



NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS
9TH PARLIAMENT – 1ST SESSION – 2ND MEETING
EXTRACT MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
Friday 1st April 2011

NP/05/1/11

MOTION NO.2: MOTION OF SYMPATHY TO THE SPEAKER OF
THE PARLIAMENT OF JAPAN.

Hon. Matthew Wale, MP for Aoke/Langalanga moved according to notice:

1. “That this House expresses its sympathy to the people of Japan at the suffering and destruction caused by the earthquake and tsunami on Friday 11th March 2011.
2. That this resolution be communicated to the Speaker of the Parliament of Japan.”

Debate ensued

Hon. Matthew Wale, MP for Aoke/Langalanga delivered his speech in reply.

Question put and passed

.....
Sir Allan Kemakeza
Speaker of National Parliament

.....
Taeasi Sanga (Ms)
Clerk to National Parliament.



NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF SOLOMON ISLANDS

HANSARD PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

2ND MEETING OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE NINTH
PARLIAMENTS

FRIDAY 1ST APRIL 2011

MOTION NO.2: MOTION OF SYMPATHY TO THE
SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT OF JAPAN

FRIDAY 1ST APRIL 2011

The Speaker, Hon Sir Allan Kemakeza took the
Chair at 9.30 am.

Prayers:

ATTENDANCE

At prayers, all were present with the exception of the Prime Minister, and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs & External Trade Affairs; Education and Human Resources; Commerce, Industries & Employment; Mines Energy & Rural Electrification; Finance & Treasury; Planning and Aid Coordination, Agriculture & Livestock Development, Provincial Government & Institutional Strengthening Affairs, Women Youth Children and Family Affairs; Communication & Civil Aviation; Culture & Tourism; Environment, Conservation, Meteorology & Disaster Management; Lands, Housing & Survey and the Members for West New Georgia/Vona Vona, Small Malaita, East Are'Are, West Kwara'ae, Temotu Pele, North West Guadalcanal, South Guadalcanal, East Honiara, North New Georgia, West Kwaio, North Vella La Vella and Malaita Outer Islands.

STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTIONS

1. That this House expresses its sympathy to the people of Japan at the suffering and destruction caused by the earthquake and tsunami on Friday 11th March 2011.
2. That this resolution be communicated to the Speaker of the Parliament of Japan.

Mr. WALE:

I would like to take this opportunity to move that this house, expresses it empathy with the people of Japan at the suffering and destruction caused by the earthquake and tsunami on Friday, the 11th of March 2011, and that this resolution be communicated to the Speaker of the Parliament of Japan through your office, Sir.

We live in very trying times with seeming increase in the frequency of natural disasters, some man-induced in terms of climate change related disasters and others purely natural as in the case of the earthquakes that hit the eastern coast of Japan recently. If there is a people who know how to rise above loss, destruction and ruin, it is the Japanese.

As you know, Mr Speaker, the nation of Japan rose from the rubble of the ruins after the terrible events of the Second World War into a very strong and disciplined society and economic powerhouse and a very strong nation.

As we speak, the effects of the quake are still being grappled with. The problems associated with the nuclear reactors that were affected by the quake are still a major problem for Japan, but also a problem to the rest of Japan's neighbours and perhaps even as far as those of us in the tropical seas of the Pacific, due to the leak of radioactive material into the sea. We, in the Pacific, may also share in the challenges posed by this problem to our fishery resource.

Even with this major disaster, when Japanese victims are still without some very basic needs, the Japanese continue in their generosity towards us through their bilateral commitment. At times like these, one would expect that it would be the other way around – that we aid Japan. We may laugh at the thought Sir, but it is our common culture that requires us to think like that. Of course, we do not have the means to contribute meaningfully however, we can share in their plight and share in their hope for something good to come out of this catastrophe. It is not only because we

receive substantial assistance from Japan that we want to express our hearts to them, our common humanity requires it of us.

This motion allows Members to do this, and I hope that many will take the opportunity to do so. Our hearts and prayers go out to those who suffered these terrible losses and destruction of property. We pray for the ongoing challenge of trying to get the problems with the nuclear reactors under control.

We are at a loss to explain why these things happened, and such loss of human lives it caused. Our finite minds cannot fathom it. We rest ourselves assured in God's sovereignty in all these things. We pray for wisdom for Prime Minister Naoto Kan as they handle the significant issues and situations related to these disasters. With these few remarks, Mr Speaker, I beg to move the motion.

Mr. Speaker:

Honourable Members, before I allow Members to debate on the motion moved by the Honourable Member for Aoke/Langalanga, I wish to kindly remind Members to adhere to the rules of debate. I also ask all Members to be mindful when making their contributions so as to give other Members the

opportunity to contribute as well. The floor is now open for debate.

Hon. TORA:

Thank you for allowing me to take the floor this morning after the honourable mover, my good brother for Aoke/Langalanga. Whilst pondering over this important motion, I must first of all congratulate my colleague Member for Aoke/Langalanga for truly considering what has happened in Japan.

