

THURSDAY 19TH DECEMBER 2013

The Deputy Speaker, Sir Job Dudley Tausinga took the Chair at 9:56am

Prayers:

ATTENDENCE.

All Members present except; the Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs, North West Guadalcanal, Ngella, East Are'Are, South Guadalcanal, South New Georgia-Rendova/ Tetepari, North Guadalcanal, North Vella La Vella.

STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILLS

Bills Committee of Supply

The 2014 Appropriation Bill 2013

Mr Chairman: Honourable Members, we are now in the Committee of Supply to consider the "The 2014 Appropriation Bill 2013," and as usual we will first consider the first schedule Head by Head before we consider each Clause of the Bill. Again may I remind all Members that when we consider each Head, Standing Order 64(3) requires that we adhere to views and that is to say that any debate on a Head must be confined to the policy of the service for which the money is to be provided and the debate must not deal with details of any item of sub head. And reference however maybe made during the debate to the details of revenues or funds for which that service is responsible. Before we continue please note that corrigenda is made on the draft development estimate which you can see inserted.

Head 270 – Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development-\$15.5million

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Chairman, this is conferences, seminars and workshop there's a new allocation there, can the Minister clarify to the House the nature of the seminars and workshops Mr Chairman. Sub item 2601 – conferences, seminars and workshops new allocation of \$200,000 for this year.

Hon David Tome: This is for the ministry's annual conferences and seminars for both staff and stakeholders.

Hon Derek Sikua: Item 2406 on house rent Mr Chairman, there is a reduction there. If the Minister can explain why this item is reduced by more than \$133,000 Mr Chairman. Thank you.

Hon David Tome: There is a significant reduction, though this measure taken by the ministry. However, there is a need for rentals but this year we decided that some of the staff be accommodated together, so there is a significant reduction. However, there is still need for rentals.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: Sub item 2704 – MPS overseas fare, there is an increase of \$102,206.00 there. Can the Minister inform the House how many trips he will expect to take next year and what these overseas trips are.

Hon David Tome: The ministry is planning to have three trips for the minister, this is for consultation and visits to partners who would like to invest in agriculture in Solomon Islands basically in oil palm. This year we have at least two which is planned. Therefore, the Ministry thinks that next year, we should have three overseas trips.

Mr Matthew Wale: The National Agriculture Council, they have estimates for 2012, there are no estimates for 2013 and 2014. Are you going to remove this? If you remove it, maybe it should not appear in here.

Hon David Tome: This is not to put it off, but this is just for suspension in 2014.

Mr Matthew Wale: If the Minister can explain this suspension of the National Agriculture Council, why is it suspended? And if it is not just 2014, but there is also nothing for that in 2013. And the function of this Council is it not important or does not fit in the overall policy for the governance of agriculture that is why it is suspended?

Hon David Tome: As I have said earlier, this does not mean that we do away with the National Agriculture Council, but we have Food Security Council which also deals with the same matters. Therefore, the Ministry thinks that the suspension for 2014 is because of that reason. We think and see it as important that this Council be suspended for 2014.

Hon Derek Sikua: I am still on page 22 on Office Rent, Sub item 2409, there is a very marked increase of more than half a million dollars for this Sub Item on Office Rent. I want the Minister to inform the Committee. Are you going to rent a new office in 2014, so that it warrants this increase of more than \$544,000?

Hon David Tome: The increase that is reflected in the budget is to cater for the Auki Office. We will be doing a major renovation and rehabilitation of the Auki Office, which includes the Head Quarter, the renting of Tom Yee Building and the Post Quarantine Office, which currently the Ministry is renting. And of course this increase is Auki. This is a new submission for Auki Office to carry out renovations as of next year.

Hon Derek Sikua: I have two more questions on page 22. Another huge increase is on Training Other item 2604 that increase is for more than \$563,000 what other training is the Ministry going to conduct at the headquarters especially on this very big increase?

Hon David Tome: The increase for training-other is basically for some of our arrears with the Solomon Islands National University and of course for the training of farmers and the staff within the Ministry especially on specialised areas which the Ministry see fits to equip the farmers and staff of the Ministry. Particularly on the areas of genetic cocoa and Oil palm and that is the increase which is reflected in the 2014 recurrent budget.

Hon Derek Sikua: The Minister is very sharp this morning and I like his answer and my final one on page 22, is on the reduction that is reflected on the telephones and faxes item 3005. There is a big reduction of more than half a million dollars especially for telephones and faxes, so can the Minister explain the reason for the big decrease on the Ministry?

Hon David Tome: This is a reflection on the management approach that the Ministry is taking and that is why it reflected in this submission.

Chairman: page 24, 25 any questions or comments on those?

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Thank you, sub item 6158 on the last one on the national livestock survey, we had original estimates of \$41, 856 but they utilise \$18,756 in 2013 and they reinstate \$48,882.00. So can the Minister explain this, if this National livestock survey is an on-going thing for 2014?

Hon David Tome: This is one of the gradual jobs which the ministry takes in the Country.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Just want to follow up, so what do we really get out of that survey or what kind of information does it help the Ministry in terms of implementing agriculture policy in the cattle or livestock?

Hon. David Tome: Basically the jobs involved are livestock statistics and of course health of animals within the country as we are trying to manage the livestock industry in Solomon Islands.

Hon. Derek Sikua: I noted the increase on capital expenditure on office equipment, item 5450. What capital equipments will the ministry pay in terms of Veterinary and Livestock Division in 2014?

Hon. David Tome: Currently as we all know that the ministry is without proper equipments in the Veterinary Department and the ministry is looking at obtaining new equipments for the veterinary lab next year, so it will assist the Veterinary staff to do diagnostic and management of animals in the country.

Mr Matthew Wale: On fees and charges on Veterinary and Livestock; those Vet services are open to the public and therefore they do not collect any fees?

Hon David Tome: As I have just said, currently the Vet Department does not have any proper facilities and so at the moment we do not charge any fees. But when the lab is established with proper equipments, definitely we will charge for jobs that are going to take place in the Vet Department.

Mr Matthew Wale: So when does the Minister expects the lab to be completed and in operation?

Hon. David Tome: As I have also said earlier that the submission for the lab next year will continue and I hope by 2015 we should have a proper and a modern Vet Lab which will cater for all animals and all diagnostic works with animals in the country. So we are expecting in 2015 that we should finish this lab.

Mr Selwyn Riimana: I would like to ask a question on page 25, item 5575 on specialised equipments. Can the minister explain those types of specialised equipments?

Hon David Tome: Thank you, as I have said the Ministry Research department is struggling at the moment and we established a small area at Henderson so this small equipment will assist the department in some of its research works at Henderson so this equipment is basically to assist the Research department for analysing.

Hon Derek Sikua: I am on page 25, item 4047 its grant to chiefs. We don't have an allocation for it in 2014. I like the minister to inform the committee what do we use this grant in 2013 for and the ministry is sure that we don't need to give the grant to our chiefs in 2014 that's why it's zero there Mr Chairman. Thank you very much.

Hon David Tome: The work that inform the chiefs especially in our consultations with the landowners, especially in oil palm and livestock, that head will not be used next year so we decided that it will not be used next year.

Mr Matthew Wale: I am still interested in the cows because the minister is saying that they will distribute the cows to those that have access to roads so it looks like it

will be done here in Guadalcanal, what about in Malaita? Is your ministry thinking of giving some cows to Malaita for Christmas?

Hon David Tome: Just recently this year we have shipped about 450 herds of animals to Gonokukufo in West Kwaio and regarding distribution the same program that will be used in Guadalcanal will be used in Malaita, that is the focus and proposed program that we will start off with to accessible areas. And then later to other parts of the island and hopefully we will get one or two more shipments next year for other provinces which are prepared by the ministry for cattle development.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: The sub item 2710 and maybe for the Minister of Finance to inform the committee because it recur in terms of how the budget is structured that we have a head, also an item that appears throughout and that is Public Servants Local Other costs.

