party that won the majority but only about 50 or 60 percent of its policies were implemented. I want you to implement the policies by putting them into practice. If we create incentives that are conducive for the rural population, for development purposes I can tell you that this nation will turn around and we will see the economy booming.

I am happy to be part of your team in this Ninth House. Let us do something for this nation. Let us do something for this new generation, for the youths of today. We must prepare and make incentives that are conducive for them, help them and that they can engage in. If not, we will see everyone in odd places, coming to search for jobs in town, and at the end you will find them in odd places. We will also see many people in the casino every day. They bring in their copra and cocoa, like the late Kinika once said that the reflections of the casino lights signals to them saying "come, come, come" and so they bring their copra, sell them and they end up in the casino. The casino seems to be saying to them "come and sell your cocoa and end up here," or "come and sell your copra and end up here". The lights signals to them "come, come and come". Those investments, I can tell you that no Solomon Islander has ever got rich in the casino. It is not a good kind of investment; it is good only for the gamblers. Maybe to the investors, yes, but the gamblers, not one of us has ever become rich. I lost about \$200,000 in the casino. They may say it is a game of chance where there is an equal chance of winning and equal chances of losing. That is not true, there is no equal chance; there is a big chance of losing and little chance of winning. I have only seen Solomon Islanders losing huge amounts of money in such an investment. Therefore, let us do something in the rural areas so that people can go back and invest in their lands, invest in God's bank which is the ground because by the sweat of your brow you shall eat. That is a universal and biblical principle that anyone who lives on the face of this earth must adhere to. No work no food and no sweat no food. We must invest in God's bank so give us more money.

How those funds go to the Ministry of Agriculture and the other ministries too is of concern to me because we start to buy computer projects where people make the projects look good and nice on the computers, but even one cocoa tree is not planted at home, not in the islands, not on the lands, but inside the computer there is a big plan that looks really nice. That is what is happening and then the government goes ahead and says "I will fund this project" because it was professionally done and so it funds it. But when you go back home you will not even find one cocoa tree planted so most of the funds do not work. The control mechanism is very weak, really weak.

That is all I want to say and because we have just started I have nothing to criticize and I have nothing to say. Our time to criticize is still to come and that is when you will come up

with the budget and I believe you will not forget to put more money into rural livelihood. If the problem is that funds that go for cattle do not work then put it to cocoa because it will work. If funds for rice do not work then do not put more funds on rice but allocate it to cocoa, allocate it to palm oil and things like that. I am looking forward to this. I think on cattle we should just import meat from Australia and Vanuatu because cattle can destroy the grass and the land too. Some years back when there were many cattle our people have to go up into the middle of the bush to make gardens, and the places where the para-grass was grown became very hard and dry that it cannot even be hoed. I think we have to think about such things.

Let us look at reality, let us not just come here and preach about things that we will not achieve so that at the end of the four years we achieve nothing and so we just go home and invent new sweet stories for the voters to vote for us. No, we want to see them realize something we achieve for them within the next years. I am very happy to see the new Members on the other side. I want us to do something for this nation. If we are people who are not well educated and our academic qualifications are low, please do something because action speaks louder than words. If we do big things for our people they will want us because we are people of action.

That is all I want to say today. I still have more time to talk later on. If the government does nothing in the next six months or the next 12 months, you are surely going to hear big shouts from me as I will shout more loudly in this House. With these few remarks I support the motion.

**Mr SOGAVARE:** Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak briefly on this motion of sine die moved by the Honorable Prime Minister to end this current meeting today. I want to take this opportunity as well to thank the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister for extending the meeting by one more day to allow Parliament time to adequately deal with this motion, considering the fact that many more Members still want to speak on the motion. This House can go on until 12 o'clock tonight.

The Prime Minister's comprehensive presentation, as rightly observed by the Member of Parliament for Aoke/Langa Langa, is considered by us as a prelude speech to the launching of the Coalition's Policy Framework as it touched on a number of very serious issues which Parliament would be simply irresponsible not to express its views on it.

The Prime Minister has obviously put a lot of time and thinking into preparing the speech and he is very passionate in the way he presented the speech, and I really admire the way he present that speech on the floor of Parliament. We would be doing, as I said, injustice to the speech if we simply ignore the issues he raised. The Prime Minister as head of the government is effectively the authority on government policy and therefore whatever he says reflects government policy and therefore we should take it very seriously.

Whilst it may be argued, maybe some will argue against that standpoint, the long standing practice that motions of sine die is treated as an opportunity for Members of Parliament to talk about anything we want, I think Standing Order 8(4) appears to suggest otherwise. It expressly provides that any debate on the motion shall be confined to the substance of the motion and, of course, the term 'substance' is open to debate. But I would like to believe that the substance of the motion is contained in the body of the Prime Minister's

speech. Otherwise we should only be bogged down in debating the date suggested for Parliament to end its meetings because that is the substance of the motion whether we want to end today or we want to continue. I do not think that is the spirit of the motion and so I will try to touch on some of the issues the Prime Minister pointed out, supported and encouraged the government on and then I will sit down.

On the meeting itself, the Ninth Parliament, of course, starts with the election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker. Now it is interesting to note that the principles of the much talked about working together, bipartisan, accountability and words like that were put to the test on day one before we even start. The government used its numbers to elect the people it wants. Whilst this side does not have argument on that, this, may be consistent, really consistent with the principles of parliamentary democracy premised on the Westminster model, fell seriously short of agreeing with the government's desire of working together in bipartisan.

As intimated by the Member for Lau/Mbaelelea, we can only see action, actions speaks louder than words. As a matter of fact, some Members in the Opposition, as intimated by the MP for Lau/Mbaelelea are under immense pressure to switch side if they want projects in their interests to be addressed. This is not a new thing, it is an ongoing game and it continues again at this Ninth Parliament.

I guess what I am saying here is that actions like is making our claim of good governance, bipartisan and working together, completely nonsense. And the only reason why Members of the Opposition, we, and thank you very much Mr Speaker, why we were given chairmanship of parliamentary standing committees is because the government simply runs out of numbers. If the present government has the kind of number that CNURA enjoyed, this side of the House will not have anything on appointment to the committees.

In the setting of a developing parliamentary democracy, like Solomon Islands, plays a vital role in advancing good governance and accountability of government. The logic here is that the principles of accountability in government as far as the involvement of Parliament is concerned demand the separation of the role of policy making of checking the public acceptability of the policies and their effects on the lives of the people so there must be a clear separation there; the Government cannot bake its own cake and eat it at the same time. This is the role that the Parliamentary Standing Committees perform under the leadership, guidance and directions set by the chairmanship of the committees that it should not necessarily lean towards the government.

My only reason for raising these issues is for us to bear the principles that we talked so much about in mind on day one.

On the performance of Parliament in general, I must agree that the new Ministers, especially those that have not tasted politics yet performed exceptionally well in the first meeting, and I congratulate every one of them. The Member for Central Kwara'ae took the first three questions on the very first day when we open Parliament, and he took it very well, congratulations Minister! I know that first test will make you strong and strong as you continue to perform in your portfolio. I must admire the way they answer questions and respond to issues that this side of the House puts to them. You can see a big difference when you compare them with the old timers, especially when it comes to the air of honesty and the desire to do justice to the question.

Question time, as you would have already known from the induction courses that we have gone through, provides an opportunity for the government to be accountable. That being the case, answers that directs the questioner, and I have heard from one or two old timers say, "You come to my office and find the answer to that question" when supplementary questions are raised. Questions are raised on this floor of Parliament not for the benefit of Members of Parliament but they are raised for the benefit of the people we represent here. I guess what I am saying is that we must be ready when we come on the floor of parliament. What I am saying here is that unless questions are way out of line, Ministers must provide answers on the floor of Parliament even as early as maybe the next day by way of government statements and not to wait for questioners to reach them, because these are matters we are asking on behalf of the people we represent.

Talking about questions, a number of them bring up serious policy issues that the government needs to take cognisance of. The claim that, and the MP for Lau/Mbaelelea has raised this already and so I am going to touch on it that to say "casinos are investments and therefore the operators must be given special recognition" is taken a bit too far as far as the country's position on casino is concerned. I need to put that very clear.

Yes, it is an investment and we would like to agree to some extent with the Minister of Finance on that position. But it is an investment that this very Parliament has attached serious conditionality on its establishment and accessibility by the public. That is the concern of this side of the House. In fact the attachment of casinos to hotel premises is based on sound social economic reasons and the attention of Parliament as is referred to in the parliamentary decision making process. Casinos established outside of hotels are considered dangerous to the peace and stability of families and our people. The temptation of making quick money can lure people with very low income to invest their wages and salaries in gambling with serious consequences. Families are known to have gone hungry because the entire family income is lost in gambling. The desperation to survive can lead people to engage in other social problems.

We must appreciate, however, of course, casino is a very effective strategy for the country to earn quick foreign currency and that is the rationale of attaching casinos to hotels. We must always remember that casino and its various activities must always win at the end of the day. This Parliament notes that the government is undertaking a review on this as announced by the Deputy Prime Minister and we are looking forward to the outcome of that review. I would suggest as food for thought that maybe in that review, there is need for the government to re-establish state lottery as a way of raising funds for natural disasters, development of sports, development of youth, women and other charitable activities in the country. I leave that issue there.

On growth centres which the Minister for Culture and Tourism and his party have talked about and he mentioned it in here, I welcome the Government's plan to establish 20 growth centres throughout the country. As a matter of fact, I want to say that this is really in line with what we have already done in East Choiseul and we will be looking forward to work very closely with the government to further develop this concept in my constituency. As you know, we established our first growth centre in 2003 and we are now in the process of negotiating with landowners to establishing three more growth centres, each specialising in advancing a specific area of development. We will wait to read the government's policy on this

and then we will come to see you. The three new growth centres, in our view, will specialize on the development of honey, fisheries and rural based livestock as catalysts of growth, and we will start off with money given through RCDF and rural livelihood therefore do not abolish that program because it has use for it.

The Parliament also paid tribute to the immediate former Speaker of the house and the first Prime Minister of our country. This is a fitting gesture and I commend the government for taking that matter up. I made the point that this parliament must not only pay lip service to Sir Peter. I suggest that the House Committee or the Government for that matter must revisit the retirement benefits of former Prime Ministers and Speakers of Parliament. The assurance given by the Prime Minister is welcomed but we want to see action. In fact, I am following this matter up with a letter to your office, Mr Speaker, for us to discuss this matter further so that the appropriate committee of the house and, of course, some former Prime Ministers too are here and they can sit down and talk about that matter.

We have also passed the Customs Valuation (Amendment) Bill 2010 and I have this observation to make on this Bill and maybe not on that bill alone but maybe a general observation on bills that are presented to Parliament, especially the way Parliament has been dealing with them. There is a tendency for Members to be bogged down narrowly on the intentions of the bill that in the end Parliament fails to fully appreciate the issues at hand. Parliament must learn to pick important policy issues and that requires the government to explain its position. This is why bills have to pass through three readings in parliament, and the second reading provides this opportunity. This is when Parliament expands its consideration of the matters presented in the bill to discuss broader government policies on the issue.

My view on that bill which came before the House, the Customs Valuation Bill, it is a tax reform and the need for the government to design a system that meets all the qualities of a good tax system. Those are the issues brought to the attention of Parliament on that particular bill and Parliament missed the opportunity to discuss tax reform in detail. That opportunity was wasted. Of course, we will probably have more when the government will present its budget next year.

There has been so much talk on tax reform with nothing really happening. I really mean it when I say this to you that the only major reform done to our tax system was when you Mr Speaker were my minister of housing and government services and I was your commissioner for inland revenue when we introduced the Goods Tax in 1992, based on our discussions with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the European Union. That reform introduced a major restructure of our tax system by addressing tradeoffs between the tax bases. And what it aims to do is to reduce what is called the cascading effects of tax on tax payers; it wants to determine the incidence of tax, who exactly is paying tax.

I remember you sent me to Australia, Mr Speaker, to travel to conduct a research on the Australian wholesales tax to assist us with that reform. Since then the reform has been piecemeal and ad hoc and narrowly focused only on the revenue needs of the government. Since tax reform is one major policy of the government, we on this side will wait with keen interest to see how this government will handle this matter.

So much was said about responsible government and the claim of being responsible by the government is almost mentioned humpty times in the last few days in our meetings. This is

a requirement of good governance and it is good to hear the government reiterating its commitment on the principles of a responsible government. Of course, the need to be responsible is across government issue; it is a collective responsibility of the government. The claim would be good for nothing if we only theorize it. We must relate to it and understand what it fully entails, otherwise our claim would be nothing more than noisy gongs in a parliament that is so engrossed in formalism and at worst a show of ostensible display of a commitment to the principles of good governance without any substance to it. That would be hypocrisy in its glaring manifestations. In reality being responsible has practical application to how ministers relate to the responsibilities assigned to them under the portfolio arrangements. These are almost standing issues that have been challenging parliaments and governments over the last 32 years and are still around. Parliament, therefore, has the responsibility to remind the government.

The way these issues are handled can produce interesting results depending on how the government and the Prime Ministers deal with a given situation. They can result in the sacking or resignation of Ministers. They can even result in the downfall of a government. And they range from issues like these: They range from how we handle the issue of illegal logging. Forestry policies that had the effect of undermining benefits to the country in the way we develop the forestry sector. That is one area, one powerful area. Another one is illegal fishing, and thumps up to the Minister of Fisheries! I will come to congratulate you later on. Illegal fishing, illegal allocation of crown land; these issues are ongoing and are challenging governments after governments. Another one is illegal awarding of contracts and tenders to cronies and associates. Illegal granting of citizenships and investment awards; illegal renting of cronies' houses at exorbitant rates and deviating from clear government policies on issues. These are issues that continue to challenge governments after governments.

We can go on and talk about the administration of tax exemptions and remissions purely for political reasons other than on sound economic rationale or taking a big delegation of Ministers and backbenchers always on overseas trips purely for political reasons and we can go on and on and on and talk about these issues. These issues and how we relate to them strike directly at our claim of being responsible. In other words, what I am saying is let us be doers of our words and not merely announcers of good intentions. For example, in the case of illegal logging, the Minister, if that happens, must put his foot down and must not give in to any threats that any illegal loggers may want to impose on him. This is the challenge. This can be a real problem in a situation where mutual interests and obligations exist.

Our short political history as an independent nation is full of events that we can draw lessons from. Governments have been brought down when these interests were undermined. Ministers have been sacrificed for taking tough stands. We learn this from the past and so we want to remind the present government about it. I know the Minister will do the right thing if this thing happens in his ministry. Ministers must appreciate that they are not alone in taking decisions on people who want to take advantage of the country in these matters. Ministers must appreciate that they have the full backing of the public and therefore they have nothing to be afraid of. You stand up and be counted!

In the case of investment incentives, the law is very clear on it and so the Minister does not need to labor himself into deciding what to do. The incentive committee was established by

this very Parliament and is vested with the responsibility to advise the government on what to do. Of course, the Minister can only intervene if the committee's advice is way out of line and is not in line with government policy. The Minister can only come in, in that instance and direct the committee to do the right thing. Otherwise the Minister leaves the committee alone to do its work.

I admire the first action of the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources. In this regard, congratulation Minister! I believe this Parliament has the duty to congratulate the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources. He stepped in and addressed the issue of illegal fishing with commitment and determination. That is being responsible and good steward of responsibilities. Thank you. That is the example of what I am talking about here. His determination to support the actions of his Permanent Secretary and other experts in the Ministry to deal with the alleged illegal fishing by foreign vessels is an action worthy of commendation by this Parliament. It sends a clear, clear signal that the government is serious. All the Ministers, you have the reputation and the credibility of the government on your shoulders and therefore you have the duty to stand like the Minister of Fisheries and tell the world, tell whoever who wants to come and make mess of this country that this is my country, this is the law and you are required to abide by it.

The Minister of Lands has the duty to collect \$24 million of uncollected revenue since 1985. I think all of us in here have been around since that time and it is shocking. I want to congratulate the Minister for Lands for coming up with this figure and say that we have \$24 million that we must collect. We really want to encourage the Minister to find out this figure and we will support every move that he will do to collect these uncollected revenues on behalf of the people of this country.

We also hold the Minister of Communication and Aviations are accountable for some outstanding investigations into the alleged used of some funds in 2008 and 2009, and when we asked him question on the floor of Parliament he said that investigations are still going on and so we register that in our minds. Do not be surprise if the same questions come back on the first quarter of next year. We were also aware that there are other outstanding investigations and findings have yet to be released to the public or directed to the appropriate authority to deal with them. Please be informed that we will continue to pursue these issues.

In the remaining 10 minutes or so I will quickly run through what I have here and I will stop. The Prime Minister has challenged all of us to ask why we decide to be Members of Parliament. That is quite a serious question and I hope he asked this question in Caucus as well so that everybody tells their minds as to why they want to become a member of parliament. It is quite a very interesting question but a very appropriate one and one which is personal to all Members of Parliament.

Interestingly, this job of being a member of parliament is one job in the country that you do not have to demonstrate any formal qualifications or past performances or experience to qualify. And that is good because it depends entirely on who our people trust to be put to parliament, and that is how parliament works. I am not talking about all kinds of papers hanging on the wall, and all sorts of qualifications hanging here and there. It does not talk about that but it talks about the trust and confidence that our people have on who they vote into this Parliament and so it is quite a serious, serious business. We are not required to work a

certain number of hours to earn our salaries and other entitlements. We are not required to fill any performance report to prove our worth and we can effectively be a liability to the government and still retain our seats in the next elections. So it is interesting, a very interesting job. We can never know management skills in managing development funds and yet be entrusted with millions of dollars of development funds from the budget; something that any sensible person who has that amount of money can only entrust on people with management skills. So it sounds like a very interesting job that all of us here are taking up. But if one thinks about it carefully, it is rather puzzling when you consider the importance of the decision that comes out of parliament. As a matter of fact, Parliament and especially the decisions in terms of the policies approved by Parliament have far reaching effects on the lives of our people. It is therefore not a simple matter.

Would it be fair to say that what we face today is a reflection of deterioration in the quality and appropriateness of policy decisions coming out of Parliament? An interesting question. Some will argue to the contrary and say that would be an over simplification of the issues that contributed to the ineffectiveness of Parliament and the Government. What then is the role of Members of Parliament or better still, do we understand our roles as Members of Parliament or as political heads of ministries? Interesting series of questions. I guess my reason for raising these questions is to make the point that unless we fully appreciate our roles here, we will have yet to appreciate the reasons why we are here.

Now, without beating around the bush, it is common knowledge that the political heads of ministries are representatives of the political government right in that ministry. The way our system works is that it is the political government that sets the policy direction for the administrative government to follow. It is, therefore, most important that representatives of the political governments in the ministries know exactly where we are taking the country. To make that direction clear to the administrative government, it is the political government that sets that direction and tells the administrative government this is the way we are going. Failing that, we will be wondering in the ocean of confusion.

Can we say this has been our problem? Is loving our country seems to be what is driving the Prime Minister and others to continue to re-contest their seats or to make their debut in Parliament? That is commendable. I would like to agree that unless we love our country we will be careless in the way we manage ourselves as members of parliament. What does it mean to love our country? Another interesting question. Do we love our country enough to say, no, to corruption, put our foot down and say this is the law? Do we love our country enough to ensure that we do not drive it down the path of aid dependency? Do we love our country enough to formulate development policies that will ensure that we fully utilize our potentials and improve our national capacity to implement credible public and private sector investment programs?

We talk about more money to cocoa, more money to coffee and so forth. But do you know what the problem of this country is? The problem of this country is that it lacks the capacity to finance any credible public investment program. That is the real big problem of this country so unless we see that, we will shout and talk about interesting policies in here, but they will exist merely in the books and come four years we will find good, good excuses to explain to our people. Do we love our country enough to stop selling our resources for peanuts? Do we

love our country enough to return the real ownership of this country to our people? These are sovereign issues.

I noticed that there are differing views. Some people want to argue that this whole issue about ownership is unrealistic because we have always owned Solomon Islands. I think this is the area that I will slightly lean towards the Prime Minister on. And the question I want to ask is, is that so? I am as I said will try to lean towards the Prime Minister on this issue and argue that as a people we have systematically lost effective control and ownership of our country. As we said in here, maybe the Prime Minister needs to slightly explain to us so that we can understand what he is referring to by that statement so that we can maybe stand at a level playing field in understanding this issue. Just for an example, and I just want to read into this; just look at the development of the forestry resources. Maybe that is what he means. Who benefits from the unsustainable development of this sector since 1926? If Solomon Islanders think they do then just look at how much does the so called 40 percent share of the logging operations under the present technology agreement arrangement is giving to landowners after the government deducts its 25% tax. A lousy 15%! This is royalty arrangement. Do you know what royalty is? Permission!!! Someone from overseas comes and pays permission for him to go and get his trees from inside your land there. That is what it is! It is permission to enter that land. We do not beneficially own it.

Just look at our tuna resources and the Minister is sitting down there listening to us. Just look at our tuna resources. All we have been getting out of our tuna resources are access fees by foreign fishing vessels. Maybe now we will get a much bigger amount because we will charge a fine on them. Minister, we encourage you to go after them. Of course, licenses, \$100million. Our former Cabinet, we colleagues were there, exports come and some benefits were outlined. We could easily earn more than \$3.1billion if we fully utilize that resource, downstream process the resource. So who owns the tuna resource in this country? Is it us or the people outside who come in and fish in our waters? Probably that is what the Prime Minister is saying and he wants to challenge us to look at appropriate policies to address that.