As we know, our lives as people of this world can be taken away by three things. First is when a person gets sick and if God knows it is his time He takes his life. Another is through man-made disasters like war, fighting, crime, where we see human beings dying through fighting and war. Another one is like what happened in Japan through natural disasters, something that people, government and the world do not expect which struck our brothers and sisters in Japan on Friday 11th March 2011. It is a sad thing when something we do not expect happens to us taking away lives. Unlike someone who is sick, when the doctor confirms he cannot be cured we know that person is going to die. In war we see people fighting with weapons and all sorts of arms, we do know it is

possible that people can die. But a natural disaster is not expected because it suddenly strikes. What happened in Japan is the same thing that happened to the western province of Solomon Islands some years back.

I want to conclude my brief contribution by saying that on behalf of my chiefs and people of Ulawa/Ugi, I want to register and put on record our sympathy to the people and the Government of Japan through the Speaker for what had happened that claimed many lives of our friends in Japan. I pray God will continue to bless Japan, a country that also gives support to us in Solomon Islands. With those few remarks, I support the motion.

Hon. MAELANGA:

First of all, I would like to thank the Honourable Member for Aoke/Langalanga and also the Deputy Leader of Opposition for moving this motion. This motion is appropriate and fitting for us to debate in this Parliament.

I also, on behalf of the Government and the people of this country, convey our sympathy and

sorrow to our good people of Japan who are now suffering over the disastrous effects of the earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan on the 11th March 2011. I stand here purposely this morning to convey our sadness to the Government and the people of Japan.

This is a moving motion because it is about something that is affecting the lives of the people over there, and therefore I see this motion as very important for us to talk about so that we can convey our sympathy to the people of Japan. I say this because Japan is one of our donor partners; it is one of the countries in the world that provides a lot of support to this country, Solomon Islands. There are many projects in this country funded by Japan, and that is why it is very fitting for us to contribute on this motion moved by the Member for Aoke/Langalanga.

I stand here to do exactly that. What more can I say, but to say that what I am saying comes from our hearts. The disasters have already happened, which we have seen and cannot turn them. If such a disaster happens to Solomon Islands, I do not know how we are going to recover from it. I think it would take us back another 32 years since independence to recover. It happened to Japan, a country that has everything and so it

was able to quickly restore normalcy back to its people.

I support this motion and I thank the MP for Aoke/Langalanga for moving this motion today. I just stand here to give this sympathy on behalf of the Prime Minister who is not here, on behalf of the NCRA Government and the people of Solomon Islands to the government and people of Japan. And I would like, Mr Speaker, that you convey these brief remarks to the Speaker of the Parliament in Japan. With these few remarks, I support the motion.

Mr. SIKUA:

I would also like to thank the honourable Member for Aoke/Langalanga, my deputy leader for moving this motion.

In times when manmade disasters hit our friends around the world, a motion such as this is always moved to allow us, as the mover has mentioned, Members of Parliament to convey our sympathies to the people that have been hit by a disaster of one nature or the other, and in this case, it is our good friends from Japan. This is a very meaningful motion in that it allows us to convey our sympathies and our condolences because of our common humanity and as a friend of Japan.

I also want to convey our sympathies and our condolences to the Government and people of Japan for the suffering and destruction caused by the earthquake and tsunami on Friday 11th March 2011 on behalf of the Opposition group and on behalf of my people of North East Guadalcanal.

Modern technology has enabled us to see in very graphic images what has happened in Japan on the 11th of March 2011. Those of us who watched the CNN, the BBC and other TV channels can see very clearly the extent of the damage and the destruction caused by the earthquake and the tsunami. When you watch what has happened you cannot believe the power of nature. Whilst you are watching the TV sometimes it seems as if you are watching a movie, it is just unbelievable.

And so modern technology is able to convey to us in our sitting rooms what has really happened in Japan on that day and the days following that. They do have aftershocks after, but I think on Thursday another major earthquake of about 6.5 on the Richter scale. Our people and our friends in Japan are suffering a very major setback from this catastrophe that struck them.

All of us know and appreciate the help that Japan has been giving us over the years. You know, Mr Speaker, that Japan is assisting Solomon

Islands in a wide range of areas, ranging from fisheries to health, especially on malaria research and assistance to the hospital, and now Japan is building a very big hospital for us in Gizo as well as other infrastructures in roads, wharves, markets and so forth. In terms of education, we continue to receive the assistance they are giving us for our schools, especially in the provision of JOCV volunteers to teach various subjects in our schools. As the mover of the motion said that even when the disaster strikes, we do not see or hear any reduction in the way they are helping us. We also know through the Budget we are debating now that more assistance will be given by Japan in continuing to support Solomon Islands.

It is very true to say that we do not have the means to reciprocate in like manner, but through this motion, we can from the bottom of our hearts express our sympathies, something very significant in our custom, to convey our sympathy to the Government and the people of Japan. And so on behalf of the Opposition Group and my own people of North East Guadalcanal, I join my colleagues who have already spoken in conveying to the government and the people of Japan our sincere condolences and sympathies. And as is required of the motion we would be very happy,

Mr Speaker, that you communicate our sympathy to the Speaker of the Parliament of Japan. With these few remarks, I support the motion.

Mr. MANENIARU:

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me time to also contribute to this very timely and important motion. I would like to also thank the Honourable Member for Aoke Langalanga, Honourable Mathew Wale for seeing it fit to also move this motion.