I guess the thinking is that it did not fit in other items, so we have that 'other item' that they put it throughout the budget that appears. Sorry the minister may answer this now so that we may not ask that question that is appearing throughout all the other heads as well, Public Servants Local Other costs.

Hon David Tome: I think the Minister of Finance must probably in a better position but as far as the ministry is concern this head 'Public Servant local other cost' which the ministry may come across. But as it is in here, this is basically for other costs which the ministry may come across in the course of the year.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: I think we will need the Minister of Finance to come in here because it has recurred throughout the other heads as well. You allocate a good amount of resources there. You could use it for other things. If we ask more specific questions to the Ministry. What other specific costs that does not fit in the other items will fit in with this new Sub Item.

Hon David Tome: May be the Finance Minister especially on the coding and the system might assist me. But as far as I am concern, that is basically what we are looking at.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: This Item has appeared all throughout under a number of heads, Public Servants Other Cost. It is to do with the way we structure the budget, so may be appropriately the Minister should answer this fully. The thinking is that, it does not fit in with other items. So we come up with this new Sub Item where we fit in the other costs that do not fit in with other Sub Items. So the policy thinking behind how we structure the budget is like that. It is possible that you could forward the huge amount there, and could use it for other things.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: One thing the coding system tried to do is to enable expenses to be under the item they refer to. So that things like Public Servants Local Fares or things like that can go under annual leave, or those to do with allowances are under allowances. I see that some of the Sub Heads maybe have zero in 2014. This is the process that is going on. The idea is that in due course, all the things to with, for example, Public Servants Local Fares and Public Servants Local Accommodations and things like that are under one Sub Head which should accommodate them.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: May be to help us, can you give me one example of a cost item that does not fit in under other areas where we will pay under this item because it appears throughout under other budget heads as well.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I do not whether I have really heard the question by the Honourable Member of Parliament for East Choiseul on what he just asked. Like other items, those Sub Heads where I am trying to explain. You will see like under

payroll, some Sub Items at the top caters for overtime and various allowances, then under the other charges you will see the other subheads that are to do with the Public Servants local affairs, Public Servants local Accommodation and such travels of officers on tour.

What I try to explain is that some of these expenses, accounting quotes you will try to put the best expense item that it will describe it well. Also in the new coding system some of the coding will go out like in 2014 where some of them are now zero.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: I am not sure whether I am clear or not but may be for clarification I think we can go back to the minister of Agriculture. Can the Minister give us one example of Public Servant other costs that you will pay out from this sub item?

Hon David Tome: I will give a practical example, when officers are on tour and then maybe a guard might accompany the officers or may be that place might involve transport cost. So basically or in practicality such would come under this item.

Hon. Derek Sikua: If you look carefully on the public service annual leave fares under the Ministry of Agriculture divisions, most of them are experiencing a big cut except for two where they have increase that is on page 25 just under the sub item that we are talking about, item 2714. There is a big decrease in the public servants annual leave fares and it is the same in the other divisions of the ministry. Can the Minister explain the reason for those big cut because your staff will not go for their holidays or why is it like that?

Hon David Tome: The staff will still be leaving for holidays and as I have said earlier we will work within the resources that we have like most of our senior staff just want to go by plane and the cabins of the ships and hiring of trucks. Therefore

the measures that we are taking the ministry will focus on that , that is why you see a reduction for next year. But the staff will still be schedule for annual leave, thank you.

Mr Matthew Wale: I like what I heard from the minister in that they are strict with their budget, and that if that is done throughout all the Ministries will be good. Of course when people are entitled, we do not want to bring that to under it but others who are not entitled but ask for more than what they are entitled for.

I would like to ask about the laboratory rent. Is it because you have moved the laboratory into a government therefore you do not have to rent?

Hon David Tome: As I have said earlier, we have started one at Henderson and that is why the rent is not included in the budget for next year because we have one now established at Henderson.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: The Last item on page 27- Bio-security Implementation. As you know, this year we passed the Bio-security Act and this is to protect from foreign pests and one of which is now in the country, the Giant African Snail. I remember in the past we used to have quarantine officers, custom officers and immigration officers on our borders on Korovou on Shortland and Lata on Temotu. I just wonder having looked at this public establishment, only one officer in the Western Province to protect foreign pests and inspect ships particularly coming to Noro. What about Lata? Are there any plans by the ministry to post an officer at our border in Lata to safeguard and to implement the Bio-security Act?

Hon David Tome: Currently we have one staff stationed at Lata to mann the Quarantine Office at Lata.

Mr Selwyn Riumana: On page 27, on Income. Is the ministry intending to review its rates or not?

Hon David Tome: Our Bio-security Act has passed and once it is implemented, all the charges will be reviewed and I am hoping that there will be some changes to that.

Hon Derek Sikua: On page 27, under Agriculture Quarantine, there has been zero allocation for a whole lot items; on chemical, minor office expenses, maintenance of residential buildings, maintenance of canoes and boat, conferences, seminars and workshops and public servants local fares. Why is there zero allocation for 2014 on these subheads? These are important ones. Can the minister explain this to the committee?

Hon David Tome: As I have quite touched on earlier that some of these courses are under the administration and some of these will definitely come under development budget of the Ministry.

Mr. Matthew Wale: For the quarantine fumigation fees, that actual of 2012 is almost \$6.6million and then for the 2013 budget it was \$4.7million and then for 2014 it was \$5.3million. If the actual in 2012 is \$6.6million it would appear that this \$5.3million for 2014 is quite understated because the level of trade has increased and one would not expect any change in rate which so far the Minister has confirm it that that figure should at least be a million more. Just for the Minister to clarify.

Hon David Tome: It depends on trainings and things like that, but in actual fact almost every day we offer from those income and charges in every year.

Mr. Matthew Wale: The bio security; I am looking at the development budget but we will come to that later, but with the matter of Giant African Snail, what the Ministry's approach to it? Before it was eradication and then when they begin to give up they call it containment, and now what? Is it giving up?

Hon David Tome: for Guadalcanal and Honiara we will take a management approach and for other provinces we are still going to do that containment program.

Mr. Matthew Wale: The Minister has confirmed it. So this Giant African Snail, is seen in other provinces or its still in Guadalcanal? For the minister to explain to the committee what does the management program means. So now we've gone from eradication to containment to management, so for him to explain, what the management term means.

Hon David Tome: in regards to management approach, you will be all aware of that the ministry is involving the local people in this program for managing their own areas and villages and providing chemicals for the villagers to managing this gas.

And containment as we know just to contain all the spread of this particular pests within the areas there were signs of it but for other parts in the country there is no sign of it yet but on Guadalcanal there is of course that is the area where the ministry is looking at and trying to manage this pests.

Mr. John Maneniaru: On the Giant African snail, minister would you explain that you have this containment program, those that spreading the pests, obviously like those loggers like what sorts of program do you have with them or what sorts of consequences they should be facing. Because when you carry out the containment program it is expensive and they still continue on spreading the pest.

Hon David Tome: Under our new Act there will be penalties enforced and it is a severe penalty for those who intentionally like to spread this. In terms of containment there are quarantine officers, once new equipment or plants and machines comes from overseas or anywhere within the country the quarantine department in my ministry surely will always send officers to man those areas.

Mr Matthew Wale: we are focusing on one thing and that is on African snail but it seems it is getting out of hand and it seems the management program in the ministry at this time is not on top of the problem because it spreads a bit wild and there is nothing in the development budget to help the ministry.