Just look at our mineral resources, who benefits from the extraction of our gold and other minerals? Not Solomon Islands. I believe that there is still a better way of developing our mineral resources. Unlike other resources like our logs where the primary product is imported by the importing country to manufacture say high quality timber or furniture, gold is different, it is traded for its intrinsic value. It is the gold bar that is of great value. It is not broken down into bits and pieces but rather it is the gold bar. Do you know what it is done with it? It is stored as wealth by the importing countries. That is what they are doing. They get it from us and keep it at some storehouses there and it sits down.

What we are effectively doing with our gold is that we transfer them for payment of what; in exchange of a lousy tax to the government and royalty to landowners. That is all this country gets and, of course, this fictitious thing recorded in export earnings. That is all. The export earning does not benefit us; it is the export earnings of foreign companies that operate here and it is right in their control if they want to remit it overseas, nothing stays in this country.

I believe we have jumped too soon into exploiting and trading our renewable resources because we did nothing to exploit the strength we have in our renewable resources. As a matter

of fact, we have renewable resources in abundance that can sustain our country economically for centuries if only we can maximize the benefit that we can get from them.

I have a lot more to say but to do justice to others who want to speak more, I want to stop here as I think I have raised enough issues that I feel the government should take notice that when you bring in your policies and we discuss the Speech from the Throne that is when we will murder each other on the floor of this Parliament on the workability of your policies, because we have some tastes of them now already in this meeting on what you have been saying to us.

Before I take my seat, I want to congratulate you as the Speaker of Parliament. Of course, the full trust and confidence of this House will be with you and we know that you will lead this Parliament and continue with the development and reforms that your predecessor has been doing. I thank your officers, the Clerk and those people that make this meeting successful. I thank the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers for answering questions and for behaving very well when we ask you questions. Of course, this House is a place to confront and argue with each other, we need to know that, and every argument ends here. Any argument that extends outside there, all of us have the right to go and confront that man outside there. Every argument ends here, and Mr Speaker you know that very well. You have been through a number of houses already and you have seen people heated up and taking the matter outside and wanted to fight outside. Is it your father's so that you want to take it outside? This is a well behaved house because if you go to other houses somewhere they are mad houses. In fact, question time in other parliaments is basically a mad house, as it is not a time to answer questions but it is time to discredit the questioner. In here, people are civilized, this is a civilized parliament and Ministers stand up and answer questions put forward to them, and so I want to congratulate you for making life easy to all of us. In saying that, I support this motion.

**Hon ETE:** I am thrilled and happy to stand up before this Chamber and the nation to thank my electorates of East Honiara constituency for having confidence in me by electing me to be their representative in the next four years. The constitution that many third world countries adopted on independence is based on the concept of constitutionalism of the new world. The underlying premise was that public power was to be demonstrated through the casting of ballots, hence on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 2010, you the people of East Honiara had spoken of which I thank you indeed. Special thanks goes to my people, the church leaders, the chiefs and community leaders of East Honiara constituency, especially to places like Kobito, Gilbert Camp, Aekafo, Fishing Village, Mbaranamba, Panatina, Lau Valley, Kwaio Valley, Milestone, the Burns Creek community, a very big community there, I thank you very much and Sun Valley. I want to also thank the students of KGVI School for having confidence in me when I came to speak to you there. I also thank Kukum Campus, Panatina Campus, Naha, Vura communities, Bahai, Mbua Valley, and other places that I do not make mention of here, I would like to thank you very much.

My contribution will only be geared towards certain things and then I will conclude; things that I think are important to talk about in this Chamber.

Our fathers went to London taking advantage of the 1962 decolonization program of the British Government to withdraw from the Pacific region, in particular the Western Pacific and when they signed the Lancaster House Agreement that we all know about, the country gained independence in 1978. I thank very much the delegates that went down at that time, especially the Rt. Hon Sir Peter Kenilorea for leading the delegation. The British Government then, its plan was to establish and sustain the economy for the next 100 or 200 years by establishing the CDC Palm Oil, the BSA rice industry and the coconut plantations that they left under the indentured laborers like William Lever and his brothers to sustain the economy.

At independence many Solomon Islanders did not like the independence constitution as they said the Solomon Islands state is a constitutional monarch adorned with the apron of British sovereign as the head of state represented by the Governor General with a parliamentary democratic style on the model of Westminster. This means that the nation is centrally governed as a single unit with government power centralized in Honiara and yet parliament must legislate a system where in practice is debatable which many people think is a hindrance to national development where the centralized government is here and the provinces are legislated.

Today we now have a new draft federal constitution before us as an alternative system to which Solomon Islands after 32 years must decide whether to still have the independence constitution handed to us by a departing imperial or to ride on a new donkey that has never been trained. I believe the neatest and most profound duty of this House is to leave it on the table for at least seven years and subsequently conduct a national referendum to seek the views of the majority. This is important.

We have enjoyed the kind of executive that the power is vested in a council of ministers called cabinet and if we are to adapt a new constitution where executive power is vested in the president, then it is up to the people to decide. The current Philip-led government I think is responsible, seemingly responsible because the Cabinet is responsible to Parliament and most of the things discussed in Cabinet will be discussed in Parliament, and this is how we will be a responsible government.

As a matter of fact whether it is a football club or a club of rotary, the test of the legitimacy of the constitution is not what is written in the constitution. But it is by efficacy, meaning if that new federal constitution goes through a national referendum and is acceptable by the majority then and only then can it be effected. Otherwise we jump into one thing which later on does not work. I suggest that the new federal constitution should remain on the table for a little while.

I will now turn to the Integrity Bill. This is important for the stability of the nation in terms of the sharing of power in politics. Although the opinion of many had been that the system may eventually lead to a concrete disaster in managing the resources of Solomon Islands. The system, in my view, brings with it the principle of responsibility to our ruling government and the legislature. It would under no circumstances provide the kind of stability in government that was not seen in the last 32 years. This Bill, if it comes to Parliament, will get my support.

I will now turn to SIWA, on the compounding issues affecting it quite recently. Allow me time to now say a few words of observation on the Solomon Islands Water Authority

(SIWA), a service provider of water to the people of this country, especially Honiara. There are people out there who believe SIWA should be a multi-million dollar business, people who think they can turn SIWA to serve their own business interest. The government must not allow these individuals to manipulate this SOE to suit their interest. The SIWA exists through an Act of Parliament and as such only Parliament can change the Act, and not the SIWA board or the so called advisors.

The events taking place at the period of caretaker which saw all board members and three managers terminated will cost SIWA dearly if legal challenges go to the High Court. What happened in the past is that caretaker ministries did not make changes but merely ensure the Permanent Secretary maintains the administrative function of the government as a normal unit until a new government is elected. Normally, a new government would appoint its backbenches to be the chairman of all SOE's. Has the convention now changed?

There are authorities and individuals out there that want SIWA to be a million-dollar company. They wanted SIWA to make millions of dollars to pay the SIEA to meet their commitments at the expense of the people. They wanted the SIWA management to enforce major disconnections of water from people who cannot pay, especially in Honiara in my constituency. They wanted the SIWA management to take people to court. They blamed the SIWA management for not doing that. They regarded the management's leniency to implement the SIWA Act as an act of poor performance. They forgot the fact that SIWA is a state owned enterprise that must deliver water to our people. What are we talking about good governance when East Honiara residents do not even have water to drink? Is that good government? Goodness sake, for 20 years my people have been carrying water at Kobito and go up as far as five kilometers and the government is still planning, successive governments are still planning. Planning, planning until what time?

While all of us want SIWA to make money, we must know that half of the city has no water. We must understand that the problem SIWA is experiencing now is something that has been in existence for years now since the ethnic tension and the militia was pronounced and they raided SIWA and stole many things. The SIWA needs subventions, it needs monetary assistance to build its infrastructure, and this is what the government will be doing.

Several board members have drilled boreholes in their premises and they have never been accounted for. I think this must be investigated because whilst they are doing that, the masses of my people of East Honiara are paying for the water. With wide unemployment today many people are drilling borehole sources in their residential areas and they never pay for water. According to the Act this is wrong.

One of the problems of SIWA is that the Kongulai water source is low and its productive capacity is far inadequate to meet the existing consumer needs. When the capacity is low, SIWA has no water to supply. Any new board must consider other water sources and negotiate with landowners and not blaming people for nonpayment of water. This is Solomon Islands and we cannot change people's mentality on the commodity. To insist on people to pay when they have no water and for SIWA to sell SIWA assets in the hope of getting more revenue is nothing less than gross miscalculations. I understand that the board and the last management have begun negotiations with landowners about sourcing of the Kovi water source and an understanding is about to conclude when the so called chairman terminated the SIWA Board

and the management. I hope the landowners in question were convinced to allow SIWA employees to access the water sources.

The government must assist the SOE to find solution to the water problems in Honiara and other centres. The process is we must allow landowners to sell water to SIWA and allow them to look after the water sources. Today, as we speak now, many water sources and water tanks are being climbed upon by people because of the recent incidents that have happened where employees were being terminated and nobody looking after those places and this causes threat to Honiara itself. In saying that, you should just understand what I am saying and what is happening. On top of the borderline just next to where I live, people are climbing on top of the tanks every day.

I wish to highlight recent difficulties that hampered the operations of SIWA. In this respect, I question the use of ministerial power after the dissolution of an elected government. The basic principle of parliamentary system is that when a ruling government ceases its term in office, the status and functions of that government also changes, meaning the government becomes a caretaker vested with caretaker functions. In a parliamentary democracy a caretaker government is tasked to perform rudimentary functions of the state such as ensuring law and order is maintained and the machinery continues to turn such that the daily business of administration is carried out. Caretaker governments cannot initiate new programs or launch new projects. Normally, this is wrong and defies the principles of electoral competition in a parliamentary democracy because if it does, the caretaker government will have an unfair advantage over other political parties running for elections. That is why in British democracies no new changes through legal notices to alter change a board of a quasi government institution like SIWA, the SIEA and Solomon Airlines should be made during a period between the end of the life of a parliament and the moment a new government is elected.

I will now turn to foreign relations and diplomacy. This is very important because all state processes are influenced not only by inside forces but also outside relations. This theory is based on the principle of interdependence and more importantly premised on who Solomon Islands wants to make friend with. I am no expert on marital affairs but foreign relations is to do with human relations and who you want to marry. In this respect, we, in this chamber must choose wisely as to which country we would want to have diplomatic ties with taking into account the principles of human rights, the commonwealth, trade and commerce, international and regional organizations and external affairs and all its interests. As a people we must be protected and promoted to the most cost effective manner, otherwise there is no use having a relationship with a foreign country. I concur with the new government's 'look-north policy' and must add that this country must keep the current relations and expand for new relationship for trade purposes.

I will now turn to the RCDF. The RCDF has been used or misused by politicians and their cronies as a golden handshake for helping them win elections and subsequently huge lawsuits are pending courts. Successive governments good speeches fail to transform and reform the procedures and yet in this Chamber we boast of good government, transparency and sound government. No wonder, former ministers and former MP's refuse to contest their seats in some of the electorates and others awaiting lawsuits. I believe in the Danny Philip-led government for the reorder of the process of the RCDF to the Ministry of Rural Development to

manage it, otherwise it will be falling into my personal account or my cronies' accounts. Only in this way the system is framed to keep politicians honest and enhance development truly in this country.

I will speak a little on crown employees. From the British model of public service, rules guiding politics and bureaucracy are explicit in that there is separation of power between politics and administration. The most permanent thing a nation can be accorded with is the civil service because it is permanent in its true sense, all other is temporal power. Woodrow Wilson, a professor at French Town and a former US President argued that civil service and its administration lies outside the parameters of politics, although politics sets the task for administration. Although that maybe true, we all know that every particular application of general law such as collecting revenue from taxes and fees is an act of administration. Wilson believes that political appointees must all be changed in a new administration when he said, "To the victor is the spoils and thus they being temporal will link politics and administration and move government programs forward".

Civil service being permanent calls for good policies, better work practices to be able to be effective and efficient. Successive governments have overlooked this important point. They think these human beings are like donkeys, forced and muzzled from participating in decent work and forced employees to carry out government programs like collecting fees and revenues without incentives. This will not happen if I am still the Minister of Public Service. New public service management demands cooperation and co-determination. I believe in the carrot and stick principle that if you want a white elephant to fly, you will have to give the donkey the carrot before the stick, and not the other way around. The conditions of service of public employees are not appealing to this day and age. One salary only fits one bag of rice. We have not control the price up until today. It was not done properly by successive governments, except for the government that was elected in 2006, and that I applaud.

I will now turn to the wage commission. Wage in Solomon Islands is done by negotiations and the aggregate result is only instability to a government. The case of Telekom Civil service strikes this year points to one thing and that is governments must now realize the need for a wage commission to cater for sectors of the society that are not recognized by law when it comes to wage issues. You will agree with me that only the legislature has rules under the Parliamentary Entitlement Regulations. The judiciary, the executive and the private sector do not have this, and thus this calls for the question, are politicians special? What right have they got over all others in the society for their conditions of service to be regulated? The time has come for this government to learn from past mistakes and be innovative. A wage commission would mean every wage increase including the legal minimum wage will fall under agreements. This alone will determine political and social economic stability in this country.

I will now talk a little on the state of the economy in the last 10 years. All development projects established in the first 10 years of independence have not worked well for this country. Investments into the Marina Sasape, the Solomon Taiyo and the CDC created in pre-independence had changed hands in the last 10 years. According to a report of June 2007 there was a case of bad investment where the Solomons Mutual insurance in partnership with the NPF had seen \$20 million of appropriation money siphoned out of the country by paper

companies and the list goes on. All SOEs must be accountable to the state. I believe some of the SOEs need to be privatized to lessen the burden on the state to support them, and more so it is not the role of a government to operate but rather to regulate.

Thirty years down the line, are Solomon Islanders truly independent or dependent or interdependent? I would rather believe that the middle expresses more concern because of the decisions that leaders in this chamber make. If this is the case, we should work a little harder to reform the country and approach national development in a different manner from which we as a nation did in the last 20 years. With the new policy framework of the Danny Philip-led government, I have all the confidence that implementation programs from these policy statements will be apportioned into the rural as a strategy to reduce the gap between the rural divide, the haves and the have-nots and the common citizens of this country. Thirty two years is a long time and we must mould our politics, socio-economic programs and civil service for the benefit of Solomon Islanders.

I will now turn to RAMSI. As a Solomon Islander, I wish to acknowledge the presence of the Regional Assistance Mission. They have obviously have Solomon Islands in returning normalcy to this country in the last seven years. It is my sincere desire to have the presence of this Regional Mission for the next 10 to 15 years. Anymore than that will be not acceptable as it can be argued and debated as re-colonization. That is probably what the Prime Minister suggested in his speech but was misquoted by the media. I understand that RAMSI's mandate remain unchanged since 2003 with focus on law and order, government finance and the economy. The economy component is not suffice because they have concentrated on reforming only the other two, including government budgetary management and hope that the economy will respond to it to give positive results. Of course, the economy will, but not in a direct way. What we want is to get RAMSI directly involved in rural development prospects if RAMSI is to be seen articulating its medium term goal in this country under the agreement with Solomon Islands Government.

I will now turn to the Titinge shooting. The recent Titinge shooting calls on this Chamber to review the Facilitation of International Assistance Act, particularly section 24 and its intentions together with section 59 of the National Constitution on the powers to make laws to see that Solomon Islands are protected in the true sense. If we truly own Solomon Islands then we must use section 59 to review the FIA Act. If we cannot because of other reasons beyond this Chamber, then we are practically in a true sense do not own this country.

I believe that the rule of law and the legal order must be seen and practiced by those assisting Solomon Islands. Immunity is a postmortem idea of the old world. However, we want a regional mission to help us, they must comply with our constitution, otherwise our safety is only something said on a piece of paper. I call on the Commissioner of Police and his Deputy to answer as to who gave the orders to shoot that tragic night that saw the death an unarmed Solomon Islander? I have not seen it in the report. I have the report with me in a letter written but I have not seen it. Someone has to do it.

I will now talk on the Police Recruitment Scheme. May I briefly speak on the voluntary early retirement ethnic tension related scheme of the Royal Solomon Islands Police. This scheme is an exit strategy for police personnel in the ranks and files who are involved in activities related to the ethnic tension with the view to retain public confidence in the Police

Force. The process shall involve officers to anonymously volunteer his/her name or the names of others to be considered for voluntary early retirement by way of a secret ballot. A steering committee will screen the names volunteered to ensure their inclusion on the list is ethnic tension related. A final list of names received in the ballot will be compiled and submitted to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission who shall then invite nominees to go through a process of counseling and confidence under closed hearing. When this hearing and counseling is over and finalized, the list of names of individual officers who have participated in the Truth and Reconciliation process will be submitted to the Royal Solomon Islands Police Steering Committee. Further, formal offers will then be made to individual officers for voluntary early retirement packages in October 2010. As reported over the media, more than 200 officers have been nominated and shall participate in the process.

While the voluntary early retirement ethnic tension related scheme may appear to have good intentions, government processes and protocols must not be ignored or hijacked. The new government was not given courtesy by the Royal Solomon Islands Police Executive through a cabinet submission. We have asked for a cabinet conclusion prior to the implementation of the scheme. Already those nominated are now in Honiara to be interviewed by the TRC and interviews are currently in process. Any scheme that involves expenditure even if externally or internally funded, the Cabinet of Solomon Islands must be consulted. The Solomon Islands Government is the employer of members of the Disciplined Forces and SIG shall be committed in many ways once that scheme is implemented. The new government must be informed and consulted.

Individuals and other stakeholders including the unions had raised very serious issues over the media on this ethnic tension related exit strategy. This ethnic tension related exit strategy has raised more questions than answers. The nation must be assured that this scheme shall not cause further disharmony and shall not be a threat to the heart and stability of this nation's security. The nation must be informed of the gravity of this scheme and its impact on the quality of services rendered by the RSIP. The nation must be assured that loss of skills due to this scheme must not be an excuse to recruit expatriates or seen as an opportunity for external recruitment to fill positions left vacant.

The voluntary earlier retirement ethnic tension related scheme is a very loose arrangement that there is no assurance from the RSIP that those identified shall be immune from prosecution. No one is above the law and justice must take its course. If this is true, the nation must be assured that those identified shall be immune from prosecution under the Solomon Islands law and Cabinet must be informed of that.

The Commissioner of Police did not consult the new government by way of a cabinet submission on this ethnic related exit scheme prior to its implementation. This is a clear abuse of executive power. Consultations with the Minister of Police as claimed by the RSIP will merely preliminary discussions on the scheme. The new government must be given the opportunity through a Cabinet submission to be informed on the advantages and disadvantages of the scheme and make a submission, especially to my office.

I shall now stop here and before I finally resume my seat, if there is a signature policy that this government has, it is the amendment to the Independence Constitution to accommodate the Customary Lands Institutional License Bill and this Bill will enable Solomon

Islanders an opportunity to lease or let their resources to effect the aspirations of national development in Solomon Islands. With that lengthy speech, may God bless Solomon Islands and I support the motion.

**Hon. RIUMANA:** Thank you for recognizing the Member of Parliament for Hograno/Katova/Kia/Havulei Constituency to contribute on this motion, a very customary motion.

In the course of the motion, we seem to hear the same choruses, the same hymns and tunes being repeated over and over again as if we are giving lectures in this honourable Chamber. We have also heard that action speaks louder than words, yet we talk so much in this honorable House and do very little so I shall be very brief and straight to the point.

First of all, on behalf of my people, I join other colleague Members on the chorus to sincerely congratulate the Prime Minister as the executive head of the government of this Ninth Parliament. The people of this nation have spoken through their legitimate representatives who intend mandate the Member of Parliament for South New Georgia/Rendova & Tetepare as the Prime Minister of this nation of Solomon Islands. You have the trust, confidence and support of my people and Isabel Province as a whole. The election of the Prime Minister demonstrates sharing of responsibilities based on quality leaders this nation groomed in various parts of the country. That in itself manifests a sense of belonging, feeling of ownership advocates unity and so together we build this nation. On the same note, may I on behalf of my people from Hograno/Katova/Kia/Havulei Constituency congratulate your goodself, Mr Speaker, for your successful election as Speaker of this highest authority, the legislature of Solomon Islands. Your election as Speaker of this Legislature was not a mistake neither for convenience but based on your wide political experience and your leadership qualities. Your election to the Office of Speaker Sir, and being one of the pioneers of the then Litovahira Primary School in my constituency is a pride to my people and Isabel Province.

To all Members of this Ninth Parliament, may I on behalf of my people of Hograno/Katova/Kia and Havulei Constituency congratulate all Members of Parliament for your sweet victory. Indeed, the victory is sweet but there will come a time when sweet feeling will soon be faced with countless challenges. There will come a time when one has to make hard decisions and become unpopular, and there will come a time when one has to make decisions between the constituency and the state.

All of us in this legislature through the same democratic process and procedures become the constitutional representatives of our people in our respective constituencies. All Members of Parliament have the trust, confidence and hope of our people, so let us be their beacon of hope, let us be that someone to be trusted and let us defend and advocate the interest and welfare of our people and our nation.

On the same note, may I take this chance to say thank you to my constituents who have trust and confidence on me to be their legitimate representative of our governing system. I know the challenges and tasks ahead are not easy, but with your support and mutual understanding, I will try my very best to serve your interests and uphold your rights and welfare wherever I can within my reach and capacity. To my constituency development officer, campaign managers and village based screening agents, I thank them so much from the bottom

of my heart for a job well done. It was through their tireless efforts and sleepless night that made me won the hearts of my heart. I will continue to work closely with them in addressing their need and the aspirations of our people with the noble intention for improved living qualities.