Japan is one of the countries that is known in households in Solomon Islands. When I was a kid in primary school, one country overseas that I started to hear about is Japan, because of the contact it had earlier with our country.

Japan is also one of the foreign countries that reached our shores, as we all know in WWII when it fought on our lands and since then it continues to become an important partner to our country. As stated by previous speakers, Japan is an important donor partner to our country. We know that its contribution reaches our people in the rural areas through grants to primary education assistance, through infrastructure projects it helps to build,

and it has a name in our country even in our provinces as one of our important donor partners.

As we all know, a natural disaster is something we cannot control, but only God and we can only regret when it happens. On this note, we too share our sorrow with our friends in Japan, especially the families that have fallen victim to the natural disaster that hit them through the tsunami and earthquake. It is just lucky for us as a small country that we are being blessed that such a catastrophe does not hit us. If it were, I do not know what kind of disaster it might be, and how long are we going to suffer. It is just fortunate for our brothers and sisters in Japan that they are well established and they can look after themselves in times of disaster like we are talking about now.

As our economic partner, we can also recall the impact Japan has on our economy through industries like the Solomon Taiyo Limited in the past and now Soltai, it is a real partner indeed that sees the need of our people. It is a partner in the economic development of our country. I want to commend Japan when it took that interest to heart by actually supporting us despite of the environment we are in, in view of our investment aspirations. They are touching our people through this economic partnership.

I also want to register Japan's generosity through assistances it has been continuously giving us as reflected in our budget. It is one of our major donor partners that support us in finances and also technical assistance. And so it is fitting here that I too on behalf of my people of West Are'Are, my chiefs, church leaders, men, women, youths and children to also convey our heartfelt, sincere sympathy and condolences to the Government and the people of Japan as they go through this disaster. We can assist through our hearts and prayers, by praying for the families and the victims of this natural disaster that God will continue to touch their lives as they go through this disaster. We pray that they will recover soon and continue to be strong partners to our country. With these few remarks I support the motion.

Mr .GUKUNA:

First, I would like to join my colleagues who have spoken in thanking the honourable Member for Aoke/ Langalanga for this very fitting motion. On Monday when my Committee deliberated on a request by the government to use today as normal business day, the honourable colleague member insisted very strongly that we refuse that request and I agreed to his request even though I was not

sure whether there was any motion coming up. And this is the reason why he refused it, and it is very fitting reason, and I thank him for this motion and for the wisdom he had that led to the submission of this motion.

As we all know, Japan is a very strong nation, a nation, as the mover of this motion alluded to, that came out from the ruins of the Second World War to become one of the most powerful nation on the earth. And it so happened that the disaster, the earthquake and tsunami struck this powerful nation. And as also alluded to by the mover that Japan will rise from this ruin, I have no doubt and no question about that. It will rise and will retain its powerful status on earth.

When we look at the footages provided to us on the TV, a lot of us have heard about a tsunami, but we have had no eye view of what a tsunami is like. The footages we saw on the international TV provided us a view of what a tsunami is like, except that at that time it was very powerful indeed and really devastating. It gets some of us to appreciate what this thing is, who have not felt this in the past. By just watching it on the TV, we can get some appreciation of what a tsunami can cause. I can just imagine the people who were actually on the ground when it happened. I can just imagine the

people of Japan who have gone through the destruction and the disturbances this tsunami has caused.

On behalf of the people of Rennell/Bellona, we cannot do much in terms of giving actual assistance to them, but we pray and share our sympathy with them and we pray that God will continue to lead them as they try to recover. Japan's response to this disaster has been phenomenal. The Japanese government has poured in a lot of money to try and stimulate cash flow in the economy so that the people of Japan can access it and try to rebuild their lives.

One of the things that came out from this disaster, as you know and is still going on right now is the effect of the nuclear plants that is providing electricity to Japan. A lot of discussions have been going on about the use of nuclear material in generating electricity and as we are seeing in Japan, even though it has done all its best to ensure the plants are safe, still the tsunami disturbed it, and as a result it is causing a lot of radiation fall outs, which is starting to drift towards the Asian neighbours, and it has been recorded as well that some radiation has drifted as far as the western coast of the United States.

Despite of the tremendous implication of the tsunami, it may bring out some positive things in terms of looking at the use of nuclear plant as electricity generators. Maybe through this experience, the people who planned the establishment of such plants can better safeguard their power plants to withstand any similar situation should it emerge again in the future.

As you know the tsunami was caused by an earthquake, and scientist who are studying earth movements, are telling us that earthquakes, especially the bigger earthquakes like the one that hit Japan are caused by a snap in the subduction zones. They say that the earth is made up of a number of plates and those plates merge at some places called the subduction zones, and when pressure is built up on those zones, they snap and that is when an earthquake can happen.

In the last few months we see earthquakes happen all over the pacific basin. The rim in the Pacific called the 'rim of fire', which includes New Zealand, South America, Japan and Solomon Islands has been experiencing earthquakes every time. There is one place that no earthquake has ever happened is the western coast of the US. But New Zealand has had one big earthquake, now Japan, Chile has had one, we have had several, one

in Indonesia and so on. Maybe this earthquake would get scientists to think, and I think it is difficult, but earthquakes happen some 10 to 20km under the surface of the earth and it is about time that scientist work very hard to try and come up with some technology that will try to disturb the build up of pressure on the subduction zones so that it can avert earthquakes and tsunamis in the future.