What is the ministry's thinking now is required, I think in the past when the current minister of Planning was the minister of Agriculture and Livestock he ask for what he felt was adequate funding to have dealt with the problem two and half years ago. Then now not only as the problem got and worse but resources given to the ministry its even less and so if minister can inform the committee of what sorts of resources does he really need to rid of this problem or to get it under real control because we are telling that its under management but it is not under management it gets worst. If you go and sit down beside a Mataniko I don't know what would like to go and doing there but if you go there you see that thing it's all over the bridge and even in Honiara Hotel besides the swimming pool you will see it in there.

So I mean it were seen in places where it not seen in the past and so if minister can give an indication of a level of resources the ministry requires to re-deal substantively with this threat.

Hon David Tome: To say that we are not capable, that is not the point! We have tried our best with all the capabilities and capacities we have at the moment to tackle this problem. But I must say here Chair, that the cost of obtaining chemicals to perfectly eradicate this particular pest is quite expensive. I mentioned this in my speech. The price of the chemicals that we try to obtain to kill the snail is about

500percent expensive. But with the resources we have, the Ministry is capable and would manage to eradicate the pest in this country.

Mr Selwyn Riumana: I am happy that the Minister has talked about the management programme for bio-security in terms of stopping the giant African snail. And being a hermaphrodite animal itself, it will be quite difficult to contain it. I have seen a practice in Solomon Islands; we go with planting materials from one province to another. That could be one source of transferring those animals to another province. Under that management programme, does the Ministry have any way of checking local vessels before going to another province? Just in case our people who travel from Guadalcanal province carry planting materials to their provinces and that snail is carried with the materials.

Hon David Tome: In fact what the member had said is true, but I must assure this House that our awareness programme has covered the country very well, and people are very cautious because of the trainings and awareness programmes through our radio programmes with the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation. And I think because of the capacity that we have, we do not normally check our internal passengers that carry plants from island to island. But the people are very cautious of this particular pest, and they are mindful of all the plants. I must assure this House that a lot of people are aware of this pest, and they are very cautious of which with the plants they get from one island to another.

Mr. John Maneniaru: The known source of transfer of this giant African snail is through the logging companies that brought in their machineries. Earlier on you talked about the severe consequences. Then you again said intentional. If the loggers say they brought the snails not by intention, it is just by mistake. And obviously they are responsible for transferring the snail to other provinces. I am afraid because you do not have the capacity in terms of your budget to really impose your restrictions

on the logging companies that brought their machineries around. I do not think you have the capacity because the budget does not show it. So those are not intentional because it is the machines that brought the giant African snails. How do you deal with those cases because obviously loggers are the ones who will take the African snail from Ranadi to other provinces? How do people actually help the loggers responsible and report them under your Act?

Hon David Tome: In the case of any company or person the Ministry is not aware of but in our normal program whatever company especially a logging company that wants to go to other provinces they normally requested the department to do the checking with the machines. But for those that went without the awareness of the ministry are the ones that I am trying to state here.

Mr Matthew Wale: I am still on the issue of snails, I am a bit worried about the enforcement aspect especially moving of machines between the islands as it is a threat and as it is voluntary to call the Quarantine service to go and check the machines. Therefore if you do not check the machines then they are not breaking the Law, so there have to be some kind of administrative mechanism in place to pick up that slack. My other concern is with regards to these intentional motives, if they intentionally do it then obviously there will be punitive measures but even those doing it unintentionally must bear the consequence. Because it is a bio security threat and so it looks like the approach of Ministry on this one is needed to be tighten up or take this to a new level or height of alertness and attack the problem as we are trying to fix the damage and stop it from spreading.

My question is with regards to this honey programs or bee that has gone around the Guadalcanal and Savo, does this problem fixed already or not yet?

Hon David Tome: For the Asian bees that the Member is referring to they are not accepted in the country and at the moment it is restricted to the Provinces that were

identified. So if any we find any more provinces to have the Asian beer the well restrict from reaching other unaffected provinces and that is the current process. But the Asian beer still exists and that is the approach that we are taking.

Hon. Derek Sikua: I want to ask one general question in terms of Bio security we have a serious threat to a very common vegetable, the slippery cabbage. Nowadays it is almost impossible to plant it without chemical. You have to treat it with chemical almost every day for it to grow, especially on Guadalcanal because of the insect. I think it came with the Oil Palm. So our farmers will have to treat the slippery cabbage with chemical every day for it grow and when you buy it from the market, it is very dangerous for human consumption because it is full of chemical. Is the ministry aware of this? And what does it do to address this very serious problem? Otherwise, it is harmful to our body to continue to buy slippery cabbage from the market and consume because the chemical will have negative impacts on us. I would like to ask the minister if there are any plans for this one with regards to bio-security implementations.

Hon. David Tome: The ministry is aware if this pest. The name of this pest is nusalthro beetle which is becoming a problem now within our areas that do a lot in planting slippery cabbage and we have a program with SPC to address this problem.

Mr. Matthew Wale: I just want to follow up on the slippery cabbage. Has it already spread to other provinces or just contained on Guadalcanal?

Hon. David Tome: I think that question is not related to anything here but I will answer it. But for the information of the House, I think it is quite severe on Guadalcanal and not much on other provinces. Because of its severity, we have established a program with the SPC to try and address this.

Hon. John Maneniaru: On page 29 Head 2010, there is quite a big increase there. Can the minister explain that?

Hon. David Tome: Can the Leader of Independent repeat that Head so that I can follow it up?

Hon. John Maneniaru: Page 29 Head 2010-subscription member to organisations is increased by \$67,000 plus. I just ask the minister to clarify that increase.

Hon. David Tome: This is a very important area within the ministry. Our ministry is subscribed to many international organisations, especially on information. This Head is to cater for our subscription to other agriculture information internationally.

Hon. Derek Sikua: Page 30, item 2601; conference, seminars and workshops. There is a new allocation there Mr Chairman of \$50,000. My concern is, whether it is a conference or seminar workshops it looks like it is not enough, it is very small. Can the Minister inform the House on what the purpose of the \$50,000 is? Is it for conference, seminar, and workshop and for whom? This is with regard to the planning and management division of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Hon David Tome: Thank you Chair, these conference and seminar is for the development planning department of the Ministry. And this will involve our planners within the Ministry in provinces and then some of these costs will go under our cocoa and coconut program next.

Mr. Matthew Wale: Thank you Chairman, in the Agriculture information unit, printing and photocopying goes down, publicity and promotion reduces; since it is an information unit and it is concern with getting processing and then disseminating information, I want to know why are these reduction took place?

Hon David Tome: It is true what the Member of Parliament for Aoke/Langalanga has stated. This is basically; the officer that we have for this department is moving away and two of the staff in the Ministry will be attending the Solomon Islands National University(SINU) next year so some of these work will be affected and so that is how we look at it. With the current staff in the Ministry I think other staff will assist them, but it has reflected that we are yet to staff and manned this unit.

Mr. Selwyn Riumana: On page 30 the salaries of Agriculture Planning and management has a slight increase but with the housing allowance it reduces. Can the Minister explain why the increasing of salaries and reduction in housing allowances? When we have this opportunity too Mr Chairman, on the gratuity and agreement there is a new growth centre in 2014, so can the Minister also explain the gratuity and agreements?