The Ninth Parliament has a very interesting story and a history of its own making. We have noticed through the election results some unexpected upsets. Some heavyweights could not make it to the finishing line of the political race. We have also noticed that about 50% of members of the legislature are new comers, about 42% are second term MPs and about 8% are long term serving MPs.

To me, the people of this nation have spoken through the democratic process. It is a call for change and the government of the day demonstrates that very call by our people for a change. Call for a change is a paradigm shift. It is a change of mentality, a change of thinking, a change of ways of doing things and a change at the way we look at issues of interest with the intention of a positive and tangible change. This is the call directed and mandated to us by our people. To guide and direct us in answering the call for change by our people, let us look back at our past history and learn from our past experiences. Let us be guided and directed by past successes and failures.

For quite a distant period of time before independence until today, no rural activities become successful despite trillions of dollars injected into the rural sector by successive governments and donor partners. It clearly manifests the fact that past rural development approaches, concepts, strategies and mechanisms do not reflect any positive sign of success. This is a crystal clear message to all of us that rural development concept must be overhauled, reformed and restructured. This is the call for a change by our people. If all ministries and regulatory functions of the government advocate and uphold the same routine systems, procedures, services and functions, I do not think we will address the call for change by our people.

All government ministries and related subsidiary authorities must be overhauled, reformed and restructure approaches and functions if we have the noble intention of delivering services to our people effectively and efficiency. In that regard, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development has, over several senior staff conferences and seminars, evaluated our past successes and failures. It does then come to our realization that the Ministry's rural development concepts and approaches must be overhauled, reformed and restructured. This is the paradigm shift to that of changing our rural development concepts and approaches with the hope of bringing about tangible positive change.

The reform and restructure exercise the Ministry is undertaking at the moment focuses on the intention to readdress ministerial approaches and activities toward achieving equitable distribution of economical activities in a more holistic and concentrated approach. The Ministry must perform proactive roles and facilitate agricultural activities with a concept devised to enhance practical and successful rural development program so that our people in respective constituency and provinces equally participate in economical activities.

Having said that, it was the first time in the history of the Ministry that we have formulated a ministerial sectoral policy. The said policy will act as a compass to guide and direct our mandated protocols. That is the roadmap that will lead the Ministry and

stakeholders to best utilize our agricultural potentials. All development donor partners are therefore encouraged to respect our policy and aligned their development programs with the ministerial program.

It saddens me to note that almost all development partners do not have trust and confidence in the way we manage and operate our ministerial affairs. As a result, donor partner designed development programs manage and operate parallel to the legitimate mechanism of the government. With due respect, parallel donor operate programs duplicate the roles and functions that exist in the ministries create lucrative salary packages and ceased to exist on the very day the project comes to an end. In most cases, donor programs were designed outside by someone who has little or no knowledge of the country, has little knowledge of our cultures and traditions and has little knowledge of our past history of rural developments. This project has always failed and dooms to fail although pictures and report produced facelift success story.

I believe if all donor operated projects were aligned with legitimate mechanisms of each respective ministries, it will avoid duplication of duties and reduce the engagement of highly paid consultants who perform exactly the same as our local expertise. Increased the level of assistance to our rural beneficiaries, enhance capacity building and institutional strengthening so that once the project comes to an end the Ministry can still perform.

Finally, the establishment of the Rural Development Constituency Fund funded by the Government and people of Taiwan has attracted wide negative criticisms and comments both from international communities and the local media and more especially the residents of Honiara. The RCDF has attracted negative comments simply because of the way it was channeled and how Members administer the fund. But not many people seem to appreciate how much this Fund has contributed to the livelihood of our rural people. I believe the silent majority of our rural population fully understands how much this Fund means to them. Indeed, the RCDF funded by the Republic of China on Taiwan has touched the hearts of our rural people in many ways.

If we are to take an inventory of the many types of assistances provided through the RCDF to our rural people, it will be very interesting to note how many people, how many villages and how many communities benefited from the most talked about fund. If we could count the water tanks, schools with permanent building, permanent rest houses, permanent churches, generators, outboard motors and canoes, solar panels, retail stores, school grant assistance, direct assistance to individual people and the list goes on, I would not be wrong to say that the RCDF supersedes all assistances provided by other donor partners that no one seems to care talk about. May I, therefore, on behalf of my people sincerely thank the government and people of the Republic of China/Taiwan for their good hearted assistance.

In concluding, let me bring to the attention of this legislature one of the long outstanding but important need of my constituents and Isabel province as a whole. On this Motion of Sine Die, I wish to point out that Isabel Province is one of the longest island but with the shortest road. The Isabel Province being one of the main provinces in the country has contributed significantly to the revenue of the government. In the forestry sector, almost all logging activities take place in my constituency and I am sure we have contributed significantly to the economy of this country yet our governments after governments turn a deaf year and a blind eye to my people's need. Furthermore, successive governments including CNURA

Government where three members from Isabel become an important part of have given us the assurance but only to later learn the assurance was merely for lobbying expediency. Again this government has the full support of three solid members from Isabel and we have no doubt in our hearts that with the policies that will be launched tomorrow, we anticipate and are very hopeful that our road will be seriously considered so that our people can equally enjoy the services and the benefits of a proper road infrastructure.

Finally, I thank the staff of Parliament for their support and understanding in making our duties easy and for facilitating the parliament meetings. Without their hard work and effort our meeting would not have been as we expected. I also thank the Leader of Opposition and Independent including their members for being constructive in our meeting's business and for providing direction and guidance to the government. I hope we work as a team as legislators of our constitutional representative so that we build our nation to the expectation of our people. As I said I shall be very brief and straight to the point and with that I support the motion.

**Mr. TOZAKA:** Thank you for permitting me this opportune time to speak on the Sine Die Motion which is the first for this Ninth Parliament, and accordingly I thank the Prime Minister for moving it. I also would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the whole Solomon Islands, especially His Excellency the Governor General for his outstanding work as the representative of Her Majesty and his role as a uniting figure of our geographically divided country. I would like to thank him for performing his role to officiate the oaths of allegiance taken by MPs to take part in the proceedings of this meeting of parliament. Your Excellency, be assured that I have all the trust in you in performing the roles of the highest office in this country. To you, Mr Speaker, I would like to give special thanks for the manner you have conducted your role as the Speaker of this House. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Clerk, your deputy and the able staff of Parliament for the excellent manner you have all performed your duties in making this meeting lively and successful. To my people of North Vella Vella I wish to thank you very much, "matu uri", thank you for your confidence. I plan to continue the work I have started both as a community leader and your elected representative in the Parliament of Solomon Islands. It has been an honour to serve you. My people of Vella will know that though I have a wantok and some good friends and former colleagues, even a tabu or two in government, I see government differently. Therefore, my experience in government, my common sense my view of how things ought to be directed me to where I am.

To open my contribution, I want to make a general comment, very briefly on situations that I see. A sine die motion is the appropriate time to look at the big picture, a micro situation and to share not only what we MPs can see, what MPs hear or feel but also the feelings of our constituencies and the general public as a whole. Here we are ending the first meeting of this Ninth Parliament in September 2010. We have a split parliament with one vacancy, the possibility of a few more before the end of the year. The Government of Solomon Islands, therefore, is in a very unsettled position. Another word that probably describes our situation better is 'unstable', even though the Minister for Finance clearly believes otherwise. This is a word that the previous government has tried very, very hard to get rid off but certain people in this House helped to continue this unfortunate habit of unstable government in Solomon

Islands. Instability helps those who want to rich quickly. Stability secures the future of our people, especially our younger generation. There is really no choice for real leaders.

The transition from the CNURA Coalition to this group is very strange. In fact, it reminds me of some of the forced changes in government from the late 1980s and 1990s. Those changes were engineered not by our people but by vested interests in different sectors, mainly logging but now gambling as well. In those times a lot of people got rich quick and left and our people have nothing to show except for bad habits, broken family relations, suspicions in nearly all levels of leadership in the country, broken institutions of government and endemic corruption. That is the legacy we inherit from the past. That is the legacy we must not allow to continue into the future if we are real leaders.

Today, it seems we have a new government that comes to power with no policy objectives as yet except to gain the upper hand and control of how the resources of government are to be spent. Now they are in power they are arguing about policy options, for example, the Minister for Education yesterday pointed out that in his opinion there should be very limited policy programs of the government based on capability to implement them. I agree with the Minister because really there are few options outside of those identified by the CNURA and the GCCG before the government. I am able to agree that Ministers have put off the budget session until the end of the first quarter of next year. Other MPs have spoken about how unfortunate this is. I agree with my colleague, the Minister of Public Service who has just spoken on some of the issues he raised. I would like to say that the budget for 2010 unless altered or amended by this new government immediately has to deliver the policies output of CNURA until the end of the year.

What I am saying here is that all the programs and projects designed and described by CNURA approved in November last year must be acted upon and delivered by the new government as originally planned for if they do not, I suggest they are in breach of the 2010 Appropriation Act, which is a law that must be followed and upheld unless this new Parliament amends it by a new act. As we know, the supplementary appropriation bill we have just passed does not replace the 2010 Appropriation Act. It merely supplements it and therefore all ministries should proceed as normal to expend the approved budgetary allocations for the various programs and projects. This should not be difficult for the new government as the previous finance minister for CNURA is now the Minister of Planning and Aid Coordination of the new government. There are other former CNURA ministers including the new Finance Minister who contributed to formulating the 2010 budget. It should not be hard to continue.

When the CNURA took over the government in late 2007, it had a clear vision of what was needed to be done. This had been described in different ways but this is how I see it. We needed to rescue the reputation of our country Solomon Islands. We needed to update and improve the laws of our country that have been neglected for so long. We needed to stabilize government because when a government is stable, it can concentrate on important things like growing the economy, creating jobs and livelihoods to increase investment. We needed to begin to root out corruption for when corruption is present, the government society which means all of us, people lose respect. Corruption is people not obeying the laws, lawful processes and procedures. Corruption is like something rotten in the system and everybody knows about it because of the stink. We needed to set in place the ways and means to facilitate

reconciliation so that peace between conflicting communities can be restored. It is a pity to note that some Ministers think what we have set in place is not enough. We responded to the private sector and speedily de-monopolize the telecommunications industry with the result where we now have two telephone companies and lower telephone costs. We allowed market forces to work in the rice industry and how many people grow rice, and we imported from more than a couple of countries, and the price of rice has gone down. The Minister of Finance must give CNURA credit for this.

We also needed to ensure the economic infrastructures of our country are repaired and expanded. Some results can already be seen; the special franchise shipping service now in place after 20 years restores regular shipping services to remote islands. Roads, bridges and airstrips upgraded, repaired and improved. Wharfs in locations such as Ughele on the PM's island will be completed by the contractor this weekend. Lambete in Munda is nearing completion also. These are some examples of the good work of the CNURA Government. When infrastructures are in place, the economy can boom again and people can get jobs and livelihoods. We worked very very hard and our donors gave us good support and significant levels of funding for which we are very grateful indeed. Even when the effects of the global financial crisis hit us, our donors came to our assistance. We had to take some hard decisions to get results.

I am sure we all know that leadership is not a popularity contest. Popularity can come to anyone who can sing, dance and play good sport. But to lead government, people expect to find father or motherly figures. People who saw us the way show us how to analyze, how to be disciplined, how to behave, how to focus on aims and objectives. When we can demonstrate these, our people will respect us and we can in turn ensure we make good policies and implement good programs for our people.

The government rarely delivers results quickly; it cannot deliver results quickly and why? This is because government leaders act on behalf of the majority of the people, not their personal interests or their friends for that matter. Their policies must be clearly discussed, carefully designed and carefully managed in the implementation stage, and this must be delivered across the board, across the country, across different sectors. They must also support and re-enforce each other.

I am sorry if some new ministers are already feeling disappointed, but do not be tempted to terminate or transfer good staffs in your ministries. Your staffs that are doing very good work, I advise you to hold on to them so that they continue with the good work they are doing. Keep them to carry on the good works for they are the ones who would help you deliver by the time the end of our term arrives. For example, if you want to change the Gaming and Lotteries Act you just do not take a paper to Cabinet. You start with consultations across all communities because gaming and lotteries affects our children and their children. This is the government of Solomon Islands and our people must be consulted because this is a national policy issue. Another example is if you have issues about lands, consult with your staff as they can tell you what has been happening and they can help you find ways that are fair and beneficial to all people.

Similarly, this so called forgiveness bill, the use of such simple words can raise enormous expectations, unreasonable expectations. Let us therefore not cloud or confuse our discussions on peace and reconciliation. There are at least two issues to be dealt with which

should not be confused; the need to be dealt with separately. One is the tension and the fighting that we have experienced between our good peoples from Guadalcanal and Malaita from 1998 until 2000. I prefer to call this communal violence instead of ethnic tension. We know that not all our people were engaged in this violence. The chapter of our history needs to be closed by appropriate acts of reconciliation. This is what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is doing at this time. Let us give time and support to the people who are bravely telling their stories. Healing has started and I thank our people for coming forward to share their burdens and pains.

The ethnic tension is a separate issue, in my view, and this has to do with what happened in 2000 when our prime minister then was apprehended, when the government then came to a standstill and when people with guns roamed the streets of our capital. We have appropriately dealt with this, so my question here is who needs forgiveness and what for? As others have said or implied, forgiveness is sought by those who know they have done wrong and in their contrition can describe what they did wrong. This must be thought out very, very carefully by Cabinet. The question to be asked are, what are the incidences of communal violence and what are the offences against the lawful government of Solomon Islands? Who wants to be forgiven and for what? This is not a very difficult issue, but it just has to be defined, described properly and managed properly and the laws of the land apply. Unless we deal with this properly, openly and with courage and confidence, we will fail our people and others will be tempted to take up arms again. If this comes to pass all of us in Parliament will need forgiveness.

On RAMSI, just very briefly, I read with dismay and surprise the lead story headlined by the Solomon Star on Tuesday that RAMSI is to leave in five years time. I am not surprised that they will leave, but I was just surprised that this is announced before the government comes up with its policies. I hope my friend, the Prime Minister has not jumped the gun, so to speak on this. I heard the Minister of Public Service mention that this is distorted information in the paper. However, let me continue on.

It was only last year that the Foreign Relations Committee of Parliament reviewed RAMSI and found widespread support for its continuation. Any careful reading of the views of our people around the country tells us they are not yet confident that our institutions of government including the Police and also probably Parliament are not ready and therefore, RAMSI must stay awhile. Not only other institutions are not so well rebuilt but capacity building by which I mean human resources to man or staff the institutions have not been well developed. Here we are less than a year later, hearing the PM wants RAMSI out and we want to be free; free to do what, may I ask. There seems to be some idle talk findings its way into the newspaper that caused some people great worry, worry big enough to direct the Solomon Star to take the news item out of its website on Tuesday evening. The announcement was clearly premature, as it had not been discussed with RAMSI and I think a lot of our people will be very concerned here.

If the government wants a timetable for RAMSI withdrawal, let us sit down with our provincial governments, community leaders and set our timelines by which certain outcomes must be impacting in our communities. The main one which has to have some significant headway is attacking corruption. Are we still under suspicion? When an expatriate family was

injected from their rented house so that a very senior government person can move in shows we have a problem. When we realized that the expatriate was paying \$23,000 a month in rental and the government is now to pay \$75,000 a month, we have a crisis of confidence on our hands. Frankly, this story will harm our international reputation, but thank you the Prime Minister has seen the wisdom, the government has seen wisdom and I am very, very thankful that the decision has been changed and the government has decided not to go on with this dealing. I thank the Prime Minister for his wisdom and understanding on this issue.

So what should we do now? We must make liners in the sand that show our progress here. Here are some thinking that I think are necessary.

- Set up the independent commission against corruption and have solid citizens lead it and give them courageous staff. When this is set up and running as expected and when we have sufficient prosecutions to demonstrate the system works, RAMSI advisors in the Justice Sector can leave.
- Set up an independent electoral commission charged with consulting nationwide and implementing a newly electoral system in time for the general elections in 2014. When it delivers as expected, the RAMSI Electoral Strengthening Project can close down and leave.
- Review and refocus the Public Service Improvement Program so that the output of the program demonstrates client satisfaction with quality and timelines of service delivery and that it service across all institutions of government. When the evaluation describes customer satisfaction with services delivered, RAMSI can then withdraw.
- Ensure that when the RSIP can demonstrate it can be trusted to resume its arms constabulary role, when a backup mobile riot squad can be mobilized, resourced and tested successfully and when the RSIP is responsible to inputs and guidance from community leaders, the backup function of the PPF will no longer be needed.
- Ensure all operating systems in the Ministry of Finance including Financial Instructions are not influenced by political decisions, not subject to threats and intimidations by criminals or con-man and can secure the people's consolidated funds, when all the staffs have graduate degrees in appropriate disciplines, especially in economics and accountancy, we can trust their professional judgment.

There are others but I will not continue. I merely mentioned a few examples of marks.

Lastly, the system implemented by RAMSI in our institutions is not without costs. When we have sufficient funds to finance the continuation of all those improvements and maintain a high standard of operation then the RAMSI advisors can leave. Remember that the communal violence and the coup that followed damaged our economy so much that the economy contracted to a level of more than 10 or so years ago. The question is at what point can we have enough government income to sustain the improvement that RAMSI has put in place? There are so many variables to be studied before we suggest that it must go.

Finally, in conclusion may I congratulate my friend the honorable Member for Rendova/Tetepare on assuming the prime ministership. We heard him when moving the

motion yesterday described his years in Parliament. We welcome him, his experience to the leadership of this country. With these few remarks, I support the motion.

**Hon. MEWA:** I too would like to contribute briefly to this sine die motion moved by the Prime Minister on Thursday last week, and I thank the Deputy Prime Minister for extending the time so that we can participate in the debate of this motion. I think this is the appropriate time for us to express our hearts and also show confidence in here as well because some of us are still nervous in talking here, and so I really thank you that we are given the opportunity to contribute, especially those of us the new ones so that we try to build up our confidence.

Like a growing child that needs nourishment and support to enable it to grow bigger and stronger, so I am in this honorable House. I still have a lot to learn regarding parliamentary proceedings, let alone the confidence to speak. The first time I arise to speak in this honorable House is something which will be quite difficult to erase from my memory. I am a teacher by profession and I always have confidence in myself that I will be bold in this honorable House just like when I stood in front of my students in the classroom. This was not the case. However, I thank God that I am gradually gaining confidence and I believe as time goes on I will greatly improve.

Before I dwell on other matters, I wish to thank my colleagues on the Opposition Bench for their valid and constructive contributions, and I have learned a lot from them. Apart from maybe the contradictions and arguments, I really appreciate what they have done so far, and I have learned a lot. I sometimes just sit down here to observe how they talk and I thank them a lot that I am picking up. I also wish to thank the parliamentary officials for the work they have done by introducing us to the Parliamentary Standing Orders and so forth. I think without them I would not come this far or otherwise I would not have the confidence to stand up here. Thank you very much Parliamentary officials.

Before I dwell on other subjects like other previous speakers, I, once again would like to register my sincere and profound gratitude to the people of Temotu Nende Constituency for the mandate they have given me to be their representative in this very honorable House. Whether you have casted your votes for me or the other candidates, I wish to thank you for exercising your democratic rights. Now it is time we put aside all our differences and work together to address some of the pressing issues in our constituency. Whilst on this subject, I wish to specifically register my thanks to the people of Graciosa Bay, Bekapoa, Temotu Neo, Nea and Lata Township for their overwhelming support which resulted in my victory. Thank you so much for your confidence in me. I can only promise that I will not fail you. Your choice to vote for me is not a mistake. I believe just like myself you are more than convinced that I can provide an alternative leadership in far as political leadership is concerned. I do not really mind about people who have questioned my capability and credibility to be a politician because my comfort is always from the famous saying that states like this: "An expert is once a beginner." I believe that nobody becomes an expert in anything overnight. I wish to assure my good people of Nende Constituency that whilst I might still lack some political insight at this stage, I do not lack God's divine wisdom which I believe is the basis of good governance.

Having said that, I now wish to briefly outline my motivation on why I want to enter Parliament. My being in this honorable House today is not by chance but rather by choice. It is

a choice I made some couple of years ago because of what I observed both in my constituency and my province. I have been working amongst my people in Temotu Province for the last two decades, both as a teacher and an education administrator. Such a background of service to the ordinary rural urban worker symbolizes the humanity that transcends the narrow boundaries of party politics. It was precisely this background that earns me the respect and credibility to be in this honorable House today. It is my sensitivity to the plight of the poor and the social disadvantaged that motivated me to enter this honorable House.

I believe my people also believe in me that I can offer an alternative leadership that will ease their burden. Temotu Province, as all of us in this honorable House might be aware of, is mini Solomon Islands of its own. The scattered-ness of our islands makes it almost impossible for any socio-economic development to take place. The route from Lata wharf to Anuta is just the same as from Honiara to Lata. It is sad to mention that successive governments in the last 32 years have not given any special attention to this matter. As someone who is concerned for the wellbeing of this people, I feel compelled to react to government policies that threaten the wellbeing of my people in Temotu Province. I wish to appeal to the government of the day and future governments to make a special provision in their policies for my beloved people, and I want to make an example here. If the Parliamentary Entitlement Regulations stipulates something like each Member of Parliament should receive \$1million each year, there should be an additional clause that says each Member would receive \$1,000 except for a MP for Temotu Province because we have a lot of unique problems which I believe are very unique indeed on their own, I should say.

**Hon. Maelanga:** Point of order, it is now 4.30pm and I can see that there are quite a number of Members who still want to speak on the sine die motion and so I move that Standing Order 10 be suspended in accordance with Standing Order 81 to permit continuation of the business of the House until adjourned by the Speaker in accordance with Standing Order 10(5).