As has been alluded to by previous speakers, Japan is a big aid donor to this country and it amazes me to see Japan in past weeks newspapers continuing to sign aid money to this country. I would have thought Japan would hold back a bit but it did not. The disaster that happened to Japan does not hold back its aid program to this country, and I would like to thank Japan. I do not contribute to this motion because Japan gives us more money, but it needs for me to state that if Japan chose to hold back some of its aid money to this country, I do not blame them as they are in desperate need of that money.

The second part of this motion is requesting you, Mr Speaker to convey our sympathy and our concern to the people of Japan, and please do so. Tell them that we are sad and we share with them

the turmoil that they are going through right now. With those comments, I fully support this motion.

Hon. SOFU:

Thank you for allowing the floor for me to join those who have already contributed to this important motion. I also want to thank the Member for Aoke/Langalanga for seeing it fitting in moving this motion, to give us the opportunity to express our sympathy to our friends in Japan who have gone through this great loss caused by the earthquake and the tsunami.

As we see on the order paper, the motion reads;

“This House expresses its sympathy to the people of Japan at the suffering and destruction caused by the earthquake and tsunami, on Friday 11th March, 2011. And that this resolution be communicated to the Speaker of the Parliament of Japan”.

We have experienced a similar natural disaster here in our country some years back. There are many good reasons that some who have talked earlier on today expressed as to why the Parliament of this country expresses its sympathy to our good friend.

We are all human beings, and we all deserve dignity and the right to live. The earthquake that

shook Japan brought fear to the lives of people. Just imagine the very moment this natural disaster took place; children, old men, women and people of that country went screaming and run for their lives. At that very time they did not know what to do. It was a very difficult time indeed. Some who are lucky survived but some cannot make it and died; it has been a very difficult time for our friends.

We share similar principles and values. We value family, because families too were killed in that country. We value education because schools too were destroyed in that great country. We value governance because offices were destroyed and damaged. We value religion because temple and churches were also damaged. We value youths because boys and girls were also killed; they died. We value wisdom because old people too were killed. It was a really bad situation in Japan as a country.

As other colleagues have expressed, we believe they can rebuild their lives, but the situation they went through is something, we need to share with them our sympathy. No one denies that, and I too agree that Japan is our close friend. Why I say Japan is our close friend is because during the

Second World War some of our people fought alongside them and, then we became friends again.

The fisheries factory at Tulagi and Noro were built by Japan laying the foundation of our trade with Japan that still continues until today. Japan is our close friend, she is our real friend. We can see since independence the development assistances that Japan has been giving to us. In terms of the public service, Japan has helped to train our human resource every year by the award of scholarships for training. I believe our students, both in-service and pre-service training have benefited from this assistance.

In terms of education, it helped us with volunteer teachers teaching in various schools throughout our country. Japan is our real friend, and I think it is appropriate and timely that we express our sympathy to them. Again, I wish to thank the Member for Aoke/Langa Langa for seeing it fit to move this motion. In terms of infrastructures, the big bridges that some of us ministers attended their opening ceremonies are funded by Japan. That is one form of assistance given to us. In terms of health in the area of the Malaria Research Program, that is also Japan's assistance to us. They need to be acknowledged for this. On agriculture and commerce, the Central

Market in Honiara is funded by Japan and the Auki Market as well is going to be constructed by Japan. The Minister for Infrastructure has already done the ground breaking ceremony and very soon they will start to build it. And so it is customary that we share with them. When something happens to them we also feel and share the same pain with them.

A country like us cannot repay the things given to us, and so the only thing we can do is to express our sympathy and our thoughts with them at these difficult times they are going through right now. This Parliament building that I am talking inside right now was funded by America but built by a Japanese company. We cannot forget our friend for that, and the list goes on many of the things that Japan has assisted us with.

When I saw on the TV what happened, it was really shocking to me. Just imagine something like that happen to a big country like Japan, and how much more if it happens to us here in Solomon Islands, as my colleague Member for West Are'Are expressed. What are we going to do if such a disaster happens to us? I think we will just wait to die.

Families screamed not knowing what to do at that very critical moment. They lost everything,

they lost their livelihood. I was thinking not to talk on this motion, but then I decided it is very important that I register my voice. How we saw it is like a bomb that suddenly bursts and everybody was in shock. I will give an example of a similar incident if it happens here. What would it be like if the volcano at Savo erupts, are you going to be safe? I do not think so, we are not going to be safe.

When the tsunami warning was given for some parts of our country, like for North Guadalcanal, Isabel and Malaita to be on standby in the night and look for higher grounds, I was driving around at night and I saw women and children residing at the Ranadi industrial area running away to higher grounds. That is because we received a warning first, but for Japan, that is not so. All of a sudden something happens. Such a situation is quite a difficult situation.

I join my colleague Members who have already spoken that we cannot repay Japan for what it has done for us in the last 30 years. I think it would be very difficult to do that. Japan is our true friend and a true development partner that we cannot repay. The only thing we can do is to just express our sympathy for the difficult situation they are going through right now.