Hon David Tome: Basically the increase in salary reflects the strengthening of the unit as it has some of the vacant posts this year and the previous year. So that is why you would see that there is an increase on that Head. With this gratuity and agreement probably the Finance Minister would be in a good position to answer it for me because this is a new head, for the ministry under this section.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: I think it is appropriate that the minister of Finance to answer this question, because it appears throughout and in agreement it appears throughout a number of ministries as well so it is to do with the way we structure the budget, so may be minister of Finance can explain it to the committee.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I did not hear the question by the Member of Parliament for East Choiseul so please can he repeat the question again.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Item 1902 on page 30 on gratuities under agreement that appears in the heads of a number of ministries and what are those? Can the minister explain it now so that we do not ask it again when it appears in the other pages?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: This is for the various contracts that ministries have with different people and some of them were also public officers. It is quite correct that you can see this item in different ministries.

Mr Douglas Ete: I really do not understand the explanation of the minister and I am asking is this for fixed term appointments or the contracts under public service, the head in public service establishment. I do not really understand this or is it under special scheme of services of government, those are unclear and I would like to ask it this way Mr Chairman. Thank you, Minister of Finance and Treasury.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: Under this new manual on charter of accounts, it includes the gratuities and agreements with the people which they are the public servants but they were link with salary structures as well and a lot of some officers and public servants they have contracts and inside those contracts they have gratuities so that is what will this one catered for is this item here.

Mr Selwyn Riutana: In the case of agriculture planning and management, what sorts of contract are there and how much are those contracts, since I am hearing that the Minister said those costing are imposed by the Ministry of Finance. What do they need and how much is being engage for 2014?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I do not really know about the details on the various that come under the line Ministries. But if the Honourable Member wants to know, we could get the Public Service to produce those contracts because they signed those contracts with the Public Service.

Hon Derek Sikua: Page 31, Item 2112 – Livestock; there is an increase of more than one hundred per cent on the allocation for livestock. What are those funds for, Is it for paying medicines for cows? What really is this money going to be spent on - more than \$200,000?

Hon David Tome: As I have said earlier, with the programme that we are embarking on, trying to revive the livestock industry, some of our provincial livestock centres will be rehabilitated and probably be stocked. So this would come under.

Mr Matthew Wale: Page 31, on Workers Compensation there were actuals in 2012, so presumably you do have workers compensation policy, but there is nothing in 2013 and 2014. Has this been taken up elsewhere or what is the government's policy with regards to workers compensation?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: Under this coding system, that item is also taken into this Item that we talked about earlier.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: On Agriculture Extension and Training. We used to have Extension Officers in Papua New Guinea, who were called '*didi man*' who go around and help out. And one of the budget strategy and outlook for the Ministry is to assist by providing technical and project support to farmers, mainly farmers that plant onion, carrot, broccoli, head cabbages and so on and so forth. I am wondering under Item 2692 - Training, it was written in-service as well. The Minister is asking for just under \$1million. Is this training for officers or is it for providing technical support for farmers.

Hon David Tome: This allocation is basically for our in service training within the Solomon Islands National University and for our staff and farm training as well on the extension division of the Ministry. However, this sub head is to upgrade some of our extension officers at our provinces to come up and study at the Solomon Islands National University.

Mr Douglas Ete: I just want to go back to the question made by the member for Aoke/Langalanga. I think it is not adequately answered by the Minister especially about the work man's compensation as it is one of the compulsory insurance that is in the country. It is the only compulsory insurance under work man compensation Act but it is zero so that question is that what you did to cater it. Or how did you cater for it?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: what I was trying to say earlier is catered for under this item that we have discussed already. In fact under the new charter of accounts manual includes pensions and gratuities, gratuities under agreement, workers compensation in the service benefits. Those are the things that come under this sub head of 1901, 1902, 1903 and 1904 so we did not forget them but they are reclassified or just regroup.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: Just a supplementary to my earlier question, if this head is for this item that is to train officers then under our budget strategy and output you worked about assisting the farmers by providing technical and project support to farmers. Also help them in terms of coffee, honey, carrot, onion and so forth. So where does the ministry provide funds to assist this sort of farmers?

Hon David Tome: Some of them would come under the development budget but most of it the rural development program in partnership with the Ministry of

Agriculture to take care of the training of the farmers in terms of technical areas. So for 2014 the RDP program would assist the ministry especially to train the farmers.

Mr Matthew Wale: I come back to the answer of the Minister of Finance and Treasury with regards to workers compensation where he said that it is included inside the item gratuities under that agreement. If that is the case then gratuities should appear there and it should appear in each sub heads or it should appear under the headquarters and administration but it does not, so that is the question. Where did you take it up, did you take it under the Finance for all of public service or under the public service for all the public services? In which case it then begs the original gratuities under that agreement, what is exactly in there but just to clarify whether government hold it is under public service or under the Ministry of Finance for everybody. And if so, does the policy cover the total establishment or only actual hiring, those that filled up the positions?

Hon. Rick Houenipwela: Thanks for the insistence by the Member, but it is a good question that needs clarification. Yes, some of the expenses come under the Ministry of Public Service, and this case, Workers' Compensation comes under the Ministry of Finance.

Hon. Derek Sikua: I would like to ask a question on the three items; 6141-demonstration and project support, 6142-provincial farm and on page 32-government project support. In previous years, for example, in 2012, we spent a lot of funds on these items; more than \$200,000 on demonstration and project support, more than \$150,000 on provincial farm and more than \$470,000 on government project support. Now we do not have an allocation for those three important items. Can the minister explain why there are no allocations for next year?

Hon. David Tome: These programs, like other programs for this year, they are catered for under Agriculture Livelihood Program under the development budget. Next year we will also take the same approach that some of these that deal with enhancement of food security and livelihoods of people. Some of these will go under the development budget.

Mr Matthew Wale: I was looking for renovation of the office in Auki but cannot find it. The minister said earlier that they will rent a building in Auki so that they can renovate the office. Where is the fund for that?

Hon David Tome: That will come under the non-residential buildings for next year.

Mr Douglas Ete: I was looking through the budget for the Ministry of Agriculture and I learned that for nearly ten years we have educated only two Vet Surgeons in the country and the post was vacant for nearly six years and over time you tend to bring short term locum in this country, whereby they come on temporary basis and leave. What is your opinion in terms of training and recruitment to fill the post? This I believe is very important.

Secondly, how do you treat supernumerary posts here? Extension brings more than a hundred people throughout the provinces but when we deal with those vacant positions, how do you treat it? That is what I want to know so that we could fill in those posts.

Hon David Tome: I do not quite get the question clearly, however regarding vet doctors that you were referring to, at the moment we have maybe four vets and one is here. The issue facing the Ministry at the moment is the conditions of service set by the Public Service that is the issue here. As you know, for technical areas, just like other doctors they need proper remuneration that is why doctors are looking for greener pastures with other organisations.

But this is a very important department should be strengthened with manpower. However this department is still struggling to send officers for studies in these discipline areas within the vet department.

Hon Dr Derek Sikua: I just want to follow up on the Ministers response to the question by the Member for Aoke/Langalanga on the renovation of the extension office in Auki. The Minister said that it will come under non-residential buildings maintenance – item 2501. But the allocation here is greatly reduced by \$300,000. This is only about \$144,000 allocated for the renovation of the Auki office. This is not enough Mr Chairman, why does the Minister reduce this allocation for the maintenance of the Auki office?

Hon David Tome: As I have mentioned earlier, rentals will be provided for Auki offices. This amount only caters for the demolition of the building. We will not renovate the building by next year but we will start off with the demolition and then we will continue in 2015. I think that is why the budget allocation there is small.

Mr. Matthew Wale: It is good that we will demolish that office because that office is not safe for officers and even the public too, so it is good to demolish it.

Mr Chairman, perhaps the Ministry of Agriculture can apply to the rural infrastructure under MID, because there is \$11million available under that head. So go to MID to build your new office in Auki because this is one of our main centres which cover a large catchment area. So it is good to speed up the building of this office building.