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you honorable Deputy Prime Minister. Honorable Members unless any other Member wishes to comment on the motion I will put the motion.

**Hon Abana:** This side of the House has no problem with that.

*Standing Order 10 suspended so that debate on the sine die motion can continue after 4.30pm  
until adjourned by the Speaker*

**Hon. Mewa:** Thank you. This might sound funny but this is the real scenario affecting my people in Temotu Province. Without such provision in government policies, the wisdom from the three wise men from the East expressed in this honorable House now and in the future will not bring about any tangible benefits to my good people in my province. I am concerned about Temotu Province as a whole because I come from the biggest constituency and I feel I am obliged to support development in the other two constituencies too, namely Vattu and Pele.

One of my observations in the last 32 years since independence is the self-serving attitude of political leaders who have only thought of encouraging production where they

themselves stand to benefit directly, even if it means greater suffering of the vast majority of the people in this nation. I am not undermining anybody in particular in this honorable House. What I am simply alluding to is the political culture that politicians are often trapped in. From what I have observed in the last 32 years, all politicians rarely embark on changing a political culture and practice that keeps them in power for private reasons whilst the majority are struggling to survive on a daily basis. This is what I term as injustice on display. I condemn this attitude in the strongest term and I will be very cautious that I will not fall into the same trap.

I am grateful to be part of this young government that will launch its policy framework tomorrow. I feel I am very much part of the policy formulation. To my good people of Temotu Nende Constituency, I wish to reiterate that the National Coalition for Reform and Advancement Government (NCRA) has encompassed a holistic development approach that targets improving the livelihoods of people in the country. I have great pride to be in this team of sensitive people who are sensitive to the needs of the marginalized villagers. The coalition team is talented, confident, innovative and above all committed to the welfare and democratic decision in this country. This well documented piece of work will be able to bring about the changes necessary to restore confidence in the people of this country and the government.

At this juncture, I wish to also make reference to my observation on what I termed as attitudinally problem which has invaded this country in the last decades. It is becoming very obvious these days for people to point fingers at the government for misconceived policies and parliamentarians for corruption whilst they failed to see some of the real underlying problems of this country. Most successive government policies in the last 32 years of independence are excellent. The problem is the attitude of the people in the country, not only with national leaders but public employees and the ordinary citizens of this country. It is something to do with what I called the value system.

A good number of people in this country still have to come to terms with their value system. We still do not understand what to value in life and what not to. I believe when parliamentarians do not value their work as national leaders of this nation, like we have seen as many are not here and I do not know why, everybody else will do the same down the line. Work output will become very minimal as public workers turn up late for work and leave early before 4:30pm every day. The street worker with the lowest value system will start indulging in activities that are contrary to the laws of this country. This scenario has placed me in a confused state of who to blame in the entire system of governance. I can only appeal to us members of this House to appropriate our value system accordingly and I have no doubt that others down the line will follow suit.

Before I resume my seat, my general advice to the people of the nation is that they should understand themselves and love their beautiful country Solomon Islands. We must understand that some of the prevailing economic problems affecting our beloved country today is attributed to our geographical set up and is beyond our control. Research in different field of studies had revealed numerous challenges affecting small island states in the pacific islands and Solomon Islands is no exception. Whether we like it or not, God has placed us in this beautiful part of Planet Earth and we should appreciate it. It is my personal conviction that it is not by mistake that we are born and live in this beautiful country. I believe this is a very, very rich

country. We just simply have to seek the Creator's wisdom to appropriate our resources in accordance to His will so as to enjoy the benefits. I believe that we need nothing less than the wisdom of the wisest man who has ever lived, and this is none other than the late King Solomon. With these few remarks, I support the motion.

**Mr. GARU:** First of all, I would like to thank the Hon Prime Minister for moving this motion which allows us all to contribute and debate the Motion of Sine Die.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank my voters and my good people of West Guadalcanal for their faith, trust and confidence through their ballots that enabled me to represent them in this very important and highest legislative body of our land in this Ninth Parliament. Thank you very much my good chiefs and community leaders from Naro to Veuru. Thank you very much my good women leaders, youth leaders for voting me in. All of us have worked really hard to mobilize support during the campaign period. Our achievements and successes at the conclusion of the electoral process is a clear demonstration of the good teamwork that all of us were committed and dedicated to under very, very difficult and hard situations.

My general voters of West Guadalcanal, I also want to ask every one of us to reconcile with each other, to reunite us together once again after the elections because some of us have started to threaten and harass each other. We are one people and we must come together and work towards a common purpose, and that is the development of our rural people and our rural communities. The election has passed and it will only come back again after four years and therefore it makes no sense for us to continue debate the differences in our opinion that we hold for the respective referred candidates nor is it right for us to continue to threaten and harass each other simply on the basis of the different choices and voting that we took because after all we would all appreciate that only one wins because that is what the electoral process allows.

All contesting candidates whether we win or lose are all winners and therefore I would like to thank all contestants of the recent national general elections for their participation and contribution in giving our good people much political, much development awareness information, an opportunity rarely given to them. I am sure our good rural people can attest to the fact that the events of campaigning has given them the opportunity to participate and contribute to the political affairs of government and their nation.

If we are to take the analogy of hunger, I believe our people have been truly and well fed with knowledge and information on all relevant issues of government, issues of development, the functions and services of government, which I believe has given them the additional capacity to understand the problems affecting us as a nation, the limitations of government in the delivery of services and development and the challenges before us as a nation, as a government and as resource owners to develop, establish and improve national and the rural economy, an economy that is premised on people and resources; an economy that recognizes that in order for the national economy to grow, the rural sector must be given priority attention and the resources. I believe this can be successfully achieved if we engage our rural people more to educate and re-educate them to see and understand the strengths and weaknesses of our country as well as to create in our people a sense of ownership and responsibility for the

welfare, livelihood, development and progress of our country. Most importantly, the demand this nation calls on each and every one of us, all citizens to be active participants and contributors to nation building to see that this nation needs all of us as against demanding from our nation what it simply cannot afford. Increased national productivity demands all citizens of this country to be proactive. This will not be achieved if only a few people are hardworking participating in economic activity.

On that matter, I sincerely wish to thank all national general election contestants for their contributions in that regard. As a new son to this honorable chamber I have observed all proceedings with great passion to learn the culture and tradition of Parliament and the legislature for that matter. On that note, I would like to register my heartfelt gratitude to yourself, Sir, as well as to the Clerk of Parliament and the very professional team of Parliament Staff for facilitating our induction program for this Ninth Parliament. I believe we are well and adequately prepared and groomed for the role before us as national legislators. Thank you all for the tools and materials which enabled us now to begin our work with much ease. On the same note, I also thank parliament staff for their facilitation of parliamentary standing committees, hearings and meetings.

Let me now reflect back to the period of intense lobbying as we endeavor to form the government. I would like to do so not to point fingers at anyone but to call on the government to again bring to Parliament the Political Parties Integrity Bill that was rejected in the Eight Parliament. The experiences that we have gone through can only be better addressed through this piece of legislation to avoid the very expensive lobbying and deceits that are customary to this effect. The current practice puts our integrity in the spotlight such that our public images as national leaders are put into question. This can easily be avoided through this bill.

I would like also to thank the government for tabling the Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2010 which was subsequently passed by Parliament. This will allow government to continue to serve our people as well as to support the continuity of national development programs and projects.

I was greatly surprised to have noted that for the planned 12 new wharves that was highlighted during question time to be built in the country, the proposed sites continue to change almost lately. From the initial list of proposed sites, two of the sites were initially proposed for my constituency; one in Bau and another one in Marasa. I was lost for words when again both names disappeared although being listed in the original priority listing. I have copies of the initial sites in past meetings and I am very sad when I only see one for Guadalcanal, not in my constituency but in Marau under this program. If you go around Guadalcanal I think you will only find one wharf, and I find this a bit hard to swallow because if prudent care and consideration is taken, I believe there should have been more than one wharf, a one good enough vision why Guadalcanal should have at least two or three wharves.

The narrow Lambi roads west of Guadalcanal have not been attended to for the last 20 years; not even a single maintenance made to those roads. I am very surprised indeed because the roads here in North West Guadalcanal were continuously maintained up to very good condition and my roads are in bad state of condition and becoming very dangerous and life threatening to my people, the travelers. I want to invite the honorable Minister for Works to one day take a ride down with me to Lambi to verify this as you would feel what I have just

said. If we are to go down that road, I can tell you that you would not be able to sleep on your back for two days. The road is dangerous and very painful for my people to travel so. I therefore want to call on the government to make sure that in the development budget of 2011, please think about my people of West Guadalcanal. This is a plea I want to put forward to the government.

During this period lives have been lost, half a dozen vehicles written off, millions of dollars have been lost through loss of production, loss of investment and loss of opportunities. I think I can go on and say more but to allow other colleagues to contribute, that is all I want to say. I would like to conclude by thanking yourself once again, Mr Speaker, and at the same time I want to thank the government, the Prime Minister and the Ministers for the good work you continue to perform. I encourage all of us to support each other and make sure that we support whatever programs that government is going to put forward to us in the four years to come. I wish every one of you a happy break until we come back again for the next meeting. With these few remarks, I support the motion.

*Sitting suspended at 5 pm for break at 4.53 pm*

*Sitting resumed at 5.14pm*

**Hon. LIONEL:** Thank you for allowing me to contribute to this motion. I rise to speak on this motion of sine die moved by the Honorable Prime Minister in this Honorable Chamber, and I do so with great humility and respect. In contributing to this motion, I am mindful of the mandate and responsibility given to me by my good people of South Vella La Vella Constituency. I am thankful to the chiefs, church leaders, elders, women, youths and the children of South Vella la Vella for giving me that mandate. I know that just over 32 years ago, we gained our independence from our colonial masters. Twenty (20) of those 32 years, you were a Member of Parliament, Mr Speaker. Four (4) of those years, you were the Prime Minister of the independent sovereign state of Solomon Islands. Behind you, Mr Speaker, you left a colorful legacy that every Solomon Islander is proud of when you ruled continuously for four years. It was with you, Mr Speaker, and with other senior citizens of our beloved Solomon Islands, some of them are Members of Parliament in this Ninth Parliament that we sailed for unchartered waters. It was with your collective leadership that we have come this far! Behind you always, Sir, is the good support given to you by your spouse. I recognize their invaluable contributions to the socio-economic development of this country. You are men and women of much courage. You are men and women of much wisdom. Solomon Islands is grateful to have been led by the courage and wisdom inspired to you by the Almighty God that we serve.

Leaders come and go but the nation of Solomon Islands will always exist. Storms happen but storms will never last. Despite the many storms we face, the people of Solomon Islands will always live on. The tsunami came in April 2007, destroyed parts of my constituency but we strived and moved on with life. I pay tribute to our past leaders for building bridges to overcome these storms, for enduring with our silent struggles and for taking us safely to this point in time.

Like you, Sir, and just like many of our past leaders, we are also leaders, we are leaders of today. We are elected to this office by the people of Solomon Islands. Our mission therefore is not to serve ourselves but to serve our people and to serve them unselfishly. This mission is wisely crafted in our national motto "To Lead is to Serve."

It is truly interesting to know that 50% of Members of Parliament in this Ninth Parliament are new. Not only that, but also a good number of us are young politicians and we come to this Honorable House with a message of hope. Hope in the sense that laws that we make and unmake in this House must improve the livelihood of Solomon Islanders, and not just for now but for the long term good of everybody. We are 'here today and gone tomorrow' but our generations will always live on. We are accountable to them. We must safeguard their future.

It is also interesting to have a father and a son in this Ninth Parliament. This is no coincidence but the Ninth Parliament is saying to us, "All fathers, old and young, our sons need to be part of our decision making process and at the same time they need to feel the positive impacts of our decisions". For too long we have been making decisions without thinking about tomorrow. Tomorrow is our sons and daughters, tomorrow is our grandchildren so let us think of them as we make decisions in this Ninth Parliament.

Having said that, I wish to congratulate the MP for West New Georgia and VonaVona constituency for rewriting history in this National Parliament of Solomon Islands. He is not only a son, but also a MP in this Ninth Parliament with his father, his colleague MP for North New Georgia Constituency. The writing is clear on the wall, the message is clear and this message is saying to us that our people want change. Our people want young people to be involved in decision making. Our people want us to walk the talk of inter-generational equity. We are here to walk the talk, we are here not to disappoint the wishes of our people, and we are here to deliver that message of change. It is also my personal conviction that it is only a matter of time when women will also come into this Honorable House and they will come in great numbers through our electoral process. The wind of change is blowing and it will continue to blow and grow with the development of this country, Solomon Islands.

At this juncture, let me turn to my good people of South Vella la Vella Constituency. To you my good people of South Vella la Vella, I thank you for having confidence and trust on me and for putting a person just like you to represent your interest in this Honorable House. I thank you for believing in your good-selves. I thank you for believing in change. I thank you for saying to the world, 'yes, we can'. We can also do it in South Vella La Vella. Let us now do it and let us now do it our way. Let us now do it and do it the Vella La Vella way!

History knows that the forestry sector has been the major contributor to government revenue. It must be recognized that the contributions of Vella la Vella on this sector is huge. Logging has been part of our national economy for many years. In Vella La Vella we have deforested our resources so that basic medicine is made available to remote parts of the country. We are still felling our forest resources so that basic education is provided to the most unprivileged Solomon Islanders. We have degraded our land so that others can have a better life. In fact, we are still losing our trees so that you can have your fortnight pay.

History also knows that the agriculture sector is another important contributor to our national economy. Vella La Vella is known for the production of copra and cocoa. I went to

school because of copra and cocoa. I was elected to the National Parliament because of copra and cocoa. That said, and when I said the Vella La Vella Way, I mean to do reforestation of the forestry sector in my constituency during my term in office. I mean to focus on rehabilitation of the copra and cocoa industries in my constituency also during my term in office.

In my definition of things, replanting of my constituency with more trees, rehabilitation of copra and cocoa industry in my constituency means rural development. But one thing is clear, and that thing is that I cannot do this job of rural development on my own. I need the support of my good chiefs, I need to partner with the two provincial assembly members, I need the advice of the technical people of South Vella La Vella, I need the encouragement of my colleague Members of Parliament and I need the intervention of the Government of Solomon Islands. All in all, I need your invaluable support and guidance to do a difference and to do the change that my people want. I am ready to work with you so let us work together to implement it the Vella La Vella way.

Let me now applaud my Prime Ministers and Ministers of Her Majesty's Executive Cabinet. To my Prime Minister, I thank you for showing confidence on me to lead on your behalf, the Ministry of Rural Development and Indigenous Affairs. I am a rural person. I was born a rural man and I will die a rural man. I am proud to be the Minister for Rural Development. Not only that, I am also an indigenous Solomon Islander. I was born out of an indigenous family and so I am equally proud to be a Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

It is not debatable to say that Solomon Islands is a rural community. Ninety percent (90%) of Solomon Islanders live in rural constituencies and they control the country's resources and they are catalysts of sustainable development in the country. It is therefore only fitting that we go back to our roots and recognize our ruralness. I am glad to say that it is for this very reason that the present government retains the Ministry of Rural Development and Indigenous Affairs from the previous government. I hope my Ministry through this present government will increase the funds that come under my Ministry such as the RCDF, the Livelihood, the Millennium and I believe all of you my good colleague Members must support me to increase these funds because I know that also want it. Despite a lot of negative media coverage, I stand tall in taking up the challenge bestowed to me by the Honorable Prime Minister to lead a team of committed officials in the Ministry of Rural Development and Indigenous Affairs. I will remain truly devoted, dedicated and committed as a minister of Her Majesty's Executive Cabinet.

Finally, the task ahead is not easy. Storms, I say will always happen but the people of Solomon Islands and in particular and dear to my heart, the people of South Vella La Vella constituency will always be around. So let us begin a new – all of us together, let us overcome these storms. Let us together build bridges and let us together fight to improve the livelihood of our people of Solomon Islands. As for me and my good people of South Vella La Vella, we will always remain faithful and committed to the pursuits of the Government of Solomon Islands. We will continue to fight the good fight of rural development to improve our welfare and livelihood. Thank you and I beg to support the Motion.

**Hon LUSIBAEA:** First of all, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister for moving the Sine Die motion which allows us to contribute on the floor of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, I congratulate you and your deputy for your new roles within the National Parliament of this country. On behalf of my people of North Malaita, I also extend my congratulations to the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Honorable Danny Philip and Members of Parliament for being elected into this Ninth Parliament. Indeed, the people of this country have spoken through the ballots and it is my plea that we respect the choice of our people to ensure we deliver on our promises to them. I also thank the Leader of the Opposition and his team and all Members of Parliament for their contributions during the question and answer session.

Similarly, allow me to thank my good people of North Malaita for having the trust and confidence in me to be their leader for the next four years in this Parliament. I know this responsibility is not easy but I will do everything that is required of me to ensure your voices are heard. It is only when we work together that we can conquer the mountains of development. I would also like to assure the people of our nation that I come to this great office, knowing fully well the responsibilities and obligations required of me as a national leader. This, I have calculated and assessed and my purpose at hand is to contribute positively to the development of our nation, a task I believe is required of us in this Honorable House. I may not have some qualities many people desire, but I have decided to be part of any team whose task is to build this country of ours. You can be rest assured to count on my humble contribution.

Many people have chosen to look at my past to map my future, but I beg to be different. I have decided to put my past at the feet of our Lord Jesus and to cling to His promise that those he made new are indeed a new creation in Him. I am glad that my Saviour sees me that way. The past I cannot change, but the future I have the opportunity to influence. As I said earlier, I have chosen to be an engine of change for the betterment of this nation. Therefore, I humbly beg the people of this nation to forgive me of my past and render to me the support to build this nation once again.

As the Minister responsible for fisheries and marine resources, I am committed to see the sector achieve its full potentials. But all investments come at a price – we must plant before we can reap. For us to enjoy the fullness of the fisheries sector, we must be willing and ready to spend. Until we put in process a framework that will provide a good environment for growth, reaping the benefits of the fisheries sector will remain a distant reality. To all provinces, I am ready to work together with you. My desire is to see fisheries in the provinces change lives in our rural Solomon Islands. As a member of the current government, I am confident that we will push for the Suava Bay Fisheries Project to start. This project is important because it can create employment for the people of North Malaita and other Solomon Islanders. As a result, North Malaita youths in Honiara can return to their communities to help their own people.

The responsibilities and obligations of my Ministry are great and we alone cannot carry them out. There are people who have seen our burden and have decided to give us a helping hand. Therefore, I would like to thank our donor partners who have committed themselves to the noble task of building the fisheries sector for the single purpose that all Solomon Islanders will enjoy fully and sustainable utilization of their resources. The New Zealand Government and its people, I thank you for your great support and commitment. The Japanese Government

and its people, thank you for your ongoing support. The European Union, the Republic of China (Taiwan) and Korea thank you for your support as well.

It would be remiss of me if I leave the Forum Fisheries Agency and the World Fish Centre out of my thank you list. These three institutions are providing technical support to my Ministry. The Forum Fisheries Agency is currently providing financial and advisory support to the Ministry's onshore tuna investment program. Talking about the Forum Fisheries Agency, Australia amongst the others must be thanked for continuous financial support to the Forum Fisheries Agency. Many marine-based NGOs including TNC, FSPI and the WWF and other industries have contributed to the development of the fisheries sector. Thank you for all your support and commitment.

As I told the Honorable House during the question and answer time, a delegation led by my Ministry is pursuing the illegal fishing case against China at the Technical Compliance Committee in Pohnpei, the Federates States of Micronesia. This is a great undertaking and this would not have been possible without the cooperation amongst the various government ministries and other institutions. I wish to thank the Forum Fisheries Agency, the Attorney General's Chambers, the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who have labored over the last three months in preparing this case. I wish the team all the best in Pohnpei Federal States of Micronesia for a great outcome. With those few remarks, I support the motion.

**Hon. FIULAUA:** Thank you for this chance for me to talk on this Motion of Sine Die. First, I would like to congratulate you as the elected Speaker of the National Parliament. Thank you also to your staff for the support and assistance during the meeting. I also would thank my people of Central Kwara'ae, especially for the chiefs, the elders, church leaders, the men, women and children also my family for their support. I also want to thank aid donors for their support to my Ministry and Solomon Islands. Thank you once again and I support the motion.

**Hon. MUA:** Thank you Sir, for allowing me to contribute to the Motion of Sine-Die moved by the Prime Minister. I would like to thank the Prime Minister for moving this motion so that Members of Parliament can express themselves on issues affecting them, their constituency and the country as a whole. I would like to thank God for his guidance, wisdom, blessings, good health, friendship and for forgiving our sins, especially since we are involved in during parliamentary sittings and programs. I also thank you, Sir, for your patience with us as our new Speaker of Parliament. On a personal note, I thank you for your good understanding on my election to Parliament as the new Member for our good people of Savo/Russells. Thank you Mr Speaker for the great work you have done in serving the people of Savo/Russell and the people of Solomon Islands being the only Prime Minister who has held that post for a whole term.

*(yeah, yeah)*

I will continue from where you left in serving our good people of Savo/Russells.

I also thank the Government in particular the Prime Minister, the Attorney General, the Deputy Prime Minister, the hard working Ministers, the Permanent Secretaries, the political advisors and government employees for ensuring government businesses are on track and in order to function as expected. I also thank the Clerk, the Parliament staff and the securities for the guidance, assistance and respect given to Members of Parliament, especially during the induction program and parliament sittings.