Before I sit down, on behalf of my family, my people of East Kwaio constituency and on behalf of all the public officers working here in Honiara and in the provinces, I stand here to convey our most sincere sympathy to the government and people of Japan for the great loss they have suffered due to the earthquake and tsunami. With this short participation, I support the motion.

Hon. LONAMEI:

I want to thank the mover of this motion, the Hon member for Aoke/Langalanga for moving this motion in this House expressing our sympathy to the people of Japan at the suffering and destruction caused by the earthquake and tsunami on Friday 11th March 2011.

It is true as we see on television that the destruction on Japan was overwhelming on that night. We are really sorry for the people of Japan for the destruction caused by the earthquake and the tsunami. Also, as we were watching the TV, we did not know where the big waves that were travelling in the huge Pacific Ocean were going to hit. The waves came rushing through and landed on Isabel. This tsunami also hit the Isabel Province, especially my constituency of Maringe/Kokota,

which hits us very hard too. The villages that were affected by the waves caused by this tsunami were Martin village, Sisiga village, Popoheo village, Buala village, the Buala headquarters, the Diocesan headquarters, Nagolau village and Nareabu village, those living along the coastal areas were also affected by the tsunami.

A Japanese volunteer nurse was also working in Isabel. When her people were swimming around in the seas at Japan, she was also swimming around in Isabel when the time of the earthquake and the tsunami it cause. However, she did not suffer as much as the people back in her country, but she also suffered the effects of the tsunami that came ashore in Isabel. People of Isabel also suffered with the people of Japan as we have never experienced a tsunami in the past. The high tide was really high as it reaches heights never experienced before. When this young lady was in the sea at Isabel, I know she also thought of her people back home.

I want to thank the mover of this motion to enable us express our sympathy to the people affected. Also, my people of Maringe/Kokota have experienced the tsunami that happened. So on behalf of my people of Maringe/Kokota, we also share the same suffering as Japan and we hope the

National Disaster Council come around to survey the places affected by the tsunami.

This reminds me of an evening when we, the three MPs Isabel had a dinner with the Japanese Ambassador, he invited the three members for dinner. During the dinner the three of us asked him why he assisted hospitals in other provinces, and not enough assistance for us on Isabel. His reply was that there is no tsunami affecting Isabel. All the places that they helped were those affected by the tsunami. And so we said, "Do you want a tsunami to hit us before you would assist us from Isabel? But this became a reality when the tsunami hit his country and also hit our province of Isabel.

With these few remarks, I too would like to join my other colleagues on behalf of my people of Maringe/Kokota express our sympathy for the people in Japan who are suffering right now as a result of the earthquake and tsunami. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker:

A reminder to honourable Members, switch-off your mobile phones when you are in the chambers. This is a rule. Otherwise leave them outside if they cannot be turned off. I also want Members of Parliament to observe Standing Order 32 whilst speaking.

Mr. SOALAOI:

Firstly, I would like to thank the mover for seeing it fit to move this motion that we are debating this morning. I think the motion is very appropriate and it enables us to express our sympathy to our friends who are suffering in Japan at this point in time.

As others have mentioned, natural disasters cannot be avoided, they are unexpected and no one can be prepared for it. During that evening and that night, a lot of things have also taken place here after warnings were issued by the National Disaster Council. Tsunamis do not frequently affect us, but some of us have gone as far as mount Austin to hide when the tsunami alert was relayed. So you can imagine the fear the tsunami has caused to people who are even are far away from Japan.

During that time I also observed people who usually say they do not care about their lives running away from the coastal area. I am also one of those living along the coast and I was the only one left in that particular place on that night. I drove from Henderson down to the hospital and the first vehicle I met at the National Referral Hospital was the ambulance. There were no vehicles or people along the road. When I drove up

the Kola'a Ridge road I noticed the road up there like a parking area and I also realized that all the vehicles were parked on higher grounds.

I am saying this for us to appreciate the fear caused by the tsunami, even though we are not very close to Japan as other countries at that time. Japan is not only a friend, but is also a donor partner and our development partner after World War II. I am very happy to learn that after Japan was defeated in the Battle of Guadalcanal, the Japanese built the first structures coming up in Honiara. I heard a story about some people sitting at the Mendana Hotel after the war in the 60s, 70s and 80s, and when they looked up at the flag that was flying at that time, were expecting to see an American flag flying in Honiara but it was the Japanese flag flying along our flag. You can see the genuineness of the Japanese people to develop Solomon Islands when they tried to occupy our islands at that time. Truly, the Japanese are people who can come out from disasters and make their lives become better again.

I am sharing our sympathy on behalf of my constituency and also my officers in the Independent Office to the people of Japan. We can only support them at this time of sorrow with prayers. We pray and hope that there will be quick

recovery to the lives of people affected by the disaster in Japan, especially those people who have lost loved ones. Here in Solomon Islands, when one of our loved one passed away, we can feel the great loss of losing that loved one. When I say this, all of us can experience the feeling that love ones have when losing another loved one. That same feeling is with our friends in Japan at this time. Maybe a mother has lost a son or a daughter. Or a child has lost his parents, which is a very difficult situation for a human being to go through. But we hope and pray at this time of difficulty, sorrow and suffering that our friends in Japan will rise up once again and enjoy their normal lives as they used to have. Japan, as we know, is the third largest economy in the world, and even though how big you are but when a natural disaster comes, as we can see, we cannot even fight against natural disasters.