My question is with regards to uniforms which will be reduced by more than a half. I would like to ask the minister if the allocation is only for trousers or for trousers and shirt and how many pairs will each officer get? If officers get one pair, will that last for two years or for each year, will they get new sets of uniforms?

Hon David Tome: If you look at the allocation the ministry will continue to purchase uniforms. This allocation is just for replacement of uniforms, but officers that look after their uniforms will not be entitled to get new uniform. This item is only for replacements and not necessarily for the replacement uniforms and not necessarily for new ones.

Head 270 agreed to.

Head 271 – Office of the Auditor General - \$9,563,990.00

Hon Derek Sikua: Page 35 on other charges, there is a big increase for this allocation. Can the Minister explain this big increase from \$3million this year to more than \$7million for 2014, which is a big increase of more than \$3.7million? What is reason for this big increase?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: If I heard it correctly the Leader is asking about why there is a very high increase for that item. The office is anticipating a lot of activity in terms of audits in the provinces. Actually, it started this year and it will go on for next year as well. The expenses incurred, going in next year is going to be high compared to previous years.

Mr Matthew Wale: 'Audit Fees Income' and 'Audit Fees Other Charges' – other charge is \$3million and Audit Fees Income is half of that. With the exception of the audit of the main government accounts and other audits that the office is going to pay for such as the SOEs, it is the SOEs that are paying for the audit fees. This is the fees that appear in the audit; the SOEs pay the Auditor General then the Auditor General pay the contracted auditors.

My question is regarding the relevant policy – did the Auditor General charge those SOEs on commercial rates that the contracted audit firms charge to him so that it is cost neutral to the government?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: As you will understand and recall the audit fees that the Auditor General charge on the works he outsources, he usually tenders them out. And they can accept the reasonable charge or fees where the companies tender in their bids. In terms of fees charged for the work that they do, it depends on the nature of the work. I think they will also look at whether that SOEs can pay. But there is a rate that can be charged to SOEs that conduct audits on their books.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Still on 'audit fees' discussion - item 2002; what actually happened in 2013? The original estimate for that year is \$3.2million. Of course we inserted that amount in 2014 meaning that a lot of audit work will happen in 2014. In 2013 there is actually negative representation there. What actually happened in 2013 on the audit fees?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I see the number the member for East Choiseul has identified. I will find out what this is about? It looks like a typo to me at the moment but I will find out. It looks like it was right when they do the revised numbers.

Mr Matthew Wale: Salaries of Public Servants has increased. I am wondering, previously when we were looking at the supplementary that the Minister has acknowledged that there is a retention problem, to retain those appropriately qualified and experienced auditors so that they do not go out into the private sector or snatched out elsewhere, so that the capacity of the office is maintained. So I wonder whether there is a scheme now in place to retain those or this increase just represent the natural growth through recruitment?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: It was last year that I advised the OAG to recruit new officers and that actually started this year and it will continue. I think by the end of this year they should have most of the vacancies filled. What you see here is basically an increase in salaries because of the increase in the number of officers. There is a minimal increase in the level but what is shown there is mainly in terms of numbers.

Hon. Derek Sikua: On page 37 - Public Servants Affairs, there is a new allocation with more than half a million dollar for 2014. Thus this reflect the tour that many officers will do in the provinces for provincial audits for 2014, or what is going to happen here which is reflected in this big allocation?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: Yes, as I have mentioned earlier, the office seems to have the capacity in terms of officers. The idea or plan here is for officers to go out and audit province accounts so this one is purposely to cover their fares, and accommodation. This local other costs refers to other allowances while travelling like Per Diems and so forth. So those increases are because of the anticipation of the activities of this department to be able to do provincial audits.

Head 271 agreed to

Head 272 – Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development - \$695,319,911

Mr. Matthew Wale: Page 42: Incomes, research fees; this is a question that I always raise, whether the rates of the fees have changed. Examination fee is zero, does that mean exam fees are done away with or is that taken up elsewhere. Then there is 'trade testing and certification fees'. Can you clarify if this is connected to the trade testing in the Ministry of Commerce? There is also 'medical fees'; is that its right

place or is it under the National Referral Hospital? Finally, are we not selling any education materials? Is it free or is it open and that we can sell some of it?

Hon. Dick Ha'amori: Research fee has not changed and although we want it to that did not earn enough money. Eventually it will change but for the time being, to answer the question by the Member for Aoke/Langalanga, the fee has not changed. The rate remains the same.

With regards to the exam fee, I do not really have a good explanation for it. One possible explanation is that fees for Form 6 are paid to SPBEA, but it is unclear. In terms of the trade testing certificate, that is connected to the Ministry of Commerce and Labour.

Regarding the materials, they are just supplied and we do not sell them. That is why it remains like this.

Mr. Matthew Wale: What about the medical fees?

So Form 6 fees are the only exam fees that go to SPBEA? What about Forms 7, 5 and 3?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: I am not really clear about the medical fee however, coming back to examination fees, the truth is that we charge exam fees on other Forms but once again it is unclear as to why it is zero.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: Page 42 - maintenance of non-residential buildings; the minister is asking Parliament for \$1.5million. I just want to know how many of these non-residential buildings will be maintained with this amount of money.

Hon Dick Ha'amori: Non-residential buildings are offices and that is what the money is for. Currently the office inside the Ministry of Education is being refurbished and I think that is where most of the money will go.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: On page 43 these are two items – 3005 and 3006 – telephone and faxes, and water. In 2013 there was a big decrease. This year’s allocation is \$951,000 for telephone and faxes, and \$521,000 for water. What may have been the reason there that we have a big allocation in 2013 and then it drops in 2014? It is just a fear that we might under estimate those two expenditure items.

Hon Dick Ha’amori: Chairman, unfortunately it is the result of the normal cut that we are familiar with. Our estimate was even bigger than this, so it is not that we meant to leave it at \$1.9million. It is a decision from those who have the power to cut the budget.

Hon Dr Derek Sikua: In page 42, maintenance of residential building has increased by more than \$700,000 to reach \$1.5million. Which residential buildings are you going to maintain in 2014?

Hon Dick Ha’amori: Most of this money will be spent on maintenance on curriculum development centre staff residence most of which are located at KG VI. So those houses will use most of that allocation.

Mr Douglas Ete: In the thin book, the development budget has \$1million allocated under Head 472. Is that the same thing since it also belongs to KG VI under the Development budget? You have a long list of figures here for KG VI school renovation/development projects. I just want to know.

Mr Chairman: Honourable Member, I think we are on the recurrent estimate and if we can confine our deliberation on the recurrent budget that would help us a lot in the discussion of the budget before us.

Hon Dick Ha'amori: A quick answer to the question which the Member of Parliament for East Honiara has asked, that is normal for KG VI. And the one that was asked about earlier belongs to the curriculum division of the Ministry of Education.

Hon Derek Sikua: Still on page 42, the last item on that page is item 2704 – MP's overseas fares; I would like to ask the Minister on the number of overseas trips he is going to take in 2014, and where?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: The usual budgeted for Ministers overseas travels are mostly USP related and further meetings related. Further meaning the Forum Education Minister's meetings and after a year the UNESCO meetings normally comes in. But otherwise every year it is always to USP because we are a member of the council and its committees.

Mr James Tora: Page 42 – Expenditure; special duty allowance public servants, I would like to know which staffs of the ministry are eligible to draw this special duty allowance.

Hon Dick Ha'amori: These are normally collected by the staff of King George and Waimapuru National Secondary Schools, for charge allowance, to be more specific.