I now would like to thank my good people of Savo/Russells. To the chiefs, church leaders, village leaders, and leaders of various groups, men, women, boys and girls, I thank you all for the trust you have on me by voting me to represent you in Parliament for the next four years. Their overwhelming support must be commended.

One long outstanding issue of my constituency is the Russell Islands Plantation Estates Limited (RIPEL). The industrial dispute has now reached probably its seventh year and remains unsolved. This dispute, as everyone knows, brings RIPEL under ICSL to its knees. The workers being unemployed, landowners getting no income from their gardens and fish products, the government and province losing revenues through taxes, license and so on.

The claim that there is no law and order in the Russell Islands and in particular Yandina must be corrected and put right. Such a claim had painted a bad picture on my peace loving people of Russell Islands. It is regrettable that peace loving Solomon Islanders have been labeled by some politicians and others as criminals. The claim that occurrence of criminal activities in Yandina that the Police cannot curb is misleading and not true. There is always peace, no kwaso related, no drunk and disorderly, no killing and so on rather you find dedicated Christians who demonstrate respect and go to church more than some of us.

I appeal to our good Prime Minister and Cabinet to take necessary steps in taking the best approach to address this issue. Successive governments find it difficult to solve the RIPEL issue, but I am sure this government can do it after learning the approaches and failures of successive governments in addressing this issue. It is the general feeling of our people in the Central Islands Province that we be given some say in the Sasape Marina Limited. This idea had been conveyed to our provincial executive and expressed by our Premier recently. Our province is the only one that is home to dry docking services, providing three slipways namely Avi Avi, Taroniara and Sasape. It is fitting that whoever the new investor is our request be considered.

The issue of unemployment in Solomon Islands must be addressed accordingly. As our population continues to rise, the government is obliged to ensure there is enough work for our growing population, particularly the youth age groups. Probably one solution to this unemployment is to spread developments to the provinces. This would then lessen the number of people moving to town. Establishing economic growth centres for all provinces and especially the Central Islands Province would be in the right direction in solving unemployment.

The Solomon Islands Police Force must be commended for maintaining law and order. The nation's security is upon them but if you look at the Police Housing Scheme currently under construction, it seems to me that these houses are quite small. I feel that our police officers need homes that can accommodate an average family. The government should

continue to find more land and build more homes for our Police Force. I believe they deserve decent homes.

One concern which I would like the government to look at is the issue of importing goods which are written in foreign languages. It is now becoming common for businesses to import goods whose labels are in foreign languages. It must also be noted that most sickness or complications we have are food related. It is, therefore, important that we read and do understand the contents of imported items. This can only happen if these goods are written in English. The Ministry concerned should look at this issue and only allow goods written in English to be imported.

One growing demand of our people in Ngella is the need to have additional three wards. As the population grows, there is a need of having such increase. Their wish had been expressed by the provincial executive during its recent meeting in Tulagi. I understand that formalities have been met and only await final approval by the Minister concerned.

I now wish all my colleague Members of Parliament the best in all they do as we continue to serve our people as servants waiting for our God's return. May God bless our nation, thank you and I support the Motion.

**Mr MANENIARU:** Thank you for according me the opportunity to contribute very briefly to this very important motion of sine die moved by the Honorable Prime Minister, Mr Danny Philip. I also would like to extend word of thanks to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs for his great understanding hence moving an amendment to the motion to allow more Members of Parliament to contribute to the traditional motion.

At the outset, I would like to thank you and congratulate you, Sir, for the conduct of parliament business during this Ninth Parliament. I also would like to join other colleagues to congratulate you, Sir, for the manner in which you have guided the sessions, the discussions, the questions and answers. You have the experience and I will continue to accord you my support as the Member of Parliament for West Are Are.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Honorable Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, Government Ministers and backbenchers of the government for forming the government of the country. I congratulate you on your victory to lead our people as the government of the day. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the 50 Members of Parliament for being cooperative during our sittings. I would also like to congratulate you for making into the Ninth Parliament. I know it is not easy; you have gone through a lengthy battle in order for you to achieve your goals in representing your people in this national chamber. On that note, I would like to congratulate you on behalf of my people. I would like to also thank the Clerk and the staff of Parliament for their support especially during the induction course they have given us, which has given us the knowledge in the procedures of Parliament.

I promise to be very brief so let me have this opportunity to thank my people of West Are Are constituency. My chiefs in West Are Are, church leaders, women leaders and association members, men's groups, youth leaders and children, I would like to thank you all for the trust given to me to be your representative in the Ninth Parliament. I trust you to put me in this parliament to be your voice, to be your representative, we will have to work together,

cooperate as we have big tasks ahead to look at the needs of our constituency for the livelihood of our people.

I want to thank my supporters, my campaign managers who have worked so hard as it has not been an easy battle. I would like to thank them very much throughout the whole month they worked so hard, hence my victory to this Ninth Parliament. I also would like to thank the church leaders for their prayers. To an extent, thank you on behalf of the Ninth Parliament as it is only prayers that brought all of us in here, and so we thank God that through His blessings we are here. We are here not by mistake, but He has a calling for us to look after his people as they are under our responsibility as leaders.

I just want to call on the candidates whom we contested the West Are Are seat. The West Are Are case could be a bit different to the other constituencies as we are still fighting at home up until now. It could be the strategy of losing candidates who are very disappointed. I want to tell them that the game is over, a member has been elected to Parliament to represent people of West Are Are, who is speaking right now, and so I call upon the leaders of West Are Are, especially the candidates who battled out the election with me to come forward and cooperate with their elected member because our people's interest is of paramount importance now and only through cooperation can that be achieved. If their strategy is to use our young people in the villages to continue to cause disappointments and frustrations to people and causing insecurity, then I call upon them to go back as Are Are leaders, chiefs and talk with those people to return normalcy to the lives of our people. I would like to ask my voters, especially those who supported me and are a bit concerned about the petition that it is the right of losing candidates to do that. That is the understanding my voters. It is going to be another history for us in Are Are because it would be the first time for someone to make a petition against the winning candidate so that people can enjoy eating according to Are Are culture. I would like to ask for the understanding of the people that allow the petition to go ahead as they are exercising their rights, but we have an enormous task ahead of us to look after people, especially the children of West Are Are who are very disadvantaged because nothing has happened in our constituency in the last many years in terms of tangible development in the West Are Are Constituency. So I want to ask my people of West Are Are to pray for those who are not at peace so that God can touch their hearts so that they have love for the people because people are made in the image of God and are the sons and daughters of God.

I also would like to take this chance to again express my gratitude to church leaders and Christians throughout the country who continue to support us in prayers by continuing to pray for this Ninth Parliament. I would like to refer back to the statement made by the Prime Minister that we must be different. The Ninth Parliament must be different. We are here mandated to make a difference and the reality must come out. It is not just talking about it but rather action must be seen.

I would like to call upon the Ninth Parliament Members that this is our challenge. This country needs us, they need new directions and our children need a future that they can enjoy, a future that can guarantee their children's future, and that is vested in our hands, colleague MPs. I trust that is the main reason as to why you are here. I want to call upon all of us to be serious in this Honorable Chamber and let us be serious with the business of Parliament. That is my challenge to all of us Members of this Ninth Parliament.

I just want to touch a little bit on the camping and lobbying experience I had. As a new Member elected into the Ninth Parliament, I really was enjoying that period as it really challenges me as a leader. I am elected as a parliament leader and it challenges my decisions and my wisdom and I thank God He guided me in making decisions I hope that He blessed me with. I hope the decisions I made as a leader also represents the interest that puts me in this honorable Chamber. I see this is a normal experience for our country and our National Parliament and I want the Ninth Parliament to be serious. Let us work hard and I join colleague MPs who have called for the reintroduction of the Political Parties Integrity Bill back into this Chamber, and I want the 50 Members to support it so that it puts back integrity into this House, it puts back integrity to our people who have trust in us by electing us here. Our people want us to represent them us leaders, as chiefs, as elders, and that is something I learn. It challenges me and that is why I want to share it on the floor of Parliament.

I would like to thank the ministers that answered the questions I raised during question time. I thank the Ministers for the assurances to my people of West Are Are, especially in respect of infrastructure developments in my constituency. My people are still waiting. I think there is only one wharf funded by the European Union is in Kiu in the West Are Are Constituency, apart from that there is nothing else and that is why I asked questions that are of interest to my constituency. Not only my constituency but all constituencies throughout Solomon Islands need to be considered for where infrastructures needed to be put. Infrastructure is the key to growth in our economy and we must take it seriously and understand it in that regards. If we only talk about economic growth and development without putting resources into infrastructure development in our country, we will not go anywhere but we will continue to be beggars despite the fact that we have the resources. We talked too much about our country as being rich but if it is rich and we do not put right our priorities then we will continue to maintain the status quo.

I also would like to thank the honorable Minister for Home Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister for his answer on the question regarding our Kurukuru children and Futsal supporters throughout the country. I thank the Deputy Prime Minister for assuring the country that their stadium will be built as of March next year. This is the sport that gave us pride and we are champions of, something that other countries throughout the world are sweating for. Just within 12 years we joined this sport, we become champions of the sport for three consecutive years in the Oceania region. Our boys are just playing or training in car parks and the grasses, but they have made it to the world standard and yet we do not recognize them. I thank the Deputy Prime Minister for this project on behalf of our young boys and girls.

I want to touch a little bit on state owned enterprises. In 10 years as alluded to in the statement made by the Member for East Choiseul is basically what we are seeing, is basically what we are riding on, those investments, but until now what have our parliaments been doing. In terms of tangible investment, the SOEs or statutory companies for that matter need conducive environments and that is the responsibility of the National Parliament, our government and our policy decisions to provide for. If we want companies to come in but the environment is not provided for them, we will just be wasting our time, we will not achieve our goals. We know investments create jobs and create spinoffs for our people and that is where we should focus on by creating that environment.

I think it is high time for us to again revisit our policy with regards to investment. Our environment is not really secure. No matter how many applications may come, they cannot start because they are scared. Investing millions of dollars in an insecure environment will not be on for the businessmen. I would like to call on the government to re-look into this again to provide the security needed by investors and the government to be a partner as a catalyst to start the investments.

Soltai is providing employment and we need to encourage this because only through joint ventures will investors come in to join us. But if we just want them to come in with 100% investment, unless we change the environment to be conducive they can start. But if not, we will be just wasting our time because nothing will start for us. It is known that our interests too can disturb and distract our business environment. Interests that are politically driven, our political interests, political interferences have continued to affect the climate we are providing. It is high time that we recognize that we contribute in destroying the initiatives we take in our priorities and investments.

For more than 20 years we have not done anything, and that is enough. The Ninth Parliament has to take on this challenge. Let us make a difference. Let us put in a few investments, maybe one in our term, one major investment, and that is enough. I think we have been looking at a list of 20 or 30 and that is why we have not achieved anything. Let us go for just one and that is the challenge for the Ninth Parliament. The Ninth Parliament is not just the government but the whole House. We must put our focus together to achieve this goal.

I would like to briefly touch on growth centres. I would like to thank the Prime Minister for his vision. This is a policy that we normally refer to it as rural policy, our people policy. Twenty growth centres is what the Prime Minister mentioned to us. I hope as we go towards the end of the term, our 50 constituencies will have 50 economic growth centres.

A growth centre is the key to constituency development because basic infrastructures will be there such as wharves, maybe electricity will be there, telecommunications, warehouse for cocoa and copra, where products of our people in the constituency will be there. I want to see a growth centre as a centre where basic services that our rural people can access. Not everyone will have a mobile phone, seventy percent of our rural will not have a mobile phone. But there is a public telephone that they can access and that is what a growth centre is there for as far as I understand it or I want to see. I want to thank the government for having this important policy to build growth centres in our constituencies.

I want to touch on rural sustainability and livelihood development which has been the policy of previous governments and again this government. Big money is coming through, a minimum of \$8million is coming through the Ministry of Rural Development. If every single cent of that money is put into good use in our constituencies, Solomon Islands will be very advanced or even half of it. I personally believe we would be well developed.

Our people in the rural areas, especially the very remote rural constituencies, if you go there, you cannot see anything. That is why the government with our leaders have the wisdom of putting in place this money so that it touch the lives of the rural people. That funding goes to our rural people for their cocoa, copra and their piggery. On that note, I would like to support the continuous giving of those funds to us Members of Parliament so that we are the custodians and accountants of those funds. Unfortunately, like the Member for Small Malaita has stated it

is the delivery vehicles that no longer work, and so they end up on us. Hopefully during this term we will come up with a very appropriate delivery vehicle for these funds so that they go right down touching our people and their lives. Our people trust us that we are the custodians of these huge amounts of money that are coming in, and yet a lot of our villages still do not have water supplies, a lot of villages still do not have aid posts. This is exactly the situation my constituency is experiencing at the moment despite of the big amounts of money coming to the constituency through their Member of Parliament.

The Member for Lau/Mbaelelea has requested the Government to look seriously at basic commodities that have been supporting our economy until today. It was basically copra, coconut and as time goes on we have cocoa. It seems to me that we are looking for something that is in the clouds. Those things are there but we have not done anything on them, but they are the backbone of our economy. I cannot forget when I was a little boy and I know that subsidy planted a lot of plantations that we have today; it was just subsidy, incentives for our rural people to actually engage in the productive sector. When the subsidy stops the planting of plantations was no longer continued with and the price went down. Let us again revisit that policy of subsidy. Let us do it for cocoa and copra. If we only invest in copra, I think we would not need anything else for our economy. We will raise sufficient revenue and income that our economy needs. It is high time we refocus on other areas of development because logging is going down. Let us use our wisdom to put priority on commodities that would generate the needed income and revenue for our country.

I would like to touch a little bit on tourism and fisheries, another two sectors we have overlooked. We talked too much about those sectors but there is no investment going to them. As has been alluded to on the floor of government, there is abundant of tuna, we are rich with it and it is only us that have it, but who really owns them? That was the question raised today.

We have the potentials in tourism. Since I started to work I have been hearing about this potential until today, but we have not make use of it as yet, we have not been able to capitalize on it as yet, and it is high time that we start to look at where our comparative advantage lies so that we can focus and capitalize on it. I think that is our challenge.

I just want to touch on land registration and administration, which is a real problem in Honiara. Our people are living there in the squatters and as leaders it is not a good sight to see this. Whose people are those? Those are our people, we are their leaders. Whilst they are living like that, do you enjoy watching them like that? It means there is a problem, and who is responsible? It is the Ninth Parliament, leaders of Parliament, our policies. Let us address our own people and their situation, their livelihood. I want us to consider the land issue very seriously. I think there is big money there, about \$24million, let us get that amount and sort out land for our people.

Foreigners come in and take over the lands and our people are pushed aside. It is high time we have to recognize that everyone should have equal opportunity, and we are responsible for our people because they are disadvantaged. There are lots of lands for development, and about 85% of our rural population is there and 85% maybe of our lands is also with them. Put in money and we sort it out so that those lands are registered so that we can push investment into those lands so that their livelihood is guaranteed and assured.

I just want to briefly touch on law and order. We have problems up until now and we are still crying for peace. We have heard in our earlier discussions that the forgiveness bill is coming. In our custom, law and order is already taken care of. We have our chiefs, we have a well established chiefly structure where chiefs can put in place laws and also police them. It was when we inherited the white men's laws that we become confused. Since the white men's law took over from our laws, our people find it difficult to implement their judgments and enforce their laws. I want the government to revisit this. We do not really need the commissions because our chiefs are already there. If we are to resource them, I think it is well established, the truth and reconciliation structure that we have. It is just for us to recognize what we have and we address its huntsman.

Our key partners in development but it seems that we are overlooking the churches. I just want to comment briefly on the churches. Churches have been to, my belief, the key implementers of our policies. But here we are saying let us not mix the churches with the government or politics. No, they are the people. If the government is for the people then it is just our people who are the churches. The churches have a well established structure. If we put in our implementation policy to them, I am sure they will achieve it and will do it because they have the manpower, they have the knowhow and we just simply resource them.

I want to thank previous governments for the policy on tithing. Unfortunately for some of our constituencies, we only hear about it but we do not know about it nor even seen it. But this is in line with the claim that this is a Christian country. I commended the government that came up with that policy. In recognizing the dues for God should be given to Him. The Holy book says that what belongs to Caesar must be given to him. I want to ask the Government to look more into this. Give God's tithes to our churches because there are needs for them, but only the administration of it should be re-visited because in the past it seems even some Members of Parliament do not fear God's money because when it was given to them it never reach the churches. I believe we can better the administration of the tithe fund, and I want the government to look into that. The right people for it is there, the right institutions for it is there - the churches because they have the need for it.

I want to thank our development partners like RAMSI, the Republic of China/Taiwan, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, PNG, EU, ADB, World Bank and others for continuing to support us. In good times and bad times they continue to be our true partners. I want to congratulate and thank them for that recognition, the recognition of valuing the friendship and partnership they have with us. On behalf of my people I would like to thank the ROC Government for giving us money now. This is a true friend of our people.

The assistance that ROC is giving us touches the rural people and that is why I also join others to call upon the government to continue to give this money to our people. It is only us that needs to improve how we administer this fund. If we have sincere hearts for our people then what belongs to them is theirs and what is ours is ours. I believe only the management and administration of the fund needs us to really look at. But that fund really uplifts our people's lives and really meets their needs. I call on the Government to continue with it with the view of maybe increasing it, as the Minister responsible alluded to in his speech this morning – increase it. I hope with the policy of growth centres to be established in the rural areas, that is where that money will go to and it would be no longer us who administer it so that

we concentrate on our work, which is to make laws. The rural people themselves should administer the fund, and this fund should not be in the ministries too but it must go right down to our people. We have competent people, trustworthy down there that can look after themselves if we only empower and direct them.

I also want to thank the media for coming to share their time with us; the One News, SIBC, Solomon Star for sharing our meeting with our people. I really want One News because our homes in Honiara and even in the provinces who can access TV can see us talking in here. I like it that way. Our people elected us into this honorable Chamber want to see us participate, cooperate and also to sit down in here.

I just want to register my concern that I am learning and I am still confused. When I came in most of the time the Chamber is empty. Sir, only you and your officials can be seen sitting down there whilst most of the chairs down here are empty. I do not know what happens. I believe our people elected here want us to be present here with the business of Parliament. That is why we are elected. Leave the other businesses alone. When Parliament is sitting, the priority is for us to sit here and listen because that is what we are elected for. If you are confused then you need to ask yourselves again. I do not know whether it is right or not, but I am still observing. But I believe it is not right, and I challenge the young MPs who come in here for your first time that let us make a difference. Do not follow the examples of the few old ones because a majority of the old ones do not normally sit down in here, and we need to sit down in here. The 50 MPs should be sitting down in here when the meeting is on. That is my challenge to the new colleague MPs. I want us to sit down here and participate because that is what we are elected here for.

Before I take my seat, I want to once again thank you Mr Speaker for the opportunity to contribute to this Motion of Sine Die. I thank your staff, I thank my colleague Members on both sides of the House for our sharing and debates. We thank God for also guiding our Parliament and our sessions. We also thank our people for continuing to support us with their prayers. With those few remarks, I beg to support the motion.

**Hon. ONIKA:** Thank you for giving me time to contribute also to the Sine Die Motion. I wish to contribute to the Sine Die Motion before this Honorable House. I take this opportunity to thank my God for giving me this opportunity of a lifetime to be part of this Ninth Parliament of Solomon Islands. I also wish to take this opportunity to thank my good people of East Central Guadalcanal Constituency for their support in entrusting me to be their leader. To the chiefs, village elders, women, men, young people and children who are the future brains of our constituency, I promise I will not let you down.

I wish to thank the Honorable Prime Minister and his Cabinet for their trust in giving me the honor to be the Minister responsible for women, youth and children affairs. Each one of us as a Member of Parliament will not deny how important this ministry is, as we all have families, sisters and brothers, relatives for that matter, a youthful generation which represent 58% of our national population and children who are the wealth of this nation. This is truly an important ministry. For this reason, I will need more of your wisdom and support to build this ministry rather than being negative for the very thing we all value and love. I am saying this from my heart because there are past and present reports, which have given us leaders,

Members of Parliament enough evidence to address such needs. It is due time we need to think and act like leaders. All women, youths and children of this country are counting on the present Members of Parliament to show them the way.

Can we Members of Parliament not read the writing on the wall? If not then let me read it to you. There are tons of reports, international agreements and conventions that we as a country have attended and endorsed that Solomon Islands has promised to support our women, youths and children in areas such as women taking up leadership roles, entrepreneurships, women involved in the business sectors, employment for youths, education skills based on curriculum for youths & children, scholarships specified, extra learning for facilities in our schools, to have qualified and specialist educators, regulate the protection of women and children from domestic violence and child abuse. Let a second chance in the education system for the weak to be inclusive in our national policies etc. After all, this is their country and they represent the majority in the country. It is about time we as leaders and Members of Parliament must learn to listen to them as they have been for years listening to us. These are among the many issues affecting and involves our Ministry.

During my time as the Minister, we will need each other to find ways of addressing to support our women, youths and children of our beloved Solomon Islands. The common excuse such as the world economic crisis, lack of resources, and manpower are often common excuses. If there is a *will* there is a *way*. Yes, there is a rainbow in the horizon because of the National Coalition Reform policies, we can make our women, youth and children prosper in this country. Let let us say to the hardworking staff of my Ministry of Women, Youths and Children; thank you for all the efforts rendered to those who need our help.