I also want to express our sympathy to the people of Japan on behalf of our people, the women and our people sitting down at the market house right now selling their products. These are people who cannot get formal employment, and so the Japanese Government saw it fit to build a very good market house so that they can sell their

products and make money to buy other things that we cannot grow in the garden.

We can only express in words our feelings about our friends in Japan, but this motion brings me to make a suggestion or a recommendation to the government that if it is possible we should include in our budget something like a disaster fund. I know money has been allocated under contingency warrants for unforeseen things. But I think we should be prepared for natural disasters by allocating funds towards it. As we know, actions speak louder than words, and so we can only express in words, but I think if we take some actions it would be very good as a country that is a recipient of Japanese assistance.

With those few remarks, I support the motion.

Mr. TOZAKA:

Thank you for allowing me to contribute to this motion moved by the Member of Parliament for Aoke/Langalanga.

Japan is not only one of our big aid donors, but we also have our diplomatic relations with Japan and this relation is very friendly and very strong. Every good thing about our relations with Japan has already been said by our colleagues and

so I will just simply say, on behalf of my people of North Vella, the chiefs, the church and community leaders, I wish to convey our deepest expression of sympathy and heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Japan for the inflicting distressful damage caused by the massive earthquake and tsunami on the north east coast of the island nation.

We are all united together in a common grief as we mourn the loss of many people who lost their lives through the tsunami, especially the families at this time of bereavement and this time of sorrow. It is our hope and prayer that the great nation of Japan will overcome this truly unbearable tragedy. Thank you, Mr Speaker, that you will convey our messages of sympathy to the Government of Japan. With those comments, I support the motion.

Mr. HANARIA:

I also wish to contribute to this motion in expressing my sympathy and the sympathy of my constituency of East Are'Are to the people of Japan.

I have worked in the fishing industry for 18 years during my younger days, and we often go down to Japan to employ fishermen to man the pole and line fishing boats which the then

government was trying to train young Solomon Islanders to run these boats. And I have been to Japan 10 times. My involvement with the Japanese people in that sense is a kind of a special connection. They are people of hospitality, very kind, and at the same time industrious. They do what they say and live and abide to their promises. During that young part of my life, I learned from the Japanese people their way of doing things. And I am not afraid to say that part of that contributes to my life and my success today.

Some of these fishermen are from Yako, near the centre of the earthquake and where the tsunami hit most. I could just imagine our time together when they were trying to teach us the Japanese way of catching fish, and then for this disastrous situation they have been through. It is a very sad situation for me as a person who is very close to the Japanese people.

I have a Japanese advisor during those 18 years, so it is a feeling that hurts me in person, and this motion only gives me an opportunity to express my sympathy and sorrow for what has happened to my friends over there, the friends of Solomon Islanders and a friend indeed.

Disaster is something that we have no control over and its nature, making itself known to

humanity. It is a very sad thing. But I believe that some of us who believe in the Almighty can only pray that God give the people of Japan wisdom to foresee comfort and speedy recovery at this difficult time.

I can describe the Japanese people as very humble people who listen to you just as much as you listen to them. I found this out during my time working in the National Fisheries and the Solomon Taiyo. I will not speak long but I would just let my heart known today that I wish them God's blessing at this difficult time. Thank you.

Hon. MEWA:

I too would like to contribute to this very important motion moved by my good colleague MP for Aoke/Langalanga. On behalf of my people of Temotu Nende Constituency, I would like to also register our greatest sympathy to the people of Japan at this trying time.

As someone who closely watched this incident, I was indeed very sad about what happened. Sometimes at midnight I just turned on the TV just to see what was actually going on there. It was like a Hollywood film. What we see in Hollywood are things just made up, and sometimes

it is the computer that makes things to look real in the movie, but it is unrealistic. But the earthquake and the tsunami that happened in Japan are real.

When I saw what happened I could not believe it and that is why I think it is very fitting at this point in time that the honourable member for Aoke/Langalanga brought this motion before the House. I am really in support of this motion, because like I said, I have been closely following this disaster or this natural catastrophe. Even up until today the death toll continues to rise and they still do not finalize the exact number of people who died in this disaster. Every day they continue to add the number of deaths to the list.

As other colleagues have expressed, we cannot do much about what has happened. The only thing we can do as a small country that depends very much on Japan for most of its development needs, except to pray for the families that are affected and are still crying today for their beloved ones who have died.

I cannot deny that Japan has really helped my constituency and that is why I am very sad when I see this. So, again on behalf of my people I want to register our greatest sympathy on what has happened. With that I support the motion.

Hon. TAREMAE:

I would also like to thank the Honourable colleague MP for Aoke/Langalanga for seeing it fit in moving this motion that we can contribute on.