Mr Douglas Ete: There is a distinction between charge responsibility and special duty allowance, their definition is inside Chapter F in General Orders. I am not really clear of the Minister's answer. Can he repeat his answer again please between the special duty allowances. The connotation for special duty allowances is for officers to be – that benefit must be extended to officers on special time and I think that's the question Mr Chairman; who is entitled to be extended the benefits? I am

saying this because that will appear in nearly every ministry's head in this thick book, the recurrent.

Hon Dick Ha'amori: Thank you Chairman, the Honourable Member clarifies the rules for collecting this special duty allowance and who is entitled for it. We have budgeted for that so when the time comes for such things to be taken then the rule will apply and we will not wonder where we will get money for special duties. However, those officers who are not entitled for it he cannot receive it, only the officers who are entitled according to the rules.

Mr Matthew Wale: Page 44 – Accounts and this training provincial. Chairman, we note that there is been an on-going challenge now with regards to education authorities and especially principals and board, just school management and boards - with regards to retirement of school grants and doing their accounts for their stakeholders as well. So I am wondering, this training is only for the provincial education authorities or does it also include education authorities and goes down as far as the school board management level. Or does it stop at the education authority level?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: This one here is only restricted to provincial education authorities but even include those that have schools that included inside this or those attending this training as well.

Hon Derek Sikua: Thank you Chairman. page 45, the last item there is Item 2717 Others Local Other Costs with a huge increase of \$100,000. There are only two persons in the Internal Audit division of the Ministry. What is the justification for this huge increase and what will this go for? That is what I want the Minister to tell the Committee.

Hon Dick Ha'amori: Just a small correction, there are now four officers in this unit as compared to the past. So the four officers will use the money and not two. I guess that is the increase here.

Hon Derek Sikua: I thank the Minister for the correction. I look at the establishment and manpower registry for the Ministry and only two people appear there. I do not know where the other two come from. It means that this registry is not accurate.

Mr Matthew Wale: I just want to ask whether the registry is accurate or not because there might be some problems for the other Ministries that we go through. Perhaps the government can clarify whether this register is accurate or not.

Hon Dick Ha'amori: Chair, I cannot answer the question because I am not directly responsible for the register. But the understanding with us is that there are four internal auditors working in that unit, not two.

Page 46, 47

Hon Derek Sikua: On 47, we have an allocation of \$10million for item 4043 - Scholarship Award Grant for the MP itself, which may be the Minister himself or all of us. Just for the Minister to clarify this \$10million allocation for MP Scholarship Award Grant. Is this just for the Minister for Education or all of us 49 members of Parliament?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: The comfort is, it is for all of us.

Mr Matthew Wale: Page 47 – subscription memberships to overseas bodies. There is a substantial reduction. Can the Minister clarify what that represents?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: It was not intentional once again. It was a result of a cut that reduced it. Really we do not have any explanations because we have not reduced it from the Ministry.

Mr Matthew Wale: In that case, I want the Minister for Finance to tell us which ones were cut out.

Hon. Rick Houenipwela: Can the Honourable Member repeat his question?

Mr Matthew Wale: On subscription to the memberships of the overseas bodies; the Minister for Education said that this reduction does not come from them; it comes from the Ministry of Finance. So I want to know which subscription to membership of overseas bodies you cut down as \$7.7million is a substantial reduction.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I do not really have any details on this but if you compare it with the actual expenditure of subscriptions for 2012 it actually went up and for 2013 we are yet to know the actual expenditure of the subscription. So this was a budgeted item that we will really see the actual when they account them. But I do not have any details with me at this time to give the Honourable member, but if he wants it then we can ask for this list of subscriptions.

Hon Derek Sikua: The other thing that happens to this sub head is that the increase to pay for arrears and however the right level is \$10million. But because of arrears of the previous year hence this brings it up to \$18million but otherwise the correct level for the subscription to the organisations that we are members of in Education is actually just \$10million. However the arrears bring it up to \$18million.

My question is for the Minister to confirm the two training allocations, item 2604 - 'training other' which is more than \$70million and item 2605 - 'training overseas' which is more than \$106million. Can the minister clarify the allocation for

'training other' which is more than \$70million? Is it for our students studying in our local institutions like SINU, USP or UPNG Open College? And 'the training Overseas' is for our students that are doing their trainings overseas?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: Like the Leader of Opposition has mentioned the confirmed training other', is meant for our local students and the 'training overseas' are meant for those students that are studying overseas.

Mr Matthew Wale: I come back to subscription membership of the overseas bodies; the two important ones are USP and UNESCO so perhaps the Minister can satisfy the committee that these two are well catered for. Can the Minister inform the committee how much is our membership per year for USP and UNESCO respectively?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: Regarding USP one I cannot give you any specific answer now but regarding UNESCO, I think we are up to date with them.

Mr. Matthew Wale: For the National Commission of UNESCO, this is nothing specifically to do with the allocation there but I would like to know because for a number of years we have never applied for grants from UNESCO because two or three beneficiaries of those grants in some years prior did not do proper retirements and we have been deprived of the resources from UNESCO. I asked the minister; unlike last year, they forgave us twice; when the Leader of Opposition was the Permanent Secretary and when he was the minister. During my term as minister I asked them to forgive us again but they said that they do not practice seven times seven forgiveness. So you have to do proper reporting, however in case the current Minister is successful in negotiating forgiveness on this matter. Can the minister inform the committee on that?

Hon. Dick Ha'amori: Unfortunately, I think the issue of forgiveness did not come in our favour yet. That is what I can say regarding this matter.

Mr. John Maneniaru: If there is no forgiveness, what actions are you going to take? Our people would like to have access to this funding.

Hon. Dick Ha'amori: It looks like we have to study the details of the issue at the moment in order for us to handle it properly. At this point in time the minister is not in a position to say exactly how to deal with this issue.

Mr. Peter Shanel Agovaka: On page 50, on Early Childhood Education. I am happy that we have a budget for Early Childhood Education. We are told that if we do not care about our children from ages 3 to 5, we will have problematic children when they grow up. I would like to ask a question to the minister but maybe the minister will not be able to answer and maybe the Attorney can answer it. Early Child is not catered for in the Education Act. My question is whether we are approving a budget to something that is not legally entitled or entailed in the education. I would like to know that, but I do not mind about the Early Childhood Education but the legality of it; whether Parliament approves a budget for something that is not legally binding in our Education Act.

Hon. Dick Ha'amori: The minister acknowledges that under the current Act; 1978 Amendments, we do not have the Early Childhood but the revised one that we are working on will definitely include that because it is a new introduction in our education system.

Mr. Matthew Wale: Perhaps I could comfort my colleague Member for Central Guadalcanal that when we pass this budget it will become an Act as well. But I would like to ask about the ECE Grant because it seems to be small but with the

salaries obviously you are paying a lot of registered ECE teachers. How many Early Childhood centres does this ECE Grant cover?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: Thank you chairman, a lot of appearance or the short fall in the limitation here is taken care of in item 372, so it is adequately supported.

Mr. Selwyn Riumana: Thank you Chairman, just a question out of interest. For the ECD grant, is there any specific criterion for accessing that fund?

Hon. Dick Ha'amori: Thank you Chair, there is general rule which is determined by number of students per head, in our schools the primary there is a rate per head, secondary rate per head and ECE also have rate per head. The other thing that will be implicate on the accessing of this grant is the retirement of course, when you retire the money that you receive then you have access to further tranches of the of the ECE grants. Otherwise there will be problems although we have a number of students. So a few factors will determine the access, thank you Chair.

Hon Derek Sikua: Thank you Mr Chairman, the salaries of Public Servants on the Early Childhood Education (ECE); Mr Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister that some time ago the ECE teachers that were qualified under the University of the South Pacific (USP) Program, we say that we do not recognise them and therefore do not pay their salaries. We only accept those qualified from the program of SINU or the former SICHE. Is this issue resolved and do we also remunerate ECE teachers that are qualified under the USP program as well?