May I also say that under the National Coalition's Reform Policy we will start a new chapter in this ministry? This means we will start a new page in this Ministry that will include punctuality – use official hours properly; customers oriented – people need to see us there, not ghosts, and be responsible public officers; create and build partnership with stakeholders and also to have common dialogue with aid donor partners and to encourage and to work with NGOs. We need workers with a strong work ethic. Such idea might sound too hard but some legacies of laziness and lack of directives must be put to an end. I also believe that the kind of partnership will improve and strengthen this Ministry and this Minister will make sure that the Coalition Reform Policies must be put into place and practice. I also wish to see that the services provided by the Ministry of Women, Youths and Children affairs must also reach our children, youths and women in the rural communities.

I would like to thank our local business houses, the NGOs, the churches, professionals, government, aid donors and individuals who have kindly supported us in all our past programs. We look forward to seeing you in the near future. I would also like to thank the Honorable Prime Minister for his good leadership in the current sittings of parliament. I also wish to thank all Ministers for their contribution and support. I also wish to thank the Members of the Opposition for their contribution and questions. I also wish to thank the Minister for Finance for giving assurance to the women, youths and children of this country that government bills on the issue of SIEA and SIWA will be taken care of. I also wish to congratulate the Coalition Government for a job well done.

Mr Speaker, I finally wish to congratulate you on your success as the new Speaker of this honorable House and thank you too for your understanding and leadership as it has encouraged us, new Members of Parliament to see our own strengths, to develop our public speaking skills, and at times learn to observe and to acquire new knowledge in the process. I trust that I have shared some of my dreams that I wish to see happen in the Ministry of Women, Youths and Children Affairs. I also hope that in the near future Members of Parliament from both sides of the Honorable House (opposition and government) share their insights into making and shaping a new chapter for the benefits of the women, youths and children to enjoy the country they belong. Now we as leaders have the time and the opportunity to do what we preach and that is to lead is to serve our women, youths and children of these happy isles. With these few remarks I support the motion and I resume my seat. Thank you.

**Hon. DETTKE:** Thank you for recognizing me to contribute to this traditional motion of sine die. Since this is my first maiden speech since I was voted into Parliament on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 2010, I would first like to thank all the people that contributed to my victory by choosing me as their leader to serve them in Parliament. Thank you to those people. I would also like to thank my wife and children for their understanding and support. I would also like to thank the nominators that have the courage to nominate me amongst other candidates who might have been very close to them. For their courage I would like to applaud and thank them also. I would not be standing here if the 2,228 people did not have the trust in me by casting their ballot papers in the North West Guadalcanal Constituency. Having taken the sacrifice to walk the distance and to put their ballot papers in the ballot boxes, to all of you I am thankful for the sacrifices you have made on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 2010. Thank you.

Having said all that, lest we forget the North West Guadalcanal Constituency is one of the most important constituencies with a special role in the development of this country because it surrounds our capital city Honiara. For the next four years it is my whole intention to try and improve with whatever resources available from the government the livelihoods of my people.

We must remind ourselves from time to time that whatever decisions we make would reflect our future. As leaders we are tasked with making decisions that will shape the future of our unborn generations. This calls for care, trust and honesty amongst leaders of Parliament because whatever we do in or out of office, the whole world is watching us. This meeting is the first in a series of meetings to be conducted in the Honorable Chambers for the next four years and as such there will be four years of decision that will be taking shape in the destiny of our young nation. Whatever the decisions every one of them will have an impact on our people, hence our rise and fall depends very much on these decisions, and in some instance the country and its people will have to bear the consequences.

There are only two resources in this country; Solomon Islands and Solomon Islanders and the relationship between them will determine their survival. That is why we have the constitutional and political duty of care to ensure these two resources survive. We, the government are facilitators of the private sector because as the saying goes “don’t kill the goose which lays the golden egg”. The private sector is the nerve centre of the economy.

To my colleague Member of Parliament for Renbell, while you maybe consciously at liberty to say anything that comes to mind in this Parliament, it is sad to hear you single out just a few groups. To put the integrity of the people who invest their wealth into the logging industry to promote our country, not only that but the revenue generated through the logging industry is paying most of our wages here and salaries for all government workers and services. But let me assure you that the Forestry Industry and the Ministry needs a lot of cleaning up. It is a shame the Ministry is in the situation it is in today. It is in the situation it is in today because of previous government's lack of will power. A lot has been said in this Chamber about corruption, but I must tell this honorable House that I think it is those who make a lot of noise about corruption that must have the will power to fight for corruption themselves. I think it is time for change.

A lot has been said about the CNURA Government. Let me tell you that it is the dream and endeavors of this new government to do better than the CNURA Government. I can assure you of that. Yes, because the mess we are in is from what was left behind from the CNURA Government because of the lack of will power.

May I remind Members that we have been chosen out of a lot of people that went through the elections but sad to say, out of the thousands or hundreds only a few have been chosen to lead our country. It is rather surprising to note that certain members of the Opposition are spending more time criticizing Members of the government team rather than cleaning up their own backyards. We could go on all day assassinating each other, mudslinging, but in the end we have to come down as leaders. Be that as it may, I cannot allow my critics to enjoy a free ride. I am referring to who I see as the big noise makers in the Opposition Bench who prefer to be given praises but really they are just like wolves in sheepskins and do not deserve any higher praise than any of us.

A lot has been said about Transparency International, but to my amazement the Transparency International did not have much to say because it was heavily involved in the last government. I will give you two examples, and first, this Parliament would want to know whether or not consignments of medicine that have been paid for by government coffers have ever reached the Auki Pharmacy. It is something to think about. Secondly, this Honorable House may also want to know whether the diversion flights from Seghe to Auki has been received payment or not, and if not why? Does the General Manager for the Airline has something to say or is there something going on?

Let me thank the Member for West Are Are and Lau/Mbaelelea for their contribution on cocoa and copra. However, that would happen much quicker if you join the government. Yes, it will always be. Yes, they will always be disgruntled members on the Opposition Bench, we will accept that. But you would do more for our people and our country on the government side. Sorry to say this.

I do not want to bore you anymore because there are still some more Members who would like to say something and so with this contribution to the motion I take my seat.

*(applause)*

**Mr SOALAOI:** Thank you very much for allowing me to briefly contribute to this important motion. I am going to be brief because all good things have been said by colleagues who have spoken already. In doing so, allow me to thank the Prime Minister for giving us the opportunity to express our words of thanks to our constituents when contributing to this motion.

But first, let me join others in congratulating yourself, Mr Speaker, for winning the Speaker's seat and also the Deputy Speaker. Also, on behalf of my people I extend our congratulations to all Members of Parliament who won the elections on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August this year. Also, allow me to join others in congratulating the Prime Minister for his victory and also the Ministers for their appointment as ministers of the crown. We really have nothing to advise the government on as its policies are still to be released and so we would like to talk to the government but it would be just like talking to a ghost that is not yet known. But I am aware that it will be launched tomorrow, so we want to congratulate the government for what is going to happen tomorrow.

In contributing to this motion, I must firstly thank the good people of Temotu Vattu Constituency

*(hear, hear)*

for once again reaffirming their confidence in me as their voice in Parliament for the next four years. I hope my reelection is reflection of their confidence in me as their voice during the past four years and perhaps a reflection of what I have done to my people and the country as a whole. Also, allow me to thank my other fellow constituents who contested with me during the last election. I can only thank you for allowing our people to exercise their democratic rights in proving to this country that I can once again represent the people of Temotu Vattu Constituency for the next four years. I thank them and I would like to ask for their cooperation to work with me in the next years. Let us all forget and forgive each other for what happened during the campaign period and come together for the good of our constituency. I can only assure you that I am here for all of you, I can also assure you that I am a new person and I can assure you that I can be a better leader this time around.

Also, allow me at this juncture to thank our donor partners both bilateral and multilateral for assisting Solomon Islands in our development endeavors. I know as well as you do that without the assistance given to us by these donors, we would never be able to develop this country up until today. So I thank them for assisting us in money and in capacity building. I can only assure them that I will continue to cooperate with them as a national leader to ensure that we work together for the interest of our countries.

Allow me also to thank the private sector and the business communities for also assisting the Government in the development endeavors of this country. We always hear that the business community and the private sector is the engine room of economic activities in the country and so I really want to thank them because even during hard times they stood with our government and support us in developing this country. I also want to thank them very much because they employ most of our people that the government cannot afford to employ in the Public Service. I thank them for that.

Also, allow me to thank our churches for their prayers and spiritual direction up until today. I am a person who does not believe in mixing politics with prayer. I do not believe in mixing politics with prayer. I do not know whether what I am saying sounds good or not, but I believe that politics without prayer is not good. We will continue to need the direction of Almighty God in our politics, in our governance and in everything we do. I therefore would like to thank our churches for their prayers and may I also urge all of us, Members of Parliament to go to church and get directions from Almighty God so that we can lead this country.

During our expression of appreciation to the former Speaker of National Parliament, I said that I guess the secret behind the success of this great man, your predecessor, is the fear of God. I can say to us that the only secret to us successfully leading this country into a successful country is to be God fearing leaders, just like our founding father has shown to us in order for our country to prosper as our motto stipulates.

Much has been said about leadership, and I can only say that leadership is a high calling. Leadership is of God, leadership is by God and leadership is for the people. You can only be a leader if you have people to lead. I have full confidence that this Ninth Parliament has leaders who have come to realize that we need God to give us wisdom to lead this country and develop it for our children to enjoy in the future.

Before I finish, allow me to say a little bit about the Independent Group. Firstly, I must thank members of the group for appointing me as their leader and the confidence they have given me to lead the group as the independent group in parliament. I must say that the Independent Group is an independent group and I am proud of the constructive contributions coming from this side of the House. Our members in the Independent Group promised to be responsible members and we will support the government when we should and we will disagree with the government when we should. We will not agree with everything the government does and we will also not disagree with everything it does. That is simply the role we are going to play in Parliament. We want to keep the balance and we want to make sure that politics does not take its toll in Parliament. We want this Government and also the Opposition to do justice to our people as responsible leaders.

Also, allow me a few more minutes to say something about where I come from. The Temotu Vattu Constituency, since this country came into existence as an independent country, up until today we still think that we have been miserably neglected by all governments. I appeal to this government who promised to be different to address our genuine needs. The priority need that we have from the beginning that we still have today is for the means of transportation to improve. We have already expressed our need to have a ship of our own and since we became a constituency that became our priority need and it is still today. And I am happy this Government says that it will be different and so I hope it will be different.

Let us be a government of the people by the people and for the people. I do not want us to play our politics so that we never consider other people. It is things like this in the past, as you know very well, that has made a former member for Temotu Pele to come up with the thinking of wanting to lead us into an independent country. I am saying this with a lot of passion and humility as somebody who comes from an isolated constituency, which I believe

very much whether I join the government or not, still history has proven itself to me that things will just be the same and that is why I decided to be an independent for awhile.

Our contribution as a minority group to Solomon Islands development in terms of human resources, I believe should at least be recognized. Whether we contribute in big things or not, but I believe in terms of human resources we also contributed to our economy. If this negligence is because we do not contribute to this economy then please, at least, you recognize our contribution in terms of human resources. As you know, during the early days of this country in the 1920s, the economy of this country relied very much on logging in my constituency. I am begging this government and Solomon Islands for that matter not to forget that.

Our marine resources have helped our economy a lot when people here export them and have also made some individuals to become wealthy. I believe we have contributed something to this country's economy. I am saying that because it would seem like we will not get any assistance. When I came in here I say it in English so that they hear it and also in pidgin so that they hear it, but they never hear me and so if I say it in my language it will be just worse. What I am saying is try and look at our needs, the needs of isolated constituencies, especially the one I represent.

Lastly, in terms of reconciliation, as a national leader, I believe very much on reconciliation as very important. I also have the fear that our reconciliation might start to go in the wrong direction. At least, let us remind ourselves why we need to reconcile. To me, we do not reconcile only because we make mistakes, not only because of our failures but of paramount importance to us leaders is our need to remain as a united Solomon Islands and that is why we have to reconcile. I believe true reconciliation will bring true peace and that to me is the only prerequisite for an environment that is conducive to economic development.

As I said I will be very, very brief so having said what I said, I am encouraged by the Government's intention to be different. Tomorrow we will know more about the policy intentions of the government so that we should be able to talk about what the governments wants to do. With that, as I have said, I only want to use this opportunity to thank my people for re-electing me back into Parliament and also to ask them to cooperate and work with me for the betterment of our constituency. Finally, I also wish to assure the government of our support when we think it is right to support we will do that. With that I wish to resume my seat and I support the motion.

**Mr. ABANA:** Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to this Motion of Sine Die moved by the Prime Minister. I would also like to thank MPs and colleagues who have spoken before me. To start with, I would like to thank the people of our great country for giving us the mandate to represent them in this Ninth Parliament. Our elections into this Honorable House demonstrate the confidence and trust they have in us to make important decisions on their behalf. This indeed is a solemn responsibility that we must not take lightly or for granted. All decisions made in this House must be taken in the best interest of our beloved people and nation.

I also want to congratulate you for your successful election as the Speaker of this Honorable House, and this looks like my third time to congratulate you and there is no harm in doing that. Mr Speaker, your election to the post demonstrates the confidence and trust we

have in you to guide parliament in its legislative functions in the next four years. Mr Speaker, over the last 10 days of our meeting, I observed with interest as you guided us through the deliberations of this honorable House and concluded that you are doing a fine job. Sir, the road ahead of you is not an easy one but a challenging one as you take the middle ground and try to maintain the total independence of the Legislature from the Executive and the Judiciary.

I must also express my deep appreciation to the Clerk and staff of the National Parliament Office for organizing the Induction Course for parliamentarians. I believe the quality of performance by Members of Parliament in this first meeting of the Ninth Parliament must be attributed to that. As the Member for East Choiseul has said, some of the Ministers really performed and MPs from the Opposition Bench too also ask questions, answers and that has been very promising. I encourage Ministers for that good work and continue with that good performance.

This Meeting, though the first of the Ninth Parliament, with membership from different walks of life and with varying degrees on the level of education has been impressively interactive. On this note, I would like to thank the various government Ministers who have answered questions raised on this floor of Parliament during the question and answer session, which like I have said before have done very well, especially the Minister for Infrastructure Development, the Minister for Fisheries, the Minister for Rural Development, the Minister for Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Finance too.

On the same token, I must also commend members of the Opposition Group and also the Leader of Independent and the Independent MPs for keeping the government in check. The questions we raised on this floor kept Solomon Islanders abreast with the progress of important government priorities and programs. The effectiveness of any Government depends on how effective the Opposition is in carrying out its watchdog role, and I can proudly assure the people of this nation that the Opposition in the Ninth Parliament will ensure the government is transparent, accountable and responsible about its decisions and actions. The first sitting of the Ninth Parliament saw the passage of three important bills and a resolution, and these are the 2010 Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2010, the Tax Valuation (Amendment) Bill 2010, Customs Valuation (Amendment) Bill 2010 and a resolution empowering the Finance Minister to authorize expenditure for the first quarter of 2011.

Before I continue I would like to thank the Minister of Finance, (and where is he now), he is one of the hardworking Ministers who brings in two bills and one motion during this short sitting. The bringing of these legislations to this House demonstrates the government's commitment to ensure that government services continue and to improve government finances, hence must be congratulated. Nevertheless, the passage of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill should now place the government in a much better picture for the next three months or so and therefore I call on the Government to be prudent in prioritizing its programs and spending well within our means.

In regards to the new government's tax or customs valuation reform initiative, I would like to commend the government in the outset for its efforts to protect government revenues through import duties by bringing this piece of legislation to the House. However, the range of penalties that are to be introduced under this piece of legislation against those who make false

declarations of import values will only have to live up to the intentions of this bill when the relevant law enforcement agencies perform their duties as expected.

I would now briefly touch on the policy framework of the government and I am heartened by the Prime Minister's announcement of Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> October as the date for the launch of the harmonized policy framework of his coalition government and the assurance he has given of his government's determination to deliver on its policy. The announcement has lifted the clouds of doubt hanging over the minds of Solomon Islanders including the Opposition side about the country's political destiny at least for the next four years. The Opposition has been anxiously awaiting this important document to ensure that government's policies are tailored to address the real needs of the Solomon Islands people. The Government's policy to engage rural communities to growth centres must be commended as well. It is through such policies that Solomon Islanders can be equipped to participate actively in economic development and thus help boost the national economy.

As you may have heard from questions and answers last Friday, the previous government has made serious and important bilateral and multilateral commitments with our development partners such as the AUSAID, NZAID, EU, JAPAN, USA, and therefore I welcome the announcement by the Prime Minister to working closely with our traditional development partners in revisiting the current SIG donor development programs and exploiting new opportunities relevant to government policy framework which will be launched tomorrow. On that note, may I impress on the Minister of Development Planning and Aid Coordination to continue with the good work already in place with the European Union under the framework of the Cotonou Agreement. The Honorable Minister confirmed in his answer that the progress of commitments with the IMF is in its final stages and that has been very reassuring.

One of the key pillars of the last government is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a process that allows victims and persons who possesses related knowledge of the ethnic tension, to come forward and testify before the Commission. The TRC has taken the lead into a new chapter of a healing process for our people and should be accorded that opportunity to conclude its task with a report submitted to the Government. On this basis, the Government will be able to have a much clearer picture on a way forward for the proposed Forgiveness Bill.

MPs accommodation in hotels and motels in the city is becoming a very expensive exercise for the National Parliament and will continue to be in the future. If nothing is done to address this by securing a parliamentary accommodation for MPs here in Honiara, the Government will continue to foot very expensive hotel bills for MPs in the future. We must be mindful of inflation and other related costs that are bound to increase as we go along. We ought not to be complacent or take it very lightly. A fine example of complacency is the security fence constructed around the Parliament Building. Something that was not foreseen by MPs of the Eight Parliament, not until after my good friend and a former MP for East Guadalcanal was hit on the face by an angry supporter, gave rise to the urgency in erecting the security fence we now see around the Parliament Building. On this note, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to Parliament Securities for the appropriate measures employed in manning the compounds of Parliament.

The Russell Islands Plantations Limited investment issue has been a long outstanding one, not only the last government but successive governments as well and that the concerns of the People of Savo/Russells to see this investment revitalized is paramount. With the assurance from the Prime Minister, I believe Government is in full gear in addressing such vital economic development investment for our people.

I also would like to bring to the attention of the government the concerns of the people of East Malaita about the current worsening road conditions directly affecting domestic economic activities in the region. There have been repeated calls over the media for urgent intervention by the government to address this problem. I am sure my two other colleagues on the other side of the House, the Deputy Prime Minister who is the MP for East Malaita and the MP for East Kwaio are listening attentively as to collectively address this issue with the government.

Also allow me to salute the government for the action it has taken to ensure the Republic of China funding is subjected to a strict administration and utilization mechanism so as to ensure funds are used for their intended purposes. The onus is now on the government to ensure whatever mechanisms are in place should be able to address the problem of constituents accusing their MPs of mismanagement and, to some extent, equitable distribution or projects across their constituencies. However, to date there has not been any serious movement on this matter and as such I can only draw one conclusion and that can be that the ROC is still demanding a sound and credible disbursement mechanism from the government. The Prime Minister assured this House of a bipartisan approach with the Opposition Group on this matter and, of course, we are ready to be part of such working group to come up with an agreed strategy on the RCDF.

With regards to RAMSI and its operations, I must once again urge the Government to be cautious about an early exit strategy. An exit strategy must take into serious consideration the risks of leaving too early as the various reforms that will be pursued by the government in the near future would require a sound law and order environment and this would take a fair bit of time.

In concluding, I would like to thank everyone that has contributed to the smooth running of the first meeting of the Ninth Parliament and indeed commendations must be accorded to you, Mr Speaker, your Clerk and your staff, for all the hard work that you have put in ensuring that the meetings are in order. You have demonstrated professionalism in discharging your duties and we look forward to the same level of service in all our meetings in the future. My big thank you to you good people of this country for taking time out listening to us and watching us in the One TV and the SIBC. With these remarks I support the motion.

**Hon. LILO:** Thank you. I look around this side and I seem to notice that everyone has stood up to talk on this motion and so if I do not stand up I will be the only one not contributing to the debate so let me just briefly contribute to this motion. In fact, I have been listening since Friday until today and I am really convinced with what everyone is saying so good news and nice music to all our ears. If you can permit me, Mr Speaker, I just want to take the good parts of whatever have been said and paste it on me so that I can also be included in the good things mentioned by colleagues on both sides of this House in this motion.

My contribution will be full of thank yous because everything has been stated by others already. Let me join everyone too to say that because of the nature of this motion that it has to be done like that. Let me first of all thank all relevant authorities that made this first meeting of this Ninth Parliament a very successful one: first to his Excellency, the Governor General for making the proclamation for this meeting to start and the staff of Government House. I also thank Parliament and your good self, Sir, for presiding over the first meeting very well and I share the sentiments made by everyone in congratulating you in the way you have handled this meeting.

We also need to thank our Public Service who has been working very hard for keeping the machinery of the government going. Not too often are we at the political level too happy about our public servants. Sometimes when things fail, especially in regards to our constituencies we blame our public officers as not working, all of us in this House. I am sure that, that will be the same experience that I hope new Members will avoid themselves from following us the old ones, when we all the time blame the public officers. For any particular failures, we complain and say it is the public officers who are not working. I think we have to learn to understand too the culture of the Public Service, in particular the Public Service system that we adopted; the Weberian Bureaucracy which follows rules; it is a rule oriented culture. There are the general orders, the financial instructions and other rules that public officers would normally follow in the performance of their duties. Most times we at the political level too in a way unnecessarily force our public servants to act contrary to the rules they should follow or that they should have followed. We must understand the difficult part our public servants go by. But we need to thank them, however, difficult the situations we always impose on them, they continue to serve the government, they even serve the Opposition too.