Japan is one of the countries in the world that finds itself in the historical records of Solomon Islands where even our students learn about in their Social Studies subject in primary schools. The historical record of Japan in world history and even in Solomon Islands history is that I believe had this event that occurred on Friday 11th March 2011 had happened in 1943, no one will want to sympathise with Japan. But the Creator is very wise by allowing this tragedy to take place 69 years later. Therefore, I would like to register our sympathy, on behalf of my constituency of Central Makira on this.

Within these 69 years, the country called Japan really develops, and as a result Solomon Islands is one of the countries that is really supported by Japan through projects, funds, goods and human resources. Because of this we see Japan as a brother.

In our culture, whenever a brother has a problem the others sympathise. Therefore, on behalf of my Ministry of Reconciliation and Peace, my family, the men and women, children, the

chiefs of Central Makira Constituency, we sympathise with those who lost some of their loved ones, their belongings and properties during the event of Friday, March 11th 2011.

With these few remarks, I support the motion.

Hon. SIGOTO:

I would also like to join other colleagues to thank the honorable member for Aoke/Langalanga for tabling this very important and timely motion. I, too, on behalf of my people of Rannogga/Simbo constituency wish to express our sympathy to the good people of Japan.

One of the things I really appreciate about Japan is its people. The people are loyal and dedicated to their country, and they love their country. Another thing I also appreciate about these people is their attitude and behaviour wherever they live in that they are very respectful people. Wherever you come into contact with them, they will respect you regardless of who you are. This is a very important value I have learnt from these people; very respectful and friendly.

Japan has been instrumental to many development projects in this country. And this

morning I would like to make mention of some of the projects it has assisted us with in the Ministry of Health and Medical Services. I thank them for:

- The new Gizo hospital, which its negotiations happened straight after the 2007 tsunami in the Western Province.
- For the many health facilities built throughout the country. And at this point in time I would like to make mention of three new clinics built in my constituency soon after the earthquake and tsunami.

I would also like to highly recognize the continuous support Japan continues to render towards the development of health services in our nation. Japan has contributed a lot in the delivery of health services in this country.

Japan also provided human resources to the Ministry of Health in terms of nurses and other health professionals who participate in the delivery of health services. One of the things I appreciate during the time I served the Choiseul and Western Provinces is that these nurses or health workers do not remain at the headquarters, but they went as far as the rural health centers in some of the provinces in this country. I think Japan has done a lot in this country in terms of the health sector.

This morning as we are talking, some of us have not experienced a tsunami! The person who is now talking speaking is someone who fled the tsunami in Gizo, and I lost almost my entire possessions I have during my time as public servant. I can imagine a similar experience that must have happened to the people of Japan. A lot of these people have lost their possessions.

I lived three months under a tent with my family, despite being the director of nursing in the Western Province. I believe a lot of very important people, people with status in Japan are having this similar experience of living under tents in camps. I can just imagine the experience these people are going through. I also lost many of my relatives on Tapurai in Simbo and also in Rannogga in the last earthquake and tsunami. I know these people are now going through the same pain we went through in the past.

On behalf of the people of Rannogga/Simbo and the people of Western Province, I want to thank the government and the people of Japan for their great assistance to my people during the time we went through a similar experience but at a smaller scale. But I think a lot of disasters are coming and those of us who still do not experience any, who knows, probably one day we might experience one. And I

would like to inform us that we must be prepared for disasters like that.

I would like on behalf of my people to convey this sympathy message to the people of Japan. I pray that they will continue to survive and live through this pain.

Hon. LIONAL:

I would also like to thank the mover of this motion, the member for Aoke/Langalanga.

We know that Japan is a well known country because of its development and also it is a rich country. We are happy that Japan is one of our donor and development partners. Not only that, but as a nation, Japan has become one of our closest friends. Japan has done a lot of good things for us, and I am happy that I am someone who has been directly involved with people of Japan.

In regards to our national projects, Japan constructed our main roads in the 90s whereby I was a surveyor then. I spent my working days, more than 10 years with the Japanese people, with the Kumagai Gumi Company and the Kitano Construction. The involvement of Japan in our nation is enormous. In terms of the construction of bridges, Japan built almost six bridges on Guadalcanal. Apart from that, Japan also funded

the prison project, which now houses our inmates. Japan also built our International Terminal building, the runway, the apron and the taxiways at Henderson. What a great help from Japan, and so Japan is our closest friend.

But not only that, they even gone further down. In my constituency of South Vella, the Japanese people have lived there for a very long time. During the Second World War when Japan surrendered about more than 1,000 Japanese people remained on Vella La Vella. When the rest of the soldiers went back, those soldiers remained on that island. It was later on that the Japanese Government made up its mind by coming back to search for them.

In my young days I know very well that I used to live with the Japanese because my father was their captain who looked after them. But sadly they could not locate these soldiers. Just recently before the tsunami they came back again to look for their remains. And so personally I am very close to the Japanese people, they are cultured people. And as some of my colleagues have mentioned, they are very respectable people and they understand who we are. Many times we Solomon Islanders would call them "ear pass" or deaf. I do not know what we are referring to here. They are hard working

people, and people with determination who work to see the result.