Hon. Dick Ha'amori: Thank you Chairman, to the best of my knowledge of the ECE the matter has been resolved. So they seem to be going across each other and recognising each other now.

Mr. Matthew Wale: Thank you Chairman, similar to the question of the Leader of Opposition if the Minister can clarify. I understand that programs of SINU but offered by COC or the Nazarene church or one of the Church in Fulisango, I have some students there so I am asking about accreditation or recognition similarly and whether they complete that whether they would become eligible to be remunerated when they go back to our ECE centres.

Hon. Dick Ha'amori: Thank you once again Chairman, the Honourable Member has asked about program commonly known as 'franchising.' Fortunately that program was offered by those organisation but they are SINU programs and they have been graduated by SINU and not by them. Unfortunately, this arrangement does not quite follow the normal franchising like we know, so it has for the time being has been discontinued.

I think it needs more work for better organisation and coordination before we continue if it is necessary to continue. But those that have gone through the program, I think they have been considered as SINU students and they have been graduated, a lot of them were graduated during the last graduation. So since they are SINU graduates they will probably be taken care of just like any SINU graduates in terms of recognition.

Mr Chairman: Honourable Members it is well passed lunch hour so I will suspend the Committee proceedings until 2pm. And then we will back to start on page 53 on education and human resources development.

Committee is Suspended until 2:00pm.

Parliament resumes at 2.12 pm

Page 54, 55

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: There's no body from this side in this Chamber right now. Sub item 2007 Mr Chairman on page 54. There is suddenly a huge provision there of \$6million for printing in 2014, what is the reason here?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: This request here is to pay Pearson's, a company in Australia which is contracted to print some of our materials.

Pages 56,57,58 & 59

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: On page 59, sub item 1902 –gratuities under agreement what could be the level of those gratuities? We only have a \$7,000 allocation. Can the Minister inform us of the levels of gratuities which are paid under this agreement?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: Chairman, unfortunately we will not be able to answer the question at the moment because we do not have enough information for this particular item. Sorry but it can be furnished if it is so wished.

Mr James Tora: Sub head 2102106: Other charges – rations. There is a reduction. I would like to know whether the number of students in the school is reduced that is why it is shown here.

Hon Dick Ha'amori: Unfortunately the Minister cannot say that there is a reduction on the number of students, so the reduction in the budget naturally is a result of the budget unit's decision to cut in this particular area.

Hon Derek Sikua: Item 2501 - maintenance of non-residential buildings; there is a huge reduction there of more than \$1.3million. Can the Minister explain this reduction; why did the reduction happen?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: The reduction will be taken care of by budget support later on. It has been reduced here, but it is being taken care of.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Page 61, Sub Item 4005. We understand that the SICHE Act is not yet repealed so that is an entity in existence. Is the narration there incorrect? What is the \$15million allocation grant to SICHE for?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: I think the narration was incorrect. It was intended for the Solomon Islands National University (SINU).

Hon Derek Sikua: Page 62, Various Allowances – Others, Item 1117. There were huge amounts in 2012 and 2013. However in 2014 there are no funds for that allocation. Can the Minister explain why there is zero for that allocation for 2014?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: According to the information, or the lack of information available to the Minister at the moment, the Minister cannot explain why this allowance was removed. Unfortunately once again if the Honourable Member wants to know more, it can be furnished in the pigeon hole.

Hon Derek Sikua: It will be very good if that can be made available at a later time. I guess the Minister would be saying the same time for Item 2710: Public Servants Local - Others Cost, where it remains the same there. But I want to ask, what this allocation is for, it is more than \$1.2million. There seems to be a lot of money for this 'other costs'. Can the Minister inform the Committee the purpose of this particular allocation?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: This allocation is to buy our local markers for the exams.

Mr James Tora: Page 63 - Church Education Authorities Grant; if the Minister can inform the committee about how many education authorities will receive this grant.

Hon Dick Ha'amori: For now I do not have the exact number of church education authority that is available in the country but this line budget is for them. Hence I cannot give you the number at this point, but it is available on request.

Hon Derek Sikua: Here we see the Church education grant and the provincial education authority grants. I just want to ask the Minister, where we put the education grants for the private education authorities? Do we help a bit or not that is why it does not appear here? But if we do then where is the grant for those private education authorities reflected in this budget.

Hon Dick Ha'amori: Private education authorities are stated out here but they are considered under the Church education grant and so they take the grants from there.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Page 65, sub item 2004; what is the nature of consultancy work done, which is worth \$500,000?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: That money is to pay the people who help to develop the national qualification framework which will be set up through the establishment of the national qualification authority in the Ministry of Education.

Hon Derek Sikua: Page 65, a big decrease of more than \$2million in the TVET grants - can the Minister explain the reason for this decrease because in 2013 it was more than \$4million. For 2014 it is just over \$1.6million, so can the Minister explain that?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: This is a result of the fact that EU has pulled out from this particular line. Usually they are the ones that used to help us in terms of TVET but they decide to pull out and so that is what caused the budget to fall substantially like this.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: The basic education grant sub item 4 in 2013; what happened to it? Do we pay the basic education grant in 2013 or it is just something that comes in 2014?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: The Minister does not have any explanation on that zero because there should be a number in there, but it seems not to be there. Perhaps this is because of a computer error but there should a number in there.

Hon Derek Sikua: Can the minister explain the huge increase on salaries? I assume that this is for Primary Teachers Salary of more than \$24million. How many teachers are we going to recruit for primary education to reflect this increase?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: We all know that this year teachers finally get their revelling and arrears and this one reflects about nine thousand teachers that we have, and also the salaries for the new levels. That is why it appears to inflate this figure.

Hon Derek Sikua: This basic Education Grant is reintroduced again for 2014. There is nothing for this year but for next year another 10million will be allocated for Basic Education Grant. Can the minister explain why this will be re-introduced in 2014 and what may have been the reason for not allocating funds for it this year?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: The minister has just answered that. There should be a number in place of the zero because we know very well that we had taken care of this Basic

Education but somehow it is not reflected there. It is not that we drop it and put it back on.

Hon Derek Sikua: Can the Minister of Finance help out here whether that is true or not. We have to look for an answer and inform the committee later on? Can the Minister assist us to understand reasons why it appears like this?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: The only explanation I can give is that there is no budget for it in 2013 but it is budgeted for in 2014.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Although this is a small thing, we appropriate it and that is what we are concerned about. But it is a historical concern and it is very important. We need to know what happened in 2013, where it was posted to for accounting purposes. So it has to be somewhere and maybe when you locate it when you work on the government accounts, as to which item we paid that expenditure under in 2013. So the Minister of Finance may need to take note of that.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: The Minister takes note.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: We will go to specific figures, item 1904 on page 69: long 'service benefits'. We take it that some teachers will be retiring, is that the case there?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: Some teachers are going to be retired and this will take care of that.

Hon Derek Sikua: On page 69 there is a big reduction in salaries of public servants of more than \$2million. Can the Minister explain to us why we are going to decrease this particular item (salaries) for people who are employed under the teaching service division?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: I think we are just budgeting for the level that should be there so that is why it is reduced. That is the only explanation the Ministry can give for this one. In the past we put an increase on the budget but we are moving it down to where it is supposed to be. It takes a bit of time but we will finally catch up.

Hon Derek Sikua: Under teaching services - 'training other', item 2804. It is \$500,000 and for next year it is only \$50,000. Is this training going to happen next year? Can the Minister explain it?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: Unfortunately this number has not quite reflected on what is supposed to be there. I guess it is so because we are not comfortable with this number appearing here. It was not intentionally put there.