We need to thank our Judiciary for continuing to be the beacon of a fair and equitable justice system in the country and have continued to perform that duty. We must continue to support it. Every now and then in the opening of the Judicial year, we would hear from the Chief Justice, the Attorney General and the President of the Bar Association saying that there is need to resource the Judiciary. I think this is a responsibility that has to be put on both sides of the House, those of you on the other side and those of us here to agree that we must always support the Judiciary. In fact that was the very reason why our governments in the past, the government of the Member for East Choiseul when the Member for East Choiseul was our Prime Minister, we were the first to create the National Judiciary Head so that it will lead towards establishing some kind of an autonomy to the Judiciary to make their own decision on the way that financial resources are decided and for them to decide where it will be spent and not controlled by the executive. I think the other thing that we need to do now is to really work out a system where we actually allocate resources to the judiciary so that the autonomy of the judiciary is further improved.

We need to thank our Police for continuing to take on the responsibility of enforcing law and order in our country. This morning we were talking about the continuous exercise of resizing or improving the capacity of the Police Force; the retrenchment exercise so that we can find a better way of improving our Police Force. They also deserve to be commended for the work they have done in helping the Electoral Commission administer and carry out the election process that has been very successful.

In spite of some of the difficulties we have experienced in some of the constituencies, I think it would be to say that it has been a very violent free election in most areas of the country, and that is due to the work our Police Force, the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force has done. We must continue to give that honor and commendation to our Force. Every time we look at the Police Force and say those people are not working. We need to improve this, we have to change our attitude. We must look at our Police Force as an institution that in spite of all the difficulties and challenges they are facing, we must think positive about the Force.

Our sick people and those working in our hospitals need to be commended because they continue to do a very good job in performing their duties. Our Correctional Services, our people who are in prison have to obey the law and are being imposed on them. What has happened to them has taken away their pride, their liberty and put directly into the hands of the law to look after them.

I would like to also join others in thanking our development partners, donors, stakeholders, the civil society because most of the time we criticized them and they too criticized us but this shows a healthy democratic society that we have a society where we check on each other. I also thank our private sector. Most importantly, I thank the people of Solomon Islands who have elected us, the 50 Members who are sitting down in this House right now. The people of this country are so important because without these people who represent our consumers, our private sector cannot be successful too. Our private sector can continue to come and operate in this country but if there are no consumers in this country that demands their goods, development in the country cannot happen too so we must thank our people too.

Also, I would like to take this opportunity to also share what have been expressed by other Members to thank us, the 50 Members of Parliament who have made the difficult four or so weeks of lobbying to be a very successful. I think we need to congratulate all of us that we have been able to achieve a very fair and free outcome on the election of the Prime Minister and the formation of the government. I think we need to congratulate all of us in this House.

In this meeting we have two bills that have been introduced, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Members who contributed to these bills; the Supplementary Appropriation and the Customs Evaluation Bill. I learn a lot from debates, from advices and comments made on both sides in particular on issues that have been raised in relation to broader economic issues and financial management. It has been so helpful. It is just as well that we have these people elected into this House. I can see that we would not have any trouble at all finding very good advice and words from people in this very Chamber. With the kind of experiences they came out from, we will all learn and I am sure that we will continue to learn from the very good debates that come out of this House. I therefore would like to commend and thank all of you for the kind of contribution you were making during the debate on these two bills.

Also, the questions that you have asked too are so relevant, and relevant to the country on issues that are very much central to the way we are running this country. Investment in terms of governance, in terms of leadership and I am sure this kind of question will continue. I would like to encourage the Opposition side to continue coming up with some more questions so that it sharpens up those of us on this side. In the same way you are calling on us to come up and think about good policies for our country to move forward, we are also asking you to think

up some very good questions as well so as to sharpen those of us on this side. That is how we will continue to improve our relationship inside this House.

That points to the way we need to conduct ourselves in this House. We need to respect each other. The fact that we have the mandate of the people to come into this House means that we have to look at each other, ourselves individually and say that person over there is also elected by the people of this country and the responsibility he is taking is also the same as me too. But when we come into this House and only look at our own selves without thinking about the other side on what we want to say and just throw in our comments, that will surely generate all sorts of comments that are normally made.

I believe if there are responsible and respectable comments we make in this House, it will also make debate in this House more responsible, sensible and respectable for every one of us. In saying that, I am pleased that we have not gone to the extent of making certain comments that would make people look bad in this House. There is the tendency for us to throw such a comment, and I am sure that is the very reason why we have comments that are trying to come out all over the place. If we learn to respect ourselves, I think we are not going to have this kind of attitude in here.

I do not want to touch on some comments that have been made, comments of doubts by a lot of people who think 'because the people on this side are like this and so that is why things are like this'. There is no need for that kind of comment. We should neither hold this kind of feeling too. The fact that we are all elected by our people makes you to sit down over there and me to sit down over here. That is what it is all about. I think we need to concentrate and if we attempt to debate or comment on a policy issue, it will make our discussions in this chamber more responsible, more dynamic, more livelihood for our people and our people would want to listen to that sort of debate. We always make comments that touch badly on personality, and that is why we usually end up with inappropriate comments made in this House. But I am encouraged that at this very early stage something like that comes up which makes us learn. I am sure that when we come in the next meeting nothing will happen.

**Members** (*interjecting*): It will be just worse.

No, that is what I think so, and I am sure that the two former Prime Ministers sitting over there are my very best friends, I have worked with them and they both know me, and that is why I am saying this. The three of us have been at odds with each other in the past, two of them with me have been at odds with each other and that is why I saying this, so you must try to help those on the other side and I will help those of us on this side so that we can improve on this kind of attitude.

A simple assertion for people to forge that because we are made up of this sort of thing in here is totally unnecessary. We should not make unnecessary comments like that because if this side turns around and say things like this and that, it will not make debates, comments and eve the environment in this House to be desirable. We have to find the way, try as much, call on the best part of our hearts and minds to try and restrain a bit on things like that so that we can make the business of the House, the debates and contributions in this House in a more dignified way. As I said, just as when we start and I started to hear comments like that makes

me sad, when you are trying to accuse some of us on this side saying “you are the ones hiding and influencing lobbying in the past and now you are right inside here”. These are unnecessary comments that we should not make because many of us on the other side or this side have also been hiding from those on that side in the past too and then we ended up coming inside here too. Why should we make those sort of comments; so unnecessary.

The way we encourage investment in this country is still not the right way of attracting investment. We are still struggling, so much so that we have only been focusing on some key sectors. I think the challenge that everyone has been saying is that we need to look at everything in theory, what we learn in theory, where we have the comparative advantage like if it is on tourism then we must have to put in investment on it, of course, we need to do that. These are some of the issues and challenges we will continue to talk about, and we need to talk more about inside here. And I am really encouraged listening to all of us, all of us in the way we try to advocate and articulate issues like these amongst ourselves in here.

I have also written down some notes here, just similar to what others were saying, but in case I say them here and I would just be repeating what others have said already. But with your permission, Mr Speaker, as you always said to just repeat it, then I am going to repeat it again. We have to invest in our diversity, what does that mean, to invest in our diversity. Our region is so diverse, the size and population of places and therefore the markets, some are big markets because of the size of the population and in some places are small, so when it comes to resource allocation only the bigger populations get a bigger share and the smaller population get a lesser share. So let us find a way, some creative ideas as to how we can make ourselves better in investing in our diversity. That sort of thing is what we should be thinking about.

The comparative advantage of each region, if it is on tourism, those of us from that region should only invest in tourism. If it is agriculture then invest only in agriculture. But this kind of way where everyone wants to invest in the same thing is not good. Like if those in that region are tourism we also want to invest in tourism, or if those in that region are on agriculture we too want agriculture. In a situation where resources are very scarce we have to learn to understand that the best allocation of resources and the choices we have to make must be best, then we need that kind of understanding. Why, because resources are very limited, and so if it is very limited we have to learn to allocate to where it can be best invested to make a good outcome from. This is where the selection of sectors becomes very important; sectors that can stimulate growth in investment, create employment and increased production so that it encourages more export into our country. These are the kind of issues we need to talk about, but not come here to talk about our personality or criticizing each other. Let us not do that.

We also need to pursue good reforms that can facilitate development. If it is the growth centre concept that we on this side have been talking about then let us go ahead and support the growth centres. And what do we need to make the growth centres become real growth centres, is the question we need to be asking? What do we need to do to make these centres become real growth centres? Firstly, it has to be the selection of sites and then it will come to some of the fundamental institutional reforms. Like what we on this side here are talking about, we cannot just let the acquisition of land to go through because it will create brothers, sisters and uncles to fight. We have to recognize the customary titles so that people can use those lands for collaterals, access capital and provide security for investment to happen.

One of the key issue that will come, which this government is talking very strongly on is that we need to invest in long term development strategy. The Member for East Choiseul mentioned today that when we started the government we have the national development plan for 10 years and then as time goes on, the program of action comes in, and then the medium term development strategy creeps in and things like that. I think from now on we have to invest in long term. What about having a kind of national development strategy legislation that no one can break so that any government that comes in cannot change from that shift, and we can have a program of action that works toward the long term objectives. I think we need to encourage that. This is the kind of thing we should be thinking about, and not a long term development strategy where we come here and criticize ourselves in this House. For 20 years this kind of politics has not yet gone out. In spite of the fact we are talking about leadership since 20 years ago up until now, that kind of politics still exist, the personal politics where people still come criticizing others in this House. That is the only part I do not agree with on those of you who talked during that time because it still exists. It started from those in the past and still continues on until today, it still does not go away.

With this kind of long term development strategy, only then can we look more positively into areas we have comparative advantages on. Because right now we can say comparative advantage but these areas of comparative advantage requires long term development investment, long term development investment in some areas. We need to do things like that. It does not mean within two years something will happen, no. We even say if we do not do it then what are we going to achieve during our term in parliament. The SOEs that have been here since the past were created for us by those in the first or second parliaments and are still inexistence until today; that is very true. That is why we have to work extra hard on our own. Maybe the growth centres will facilitate that sort of thing, and that was the very idea that we in Kolombangara had in the late 1980s, and you were the Minister of Natural resources at that time, Mr Speaker. When Levers left, we were given the choice to take back the land or put it into investment. You called me to go there and we worked on it at that time. I was not a member of parliament at that time. We were so divided, some groups want their land to be returned to them, but some of us said, no, we have to put it into investment. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 1992 after long consultations with land owners, after clearance of relevant agreements and the deed of trust by now the Governor General of Solomon Islands who was then the Attorney General, I signed the deed of trust in the Cabinet Office with the Commissioner of Lands at that time, allowing the KFPL to start in Kolombangara.

I want to encourage some of you to do that sort of investment in your constituencies. We started the KFPL and at that time we were promised there will be dividend, but up until today I still tell my people there will be dividends but there is still no dividend. Maybe the disease in some of the SOEs still exists, quite honestly, I can tell you this. Every time I go back, they still ask me that I was the one who tell them about this investment so where is the dividend. I said to them "it will come", but it still has not come until today.

This company faces a lot of problem but it is one of our SOEs, a SOE where during the ethnic tension we really worked so hard just to keep it going. The Soltai Company was gun pointed and it had to stop, everyone left, all the Asians ran away from Noro. They also came and tried to point guns at us in Ringgi and Poitete but we chased them out, those who carry

guns; some of them had to be imprisoned here at Rove and then later on were taken back to Ringgi and become part of the community now. These are some examples of things that some of us are doing. And we need to do more in our constituencies. Maybe the growth centers will work this time. But these are the sorts of challenges we have to do and challenges that we need to take on responsibility at the leadership level so that we avoid coming here every day and asking, 'is the RCDF ready, is the micro ready', those are the sort of things I mean.

Of course, we cannot say you cannot talk about such things because you have to start off with things like that. But we need to encourage everyone to start think about things that will create more long term development in our constituencies. That is what we need to do rather than coming in here and throwing words on each other or say, 'yes, it is good but I still doubt you'. Do you come in here to be concerned about me, somebody personally or you should be concerned about the development of Solomon Islands? I think it is good that we remind ourselves of these things at this very early stage but such is the way that it will be so difficult and challenging for us in moving forward. However, I am not totally negative in my own thinking and feeling that this Ninth Parliament, just like others have said and I share with them and agree with what they have said that I think can make a difference. I join those of you who have that understanding and conviction in your own self that I think in this Ninth Parliament we have all, and it is good that we have challenged ourselves very early at this Ninth Parliament; challenge ourselves that we must make a difference.

I join my friend, the MP for West, Are Are, yes I am with you that we need to make a difference in this Ninth Parliament. I join you East Choiseul, yes, we need to make a difference in this Ninth Parliament. I join you Small Malaita that we have to make a difference in this Ninth Parliament. The only thing is that you two must control those on your side so that they do not come here throwing all sorts of comments to those on this side of the House.

This side is so responsible and I want you to take hope and confidence in the understanding and what we believe that we are going to do; do not doubt that. As I have said to you, this group is a very understandable group. We started the government by running around in old bomb vehicles, the old bomb vehicles that you have left behind to us or we have left behind. One Minister wanted to start his vehicle but the battery could not start and so we have to push start the vehicle. Another one said I was riding in the vehicle but I can just look through the vehicle to the ground. But this is the kind of discipline this side is taking on and it gives a lot of confidence but when you said 'yes, we have confidence on you *but* we also doubted you too', and that is what made us feel a bit uneasy about it. I hope that we are not doing this. But I am really confident we will make a difference in this Ninth Parliament. The issues and challenges we will continue to face are there and it is good that we continue to remind ourselves to address those issues.

I also want to say in this sine die motion that I am encouraged by all of you and let me take this opportunity before I conclude, just like all of you have done, to your own constituencies to thank the people of Gizo/Kolombangara for returning me to this honorable House for the third term, and I think I will still remain there. I am so encouraged by the untainted support they continue to give me that in spite of the fact that the number of contestants has increased, the majority support still remains the same. I am so encouraged by that. I can assure them that with the mandate and support they have given me, I will join these

50 Members of Parliament to make up the national leadership of Solomon Islands. That, I can assure them that I will join the other 49 Members of Parliament in this Ninth Parliament to provide that national leadership in Solomon Islands. I can also assure them that with the support they have given me, I have accepted the responsibility given to me by the Prime Minister and the team on this side to take on this responsibility as the Minister of Finance of this country for the second time.

Also to you, Mr Speaker, I think you deserve to be in that position, but be mindful not to overrule us too on some of the points, Mr Speaker. This is just my own personal admiration of you and that is why I talk like that, and not of any complaints. You have done very well in presiding over this meeting, but do not go to the extreme of ruling us out on some of the points we raise. Otherwise you make rulings that we would not be able to find in the Standing Orders. Nonetheless, Sir, I think you know it has been a very fruitful meeting and I quite agree with the Prime Minister that this Parliament must sine die today. Thank you, and with that I support the motion.

**Mr SIKUA:** Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to speak on this Sine Die motion moved by the Prime Minister last Thursday. In fact, I was not going to speak but seeing the Member for Gizo/Kolombangara and Minister of Finance stood up and gave advice and encouragement, I feel like I should also do the same too for those on the other side so thank you for this opportunity.

Having had this meeting the first meeting of the Ninth Parliament in the last 9 or 10 days, I am very encouraged by the performance of everyone. Firstly, those on the other side of the House, the new Members of Parliament who have been appointed Ministers, including the old ones, as well as new Members of Parliament on this side of the House, have performed extremely well in the asking and answering of questions and in all the various contributions they have made, especially their contributions to this motion of sine die. I think in the long term this kind of quality that we have augers very well for a very successful Ninth Parliament.

The advices given to us by the Minister of Finance and Treasury and honorable Member for Gizo/Kolombangara are very pertinent, and I think we need to keep them in mind as we continue to conduct ourselves in debates and in our dealings with business in this House. I think we should take those into account because as the Member for East Choiseul mentioned, this is a very civilized Parliament and that we should keep it that way. That is what I would like to remind us about.

As everybody else has done, I too would like to sincerely thank all my voters and my good people of North East Guadalcanal. I have two wards there - Paripao and East Tasimboko, and I thank them for putting me back or re-electing me for a second term in this House. I would like to thank them for their support and I hope I will continue to be a worthy representative in this Parliament during the next four years. I also would like to thank my campaign managers and supporters for all their help. We have run a very successful campaign and because of the Parliament Meeting I was not able to go back to them as yet, but I am sure after this meeting, in the next couple of days I will be making arrangements to go back and see them after the elections are done.

Also, I would like to encourage the Minister of Finance to quickly make the funds available because those of you on the government side will be busy running the country after the meeting but those of us on this side are going to be free so if you can quickly make some money available then it would be very good for us on this side to start going back to visit our people and to talk then after the elections.

In thanking my campaign managers and supporters, I also would like to thank one special group of people who has been going around with me during my campaign and that is our CPP. As you are aware, I am sure you were also caretaker during your time after four years and you know what I mean. I came through the experience and I would like to thank members of the Police Force both RAMSI and the Royal Solomon Islands Police for having been with me everywhere I went, whether night or day, rough or good road, they have been with me and have been very helpful in every way. Sometimes because we have been to some of the very roughest ranges of this country, going up to the mountains, sometimes our bags went ahead of us whilst we rolled after them when going up to Kolosulu. I am sure some of us do not have mountains in our country and so it is our first time to go through such an experience. But we all came out of it and all agreed that it has been an enjoyable and worthwhile experience, and so I thank the police officials who have been with me during my campaign. I also thank all my colleagues who contested the seat with me, they are all my wantoks, there are five of them whom we contested the last national general elections. One is taking a petition against me, but I will leave that to the courts to decide on that.

Sir, you also accept my hearty congratulations on your election as the Speaker of this honorable House. Your election Mr Speaker is a testimony of your very good work and experience, and I wish you every success as we work together in this next four years. Of course, you will be very ably assisted by the Deputy Speaker, and so to the Deputy Speaker, I also give my congratulations to him for winning the elections. As you know, both of us were candidates and he won and I ask that he accepts my sincere congratulations.

I did not have opportunity the last time to thank the former Speaker for all that he has done to our National Parliament and the country as a whole, but I think every Member of Parliament who have spoken have said all the good things and have mentioned all the good things that the former Speaker, as the founding father of the nation and Speaker of this House for the last eight years, have already said all the good things he has done for us, and so I do not wish to repeat all those things. But let me just simply thank him for being a father figure, not only to me but to all of us. During my term as Prime Minister, he has always been a father figure to me and so I would like to sincerely thank him for every encouragement and guidance and wisdom he has given to me. On behalf of my family and people, I wish him and his good lady and family a happy retirement and all the bests in the years ahead. I also would like to congratulate all my 49 colleagues on being successfully elected to this honorable House, and I look forward to working closely with all of you in the next four years.

As you know we are a group of people elected to perform certain duties. As legislators our role is to ensure the laws of the land are good and just laws. Secondly if some of them are dated by events and technology, we must change and improve them or even discard some aspects of them. Thirdly, if new situations arise that need legislation, we must enact new legislation. Fourthly, laws are meant to ensure equity, safety and security and they are enforceable

guidelines so that rights of individuals, corporate entities and groups of people are protected and upheld.

When we as legislators do our job properly, the other very important arm of government, the Judiciary, can operate and dispense justice for everyone in the way we expect and in accordance with democratic expectations of the rule of law. We are also expected to debate, discuss and approve policies to ensure that the Executive of government - the Cabinet responds properly and adequately to the needs of the citizens and residents of our country.

I also take this opportunity to thank all public officers, private sector employees, and all our good people for their patience during the period when we were trying to form government. I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Prime Minister for his successful elections. As the most recent former Prime Minister, I wish him all the very best in his tenure in office. Furthermore, I ask that all honorable colleagues on both sides of the House will give our new Prime Minister, his Ministers and Government all the support they need as they lead the new government to rule our beloved country and people during their tenure in office. To the new Government, I can only say that you have accepted the challenge, fully trusting in your collective capabilities to take over the business of governing the sovereign affairs of our beloved country for the benefit of all our people and to the Glory of God.

As you are well aware, the Prime Minister is just one person who is leading a team – a team of people which is made up of very experienced politicians, like the good Minister Finance and some very qualified individuals in their field of expertise and all of them are genuine leaders of the people they represent in this House. So I urge as a team leader, the Prime Minister must continue to listen to his Ministers, his Backbenchers and above all, all of us who are his people and the people of this country.

Our country has already suffered enough adverse publicity and we need to turn that around and improve our image, reputation and relationships abroad. In addition, in situations where differences exist, I hope that the Party leaders, which I think must be six or seven that make up the National Coalition can enter into dialogue rather than being confrontational. As the Minister of Finance has asked us from this side of the House, I am also asking you too that when you have any differences, I hope you can enter into dialogue so that you can work together to regain the confidence and trust of our donor partners and other regional partners and international organizations. I encourage the government not to be confrontational but whenever differences exist, do not start looking at this side to be pulled over to that side, but have dialogue first with yourselves to settle disputes and iron out everything so that you can go ahead and continue.

In giving that advice, I also would like to inform all Ministers that we all know the different styles of leadership where different people apply different styles given the circumstances. But in my experience, for every major issues of national interest, I always want to see that due care must be taken in exercising composure and confidence that we must take time to consider the pros and cons, the positive and negative sides of the issue you are confronted with. The Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers need to take that into account so that you only decide to move when you have had careful consideration, careful consideration demonstrating strong mindedness and determination. But again, keep an open mind and be flexible that even though there is no money, if you say come back tomorrow,

then it is just right Minister of Finance. I do find that you do not really make a decision in a rush and in an angry way and in everything you do you must be responsible. So I ask that all our good friends who are in the government now must continue to work together and continue to uphold the principles of democracy, embracing love, tolerance and understanding. I hope the new government will continue with the major programs we have embarked upon under the CNURA Government I have led and improve on those that need improvement. I hope the new government will continue to reassure our good people of Solomon Islands that it is the government of the people by the people and for the people. This means that it is their government.