The disaster struck them, and as we know Japan is a developed country, and despite of the beauty of her cities and the precious lives it owns, this natural disaster strikes them. The earthquake and tsunami, just like my colleague Minister for Health has stated, I also experienced that disaster. When an earthquake shakes it is just like holding a bottle and shaking it like this; you cannot hold on to anything. That is how the strength of God is through nature. And so I can just imagine it, and I even did not want to see it on the TV how the Japanese are experiencing such a disaster because I, myself actually experienced it. I know it is a very bad experience. Since I have experienced such a disaster I know just how much more the Japanese people are feeling this disaster.

Anyway, what has happened is already over and so what else can we say, but what we can share with them is, on behalf of my people, the chiefs, the good children, the youths and leaders of churches in South Vella La Vella, I would like to share our sympathy to the Government and the good people of Japan. Our prayers, belief and faith is that they will quickly recover from this disaster and will come up to the standard that they used to be in or

even much better than where they used to be. With these remarks, I support the motion.

Mr. PACHA:

Mr Speaker, I too, would like to join other colleague Members in expressing sympathy to the people of Japan at the suffering and destruction caused by the earthquake and tsunami.

No one would deny help that comes from Japan whether it comes directly to your constituency or comes to National projects. My people of South Guadalcanal in the Weather Coast, which is also a disastrous area that experiences such a natural disaster like that. Natural disaster is almost becoming a normal situation in my constituency. My people have also received help from Japan, especially the people of Koloula. They received funding from Japan to build a clinic.

On behalf of my people of South Guadalcanal constituency, the chiefs, church leaders and community leaders, I wish to convey our deepest sympathy and condolences to the Government and the people of Japan for the damage and loss of life caused by the earthquake. It is my hope and prayer that Japan will overcome that disaster.

Mr. WALE:

Mr Speaker, I wish to thank honourable colleagues who have contributed to the motion. Some of the colleagues have raised some good points, like the Leader of Independent who said we do not have much. But just like the parable told by our Master about giving, a poor widow giving her only last two last cents which in essence is giving everything she owns whereas a rich man who has many things gives a bigger amount, but is small in proportion to what he has. So perhaps a gesture of that kind from us will be meaningful. Our budget has \$24m surplus, so let us give that \$24m surplus, half of it or a bit of. But I suppose in principle the thinking is a worthy one.

Some of the colleagues speak about Japan's place and role globally and is a positive one and it is undeniable that Japan is one of the global powerhouses, definitely economically. We know that Japan made a bid for the UN Security Council for a permanent seat and I think it is a good thing we must support. I know the Deputy Prime Minister is really in support of this. We should talk with our friends in the Pacific to support this bid. I think it would be a very meaningful gesture in the sense that we cannot do much, but support them,

although the merits of their application to the UN Security Council is also right.

Do you know that it is the Japanese people that gave this word 'tsunami?' In the past when I was still a child running around naked in Ambu, the earthquakes in 1977 or 1976, just before independence when the Weather Coast was badly destroyed on South Guadalcanal, when the high tides went up and down every five minute, during those times we do not know what that thing is called. But I suppose it was a mini tsunami at that time. But the word is a Japanese word mainstreamed into the international language – it became an English word. And so the Japanese have lived in millennia with the experience of tsunami and that is why they coined this word.

When our enemies, and I hope we do not have any, suffer, we sympathize with them. That is our common humanity. Even if people you do not like or someone you hate suffers, you also feel for him. You do not say 'good on me' when he suffers! I mean some people may say that, but I think generally we share in the suffering even of our enemies. How much more should we feel for our friends in their time of extreme suffering and hardship. It is something that words cannot express what they were going through.

Sympathy perhaps, is not the appropriate word because what the Japanese need is certainly not our pity, but perhaps empathy in the sense that we can feel to be in their shoes, and feel, as is required of our common humanity, feel the fear of the unknown, the grief of the loss, the doubt; for those who believe in God when such things happen they might even start doubting their faith, the panic, the pain, the loss and all other emotions and thoughts that come as a result of going through such a situation and sustaining the losses.

The Ministers of Rural Development and Health talked about their own experiences during the tsunami that hit the Western Province recently. It is very true and it leaves a scar and a permanent mark on the human psyche going forward. And so when it happened on such a large scale, it deserves our empathy.

If you look at all the stories coming from the internet where people are feeding in their stories, I read a story of a mother who lost all her three children; an only son who also lost his mother and father; a husband and father who lost his dear wife and his two children; a 90 year old mother lost his only son who cared for her in her old age, and I am sure there are thousands more of those kind of stories. When you hear stories like these, we

cannot help but be moved by them, we cannot help but find in our hearts that we share in that kind of suffering.

And so it is appropriate that we express these views in words that even though these words might not rebuild homes for those who lost homes, will not bring back the loved ones they lost, will not bring back the money and the livelihoods they lost, but perhaps shows to them that the rest of the world and certainly in Solomon Islands, we share in their sense of hope for the future, hope that out of ruin will rise strength, opportunity and good; hope that the rest of humanity too stands with them in such a time like this, and certainly the strength of resolve to face the future and to make good to come out of it.

I appreciate all the words my colleagues have expressed today and through your good self, Mr Speaker, as the motion states, you will pass on these thoughts to the government and the people of Japan through their Speaker. With these few words, I beg to move.

The motion is passed