I am very happy to note some of the things the Prime Minister mentioned in his speech. We have to be mindful of what has happened and the events of the ethnic unrest and the April Riots because the things that happened in the past, they reflect the under currents that our new government must find solutions to. I hope the government will carry on the business of governing with the view to redirecting the course of this nation to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves.

I ask that the new government, I hope, in its policies it will announce tomorrow there will be some moves for the Government to vigorously pursue the current 2009 draft of the Federal Constitution and that it will adopt it as soon as possible. On behalf of my people of North East Guadalcanal, we firmly believe that the new federal system of government is a principal strategy to address the inherent deficiencies of the present government system and it is supporting economic development strategies that have been largely responsible in creating the environment of ethnic hatred and intolerance. I hope that in the policies the government is going to release tomorrow, we will see something towards the federal constitution and we hope that it will be finally adopted.

We also would like to lend our support to the announcement by the National Coalition for a mechanism that aims to engage rural people with regards to the growth centres. Indeed, this is a policy mechanism that we would want to see implemented in our rural communities so that it can act like a growth base for livelihood in areas such as timber, cocoa, copra, fisheries, small livestock and horticulture.

On behalf of my people, I welcome the new government's policy to instill greater transparency in the administration and use of the Republic of China's assistance to Solomon Islands and we look forward to any moves by the government that will increase the current levels so that what we give to our people will have greater impact in rural development. We hope that the new government will look at policies on the international front so that it can pursue a foreign policy based on selective engagement and pragmatism in order to ensure the country gets maximum benefit from its diplomatic relations as you know, Solomon Islands is a friend to all and enemy to none.

As you know, RAMSI is here through the assistance of our neighbors in the Pacific, and of course, led by Australia and New Zealand and so I am happy to note the new government accepts that RAMSI is playing a positive role in Solomon Islands and will continue to review its role. As you know, we have had a partnership framework where we agree with RAMSI, and I urge the new government to have a good look at that document because it should point us to the direction we should be heading and the benchmark for its parties to meet at different times

along the way as we journey forward into the future. But I want to reiterate what others have already said that the tenure of RAMSI in Solomon Islands should be measured by the tasks of restoring and sustaining stability and economic growth, enabling Solomon Islanders to embark on the peace process to achieve full stability, peace, harmony and prosperity. Time should not be an issue in this regard but rather stability, peace, social harmony and economic growth are the issues.

I would be very interested when I see the policy of the National Coalition tomorrow on what it says on the bona fide demands of the people of Guadalcanal. As you know, being a Member of Parliament of this province, it will be of great interest to my people to see our demands on the resolutions made on land, education, law and order, peace, reconciliation and rehabilitation, on leadership and constitutional reform, environment and natural resources, women and youth; all these will continue to be the guiding principles on all forms of development on Guadalcanal for years to come. And so I would be very interested tomorrow when I get hold of the policy of the Government on what it says on the bona fide demands of the people of Guadalcanal.

Our leaders are unanimous on our resolve to achieve peace. First, whilst we pledge to work together with everybody towards lasting peace and harmony amongst our people, we affirm as leaders of this province that there can be no development on Guadalcanal without peace. I know my Government has often being accused of not addressing the bona fide demands of the people of Guadalcanal, but you should not overlook the fact that the Commission of Inquiry on Land on Guadalcanal is ongoing and the federal constitution. We must understand also that the demands of the Guadalcanal people cannot be treated in isolation of the interest of the whole Solomon Islands and other provinces. I hope the Government will continue to look at the demands of the people of Guadalcanal. I also hope the new government will recognize the efforts of our national leaders in trying to deal with the root causes of the ethnic unrest, and in this regard I reiterate my call for the government to take into account the ongoing peace negotiations between the Malaita and Guadalcanal Provincial Governments and the relevant issues pertaining to the national peace building process.

I look forward to seeing the details of the government's major reform on customary land. This is an important area that has to be thought through very carefully and will be supported through adequate funding. This is a very expensive exercise, I know, but I hope the government can give it the necessary funding it requires, and I hope that landowners can then opt for them to liberalize their customary land for worthwhile economic activities through appropriate leases.

Like all the other colleagues have already mentioned, the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is very important and I hope that the government can continue to support the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission so that its outcome, we can then look at the Forgiveness Bill we have talked about during the questions and answers session.

I also would like to thank this opportunity to thank our donors; Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of China, Japan, the European Union, Papua New Guinea, the United Kingdom, Korea and the other bilateral and multilateral development partners for their continuing support to the people and government of Solomon Islands. I also would like to thank very much, institutions like the World Bank and the ADB for finding it very convenient to set up

offices in our country in the last two years. I look forward to their continuing support to our people and government.

I know that we are not going to have any more meetings until December when we usually have time to wish each other a very happy Christmas. But I have just received a letter today that the SIBC is going to give us a special rate to advertise for the Christmas, however, if I do not have money at Christmas, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of my people and family to wish you Mr Speaker and your good lady and family, the Clerk and all the staff of the National Parliament Office and your families, all my colleague MPs and their families and constituents and all Solomon Islanders, guests and visitors a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2011. With these remarks, I support the Motion.

**Hon. MAELANGA:** Thank you for giving me this opportunity to make this concluding statement on the Motion of Sine Die moved by the Honorable Prime Minister last week. Allow me to thank the Prime Minister for honoring me to conclude or wind up this motion on his behalf.

At the outset, I wish to take this opportunity to thank all members of Parliament who have contributed and participated in debating the Motion of Sine Die. Much has been said during the debate of this motion about what we have covered during the First Meeting of the Ninth Parliament and how we as a government and, of course, as national leaders should do in taking this country forward.

As the Prime Minister has alluded to when he moved this motion, the first meeting of the Ninth Parliament, though very brief, has been a very important one and quite substantive. It has also been a historical one. It has been a substantive meeting because within one week we have managed to pass two important Bills and a Resolution. Both Bills - the Customs Valuation Bill 2010, the Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2010 as well as the Resolution to authorize expenditure for the first quarter of next year, all come from our good Minister of Finance and Treasury and I wish to salute him and his staff for the determination and hard work.

This first meeting of the Ninth Parliament is also historic in that we, Members of the Ninth Parliament had the privilege and honour to say farewell and pay tribute to the former Speaker of National Parliament, Rt Sir Peter Kenilorea for his distinguished service as Speaker since December 2001 as well as for his outgoing contributions to nation building and the advancement of democracy and good governance. The government has taken note of the various comments, concerns and contributions that were made on the floor of this Parliament, especially those issues that hinge on the need for some policy considerations to address them. This government will work hard to see how best these concerns can be best addressed.

I am indeed encouraged by a good number of questions and useful comments that were raised by the other side of the House on policy related issues. As you know, the government's policy statements are yet to be released, but common sense should prevail on how we should tackle some of these issues. There are, of course, other matters relating to national interests that any government, including this government will have to take on board.

Infrastructure developments, whether they be a new road system, airports, wharves, affordable telecommunication systems and good shipping, remain a crucial area to seriously address for the stimulation of the growth of our economy. Simultaneously, the upgrading of

our provincial hospitals and areas health centers as well as improving of our schools is extremely important for a healthy and educated Solomon Islands. As a government, we must not lose sight of those important features for meaningful development in our provinces, the rural areas and Solomon Islands as a whole. Largely, we must all work together to put in place a sound and a conducive environment for the economy to flourish.

As a government, we are also conscious of the call to be vigilant in the way government funds are managed and spent. Although the provision of the delivery of basic social services to our people is extremely important, this government will make sure that discipline is exercised in the way funds are expended. This is significant in order for services not to be disrupted.

A government that loses sight of the needs of its youth and young generations is a government that is truly ignorant of its future. I say this because the youth of any country is the most important asset that any country could count on, and Solomon Islands is no exception. This government recognizes the potentials of our young population and will work with relevant stakeholders in addressing the issues and challenges confronting our youth today. In order to move this country forward and to make a difference in the lives of all Solomon Islanders, reforms whether they are fundamental in national or sectoral is very important. The reforms this Government will undertake are necessary to put development in this country in perspective and one that would set the basis for more meaningful developments to take place.

Much has been said about the Public Service and the manner in which services are delivered to our people. I agree that the public service has been an issue of concern to MPs and not only Members of Parliament but Solomon Islands as a whole, in particular those living in the rural areas. Let me inform this House that the current public service culture must be turned around to respond to the needs of the citizens of this country and I call upon all of us stakeholders to once again work together to tackle this as an issue of concern to all of us.

The private sector is an important sector for any economy. The engine of growth as we all know is any market and it is my conviction that in order for this sector to grow, the government must put in place necessary reforms and appropriate legislations. You will appreciate that the partnership had begun with the Chamber of Commerce. I believe that sets the basis for dialogue and interaction between the government and private sector in mapping out the need to work hand in hand to develop the economy of Solomon Islands to a vibrant one.

I would like to make some points on some of the issues raised concerning RAMSI. Some Members who talked today refer to the opening speech of the Prime Minister on this motion when he stated that there is an exit for RAMSI. I must make it clear here that the Prime Minister does not mean it is an exit in the next five, 10 or 15 years. No, I do not think that is what he said. It would be good if the media puts this right. The media must listen properly and put the right statements in the media. I would like to clarify here that those are years we are looking at and it all depends. If we are fit can stand on our own then RAMSI too will know what time they will leave. I think it is good that we come out clear, be frank and straight on what we are saying. I would like to make this clear to our good media when they put news on the media, they must make sure it is right so that it does not confuse our people.

Also, on projects as raised by some of my good Members, I think all of us are looking forward to projects happening in our various constituencies, especially agriculture projects in terms of cocoa and copra. Those are the main products that some of the constituencies we that

we come from rely on. I think the Government will look at that as they are the main projects we are going to work on to help our people in the rural areas.

I also would like to touch on investment, the private sector is very important as it is bringing economy to the country. As a government we will continue to work closely with the private sector. This is just to clarify some doubts that have arisen inside the House today from the contributions of some of our good Members. We must consider from the private sector that the main thing we have is employment in this country. If the government turns a blind eye to some of these private sectors, then we are surely going to lose employment. When our people lost their employment, we will see social problems on the rise in our country, and we do not want this. This government will continue to work closely with our stakeholders to invest in this country.

I also wish to acknowledge the very useful comments made in this House on the much talked about RCDF. As alluded to by the Honorable Prime Minister, this Government will put in place mechanisms that will ensure this fund is used in a transparent, effective and accountable manner, one that transforms the lives of many constituents in the past years. This Government will look into this and make sure it puts in place some strong mechanisms that how this fund will be used must be in a transparent manner because as we know it is this fund that a lot of people are complaining about us Members of Parliament on. I think that is how this Government will work as to how we will address the RCDF to go down to our constituencies.

Above all, as the Prime Minister had said in the sine die motion, this government is committed to make a difference. To be able to make a difference we need the support and contribution of every stakeholder, including every citizen, men, women, youth and children. It is a collective mission, and the obligation is on all of us.

The task of nation building is a collective responsibility. It requires the active participation of the government, the private sector and the civil society, including our churches and, of course, the support of our development partners. The government in this regard stands ready to play its part. The future of our country or its destiny is in our hands. We have to positively shape or influence the present in order to limit the uncertainties of the future. A good number of us have never realized the enormity of the responsibilities of the office we have held as national leaders of this country and its people.

Let me briefly touch on some areas within my Ministry so that we know what is going on in the Ministry of Home Affairs. All I can see in this game for us here as leaders is that first of all, we represent the people who have through the recent election invested their faith and trust in us, so let us positively do justice to them by getting serious on what we need to do, as we have exactly four years to deliver what we have promised to them. I also wish to thank everyone on both sides of the House for their positive contributions to the discussions we have all enjoyed during the last two weeks on important issues that have been brought before us.

The Government is ready to launch its policy statements and I can assure you that it will be tomorrow. But to an extent there are already indications of what and where the general public think are important issues that really matters, at least to them or from their perspective. For my Ministry, election reform appears to be an important area that will continue to be aggressively pursued. There is certainly going to be a huge undertaking for my Ministry to ensure what needs to be done between now and the next election is done. Since the election, the

staffs of the Electoral Commission have just completed two sessions; two lessons learned workshops, one in Gizo and one in Tulagi. There is the possibility we might still need to have more in Honiara. These lessons learned workshops are important for the reform program that we expect to see in regards to our electoral system.

Under the CNURA Government, there was an initiative to look at adopting a limited preferential voting system. My Ministry will continue to pursue such possibility. If valuable, we will ensure the system is ready in time for the next election in 2014.

A large number of our eligible voting population who have always wanted to participate in electing their leaders have always been prevented from doing so because the current legislation does not allow them. My Ministry is determined to ensure that every citizen of this country who has the right to vote is given the opportunity and privilege to do so in the 2014 elections. The people who often miss out or unable to cast their votes in any elections include those working for the electoral office, the seafarers and Solomon Islands citizens on study leave outside the country at the time of the election.

Another area for immediate attention for those residing outside of their home village who want to participate election in their own constituencies during the election, it is an expensive exercise and the Electoral Commission will be looking at the possibility for those concerned to be able to cast their votes in Honiara. Yes, it is going to be a busy four years and as such we only hope that our time to implement these important changes is not interrupted by any unforeseen circumstances.

On the voter registration, while we may all agree that there is an urgent need to have a total new and reliable voter register, all I can say is we will certainly have one ready for the 2014 elections. For those who think the Electoral Commission has done nothing over the last four years to correct the current in time for the last election, all I can say is that the Electoral Commission has done everything in its ability to produce one, but limited by the fact that its proposed bill to effect the necessary changes failed to meet the approval of Parliament in time for the recent election. Following the passage of the said Bill in early April this year, the Commission now has power to do its own voter register on incremental basis or on annual basis. The Ministry is determined to begin this exercise as early as January 2011.

On the Honiara City Council Elections, may I take this opportunity to assure those aspiring to be the next Honiara City Councilors that the staffs of my Ministry are now working on getting the necessary administrative processes ready. As soon as that is completed, we will decide on the possible election date. I personally want to see it happen before the end of November 2010 if that is legally possible.

On the bye-election for our good people of Shortlands, as soon as the Electoral Commission decides on the date and all other necessary administrative arrangements are in place, we will provide our people in that constituency the opportunity to elect their new representative. Again, as the Minister responsible, I do not wish to see this particular exercise delayed any longer than is necessary, and as such take responsibility to ensure it is done as quickly as possible.

I also wish to report to this House that our contingent to the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi has left three days ago. The team includes 11 athletes and 7 officials. We wish them every success in their individual sports and assure them of our moral support. I would like to

also say here that our National Women Soccer team is also in New Zealand at the moment and I want to wish them success in their games.

On other sporting developments, our national men beach soccer team is also gearing up to leave the country very soon on another beach soccer world cup competition. This is an opportunity for our team to raise its level of rating against other 250 countries in the world. They have done it before and I am confident they will do it again, and on this note, I wish to assure them of our support and wish them every success in their competition as they are representing Solomon Islands state out there.

May I take this opportunity to thank the Electoral Commission and its hardworking staff, the provincial staff, the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, the transports, the sea, land and air service providers, community leaders, candidates who helped to make the recent elections a real competition and, of course, the voters who in good faith have invested their trust and faith in those of us who finally made it to this honorable House. Special thank you also goes to all church leaders and their Members for the prayers which resulted in a very peaceful election despite of a few incidents we all know about after the election.

I must also sincerely thank the donors who have assisted the Electoral Commission in one way or the other in making the recent elections a real success. I wish to also make special reference to the Election Observers both international and local. Your services as observers provide the Electoral Commission with an important and impartial judgment of what we as a nation have been able to accomplish in terms of the principles of democracy as a fair and peaceful elections. I would like to also thank our donor partners; the UNDP, RAMSI, EU, AUSAID, NZAID, ROC, Japan and other donor partners for continuing to support the development of this country.

I would like to also thank yourself Mr Speaker and also the Clerk, the Deputy and staff of the National Parliament for the work you have done during these two weeks of Parliament sitting. I also would like to thank my good people of East Malaita constituency for having trust and confidence in me in voting me back to this Honourable House. Thank you very much to you the chiefs, church leaders, women and children of East Malaita constituency. I just want to say that I will continue to work together with you to ensure that our plans for these four years in East Malaita Constituency will be a success. We will continue to build East Malaita constituency so that it can also develop like the other constituencies. Everybody always says that East Malaita is always a behind ship. That is the phrase they always use for my constituency. But I would like to say to my people that we will build East Malaita constituency. I hope to come and see you anytime when I am free so that we can start to work.

I once again would like to thank all colleague Members of Parliament, especially the Leader of Independent, the Leader of Opposition and those in the Opposition Bench. Thank you for the positive contributions and discussions we have all enjoyed during this short sitting of Parliament discussing important matters that we brought before us including the two important Bills. I also thank my colleague Ministers on the government side, especially the Prime Minister, colleague Ministers and also Members of Parliament.

Lastly, I would like to share my heart to the sick and the disable and to those in prison throughout the country. I wish you all God's healing and blessings. Thank you and I beg to move.

**Mr Speaker:** Thank you Deputy Prime Minister for winding up the motion. I just remind Members that we have already taken the vote on the motion as of 4.30 pm this evening when I put the question by suspending the relevant Standing Orders so as to allow the Speaker to adjourn Parliament according to Standing Order 10(5).

Before I adjourn Parliament in accordance with the earlier resolution I mentioned, please allow me to say a few words before I officially adjourn Parliament.

Honorable Members, we have now reached the conclusion of the First Meeting of the Ninth Parliament and I wish to formally thank the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Ministers, the Leader of Opposition, the Leader of the Independent and all Members of Parliament for their speeches and constructive debates and the valuable contributions on certain issues raised before the House. Honourable Members, before I adjourn Parliament as I have said earlier on, I wish to take this opportunity to thank you all for the serious commitment and participation in a series of parliamentary events, commencing with the election of the Prime Minister to today's sine die motion.

Within this period a lot has transpired with some events favorable and marked with celebrations and others with sharing of condolences and expression of sorrow. Thus far, in the First meeting of the Ninth Parliament, we shared our condolences with the family, relatives, friends and people of Shortland Islands for the untimely passing away of the late Honorable Steve Laore. The House paid tribute with a moment of silence in honor of the late Hon. Steve Laore, which itself marked the genuine sharing of sorrow at such a sad time in this Ninth Parliament.

Despite this, there were also occasions of celebrations which this House has enjoyed, beginning with the successful election of the Prime Minister, which occurred smoothly with little or no security threats. The occasion occurred under the administration of His Excellency, the Governor General with Members of Parliament involved in choosing a leader for this nation. Although this is not a parliament sitting, it engaged the ballots of Members of Parliament in the House.

This was followed by two other successful elections - the election of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker in which myself and the Honorable Member for West Honiara were duly elected. So once again, on behalf of the Deputy Speaker and myself and that of my family, I would like to thank you all for the congratulatory remarks made from time to time in the course of this meeting.

At this juncture, I also wish to highlight the recent Induction program which was the second of such to be carried out in Parliament and certainly was another successful induction course at this Ninth Parliament. In that program, it was pleasing to see Members of Parliament engaged in discussions, workshops and the sharing of ideas and interacting with both new and old Members in a bipartisan manner. I would like to register a word of thanks to His Excellency, the President of the Autonomous region of Bougainville, for being the guest of honor during the Induction program. I thank the Clerk to National Parliament and her team of staff for a job well done.

Last week on Thursday 23rd September 2010, Members of Parliament in unison chorused the positive contributions in respect and appreciation of Sir Peter Kenilorea's service

to our nation. In that motion, you have asked the Speaker of Parliament by resolution to communicate the records of the deliberations, which I did on your behalf at a function to farewell the former Speaker of Parliament. I thank you honorable Members for your engagement and contribution on that particular occasion.

Members of Parliament, this meeting which the House is just about to *adjourn sine die*, has recorded its achievements, though small. We all have witnessed the passing of the *Customs Valuation (Amendment) Bill 2010* and the *2010 Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2010*. The Minister for Finance and Treasury has also moved an authorization of expenditure in advance according to section 103(1) of the Constitution. Members of the House have tirelessly participated in this motion and the two bills. I also wish to sincerely thank the Standing Committees of Parliament for their performance in meeting under tight schedules, especially when government business was given deadlines.

In particular, I thank members of the Bills & Legislation Committee as well as the Public Accounts Committee and your support staffs for ensuring the requirements of the Standing Orders are met. I shall say we have made a very good start in this four year course, and for that I congratulate you.

Honourable Members, as we now adjourn *sine die* this 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Parliament, we must set realistic goals for ourselves that we can work towards - our people must be served, services must be delivered and the machinery of governance must be seen to be working in an honest and most accountable way. Since this is the last meeting for this year, I wish to thank all Honorable Members for their generous comments and kind wishes to me and my family, the Clerk and all parliamentary staff. On my behalf and on behalf of the Clerk and staff, I wish all Honorable Members of this House a blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year 2011. With those words, I now close this meeting of Parliament and I wish you all God's blessing as you go about your work. Thank You.

*(applause)*

Members of Parliament, in accordance with the earlier resolution of the House pursuant with Standing Order 10(5) the House is now adjourned.

*The House adjourned Sine Die at 9pm*