Hon Derek Sikua: Those accounting Heads that you have mentioned are for educational officers in the provinces and when I look at the establishment of some provinces some positions are still vacant. But on Head 77, I see that there will be a reduction in salaries for the office of education in Choiseul province. How is this Mr Chairman? Are we going to have fewer officers there or what does this mean? Can the Minister explain to us why we have a reduction in our education office at Taro in Choiseul Province?

Hon Dick Ha'amori: Once again I think it is the right level that we are seeing here. In the past we use to have an extra \$38,000 which has not been used. So we have reduced it to this amount here for the time being. When there is a projected increase in staffing as the need demands then we will increase it bagain. But as for 2014 this is the level that we envisage.

Head 272 agreed to

Head 273 – Ministry of Finance and Treasury - \$82,698,755.00

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: On sub item 3509 – court judgement provision. What sorts of court judgements will we pay in 2014?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: There are a number of court judgements that the court made against the government over the last couple of years and government had to pay those that win court cases against the government. I had requested the details but at the moment I do not have them. However, that is what is shown and this budget will cater for it.

Hon Derek Sikua: Electricity - item 3001, there is a big reduction in there for 2014. Can the Minister explain why we reduce this particular allocation?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: In the revised budget for this year (2013) we allowed for a lot of arrears to pay for electricity. That is why this year, 2013 the allocation is substantial. In 2014, it should return to its normal usage.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Sub Item 2714 – ‘Public Servants Annual Leave Fares’. That item has gone down substantially by \$13,069. If you look at salaries for Public obviously it has increased - the number of public servants we employ. So if this relates to their annual leave fares, then obviously the logical thinking is that it must increase because an increased number of public officers need to go on leave. Is that reasoning logical Mr Chairman?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: Yes, Public Servants Salaries under the Head, ‘statistical services’ has gone up. The sub head, ‘annual leave’ has also increased, but not as

high as salaries. The annual leave fares for public servants under that sub head has also gone up.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: It actually has gone down. It has decreased by \$13,069. In 2013 the amount is \$22,877. For next year (2014) we budget for \$9,908. Obviously the level of public officers remains the same. If we take the increase to be representing a recruitment of additional staff, then obviously the allocation there cannot cater for them.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: Sorry, I jumped to another page already, so excuse me for that. This is under the Economic Reform Unit (ERU). Yes this Sub Head 2714 – ‘annual leave’ has gone down a bit but there is no change in terms of the number of public officers. In fact, we hope that we will recruit some more into the unit. But this year, a lot of the vacancies are not filled up. So I take note of the point raised and I will find out more from the staff the reason why there is a reduction in the annual leave.

Hon Derek Sikua: The capital expenditure for the specialised equipment under the economic reform unit has not had any allocation for next year. But we spent \$2million for this expenditure item on this year and so I want to ask the Minister on what we have spent this money for this year and why we will not need it again next year?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I would like to thank the Honourable leader for the question. Such equipment or furniture is those that we can buy only for this year and it can last for two or three years ahead. This one is to do with the computer program that the economic reform unit use and so they just purchase it this year and we hope it will stay more for the next 4 years.

Hon Derek Sikua: On page one hundred we spend \$15million on the community services obligation payment that is item 4045 on this year 2013. But it is zero for 2014 and so can the Minister tell us what this payment is for and why we do not need to put another \$15million for 2014?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: Yes for this year the Ministry provides for CSOs under this Head. For the budget of 2014 this one is now provided under the Head 278 which is on page 228 and it has now come under as part of the national debt servicing and it will be a continuous from this year on. Hence, that is why that item in 2014 budget it has more than \$39million.

Hon Derek Sikua: Thank you Minister for pointing me to where it stays and so it is good. But in terms of trade, creditors arouse is also on page 100 item 5980 and it has big increase on it that is an increase of \$11million and this for 2014. So can the Minister explain this one?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: Creditors here applies to providers of goods and services that the government owed. We do not much because some refuse but others allowed us to do so. That is what this budget is for.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: On the same item just to get the proper information about what happened in 213 and what will happen in 2014. The original estimate was \$16million but what seem to be presented here is that for 2013 nothing really is happening. If these areas present costs incurred by the government, that negative would suggest that they paid us and maybe you need to clarify what this negative figure of \$2.7million mean. The figure that the Leader of Opposition mentioned has an increase of \$11million because we have a negative figure of \$2.7million deducted from the \$16million in the original estimate for 2013. What really happened in 2013 on trade creditors?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I notice that. I think it is like a story but not a good story. I think this happened when the numbers were revised because it supposed not to be in brackets. We have not overpaid any of the funds that we owed. We still have our debts. I have to apologise but this seems to be a typo.

Mr Matthew Wale: On Community Service Obligation, it is moved elsewhere but I would like to know the basis of any estimates. Do they look at non-profitable routes, for example, Airline or non-profitable activities of SIEA or SIWA or Ports? On what basis do they build the estimates on?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: Under the new SOE Act, from last year every SOE in every year have to submit corporate plans to the ministry. One item that they must come up with is services that they provide at some cost which should be met by the government. For example, if the Airline make flights to Auki five days a week but out of those five days maybe only two are commercially viable and they have to cost out the other three for government to pay. So every SOE make their submissions before we finalise the budget.

Hon Derek Sikua: When the Minister of Finance mentioned Solomon Airlines I thought that it is a company which the government has owed a lot from. And then we are closing some of our Airports and then it has greatly affected our Solomon Airlines, but I know that the Ministry of Education has owed Solomon Airlines about \$1.6million for one of the charters for students. Are you going to pay that out from this allocation? I would like that Minister to answer this so that our friends at the Solomon Airlines will be happy because I know they are tired of doing follow ups on this.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: With your indulgence just to assure the House and the Leader of Opposition, yes, Solomon Airlines has been doing follow ups so it will be paid before the end of this month. Yes, I totally agree with those concerns.

Hon Matthew Wale: On page 103 the imprest on the income of the Treasury; imprest recovery retirement in prior years, the actuals of 2012 is \$348,000, 2013 is \$500,000 and 2014 is \$1million. But what is the total amount on the unretired imprest at the Treasury, is it the \$1million that they expect to collect or is it a larger sum out of which \$1million they have expected to collect? Just for the Minister to clarify.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I thank the Honourable Member for Aoke/Langalanga for raising this matter. It is quite very important and also one difficult area the government has found a long time ago in retirement because imprest are going out but the retirement is very slow.

This amount is what we think we will recover, as opposed to out siding imprest I think about \$80million, so it is quite big. But it is not only for this year it was from when you were in the government side too. It is quite a very important issue where successive governments have been finding it very difficult. So we are trying our very best to try and recover them but as previous Ministers and Prime Ministers will attest to this has been a very difficult to deal with. By the way, this also includes some us here.

Mr James Tora: Under other charges item 2405 this year there is no provision for this Item, but this year it will be \$50,000 and which venue do they plan to hire, if the minister can inform the committee.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: We plan to hire venues for some seminars where Treasury officials will involve in it to conduct seminars next year.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: I would like to get back to this sub item 0550 – imprest recovery. The minister is saying that the total amount that people did not retire is \$80million which we are saying that we will only recover \$1million this year.

So question is, those imprest holders were still worked in Public Service or are we identifying them. If it was the case then why we cannot recovering those imprest in next year, if it is legal reasons why we cannot doing it.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: Well there is a lot of angles to this difficult situation. One of them is that the recovery processes is what you get from the salaries and sometime when a person receive \$50,000 or so then he did not retire it but his earning is \$1,000 per fortnight so you will only deduct \$5.00 every fortnight or it depends on the agreements done with the individual in order to recover the unretired money.

In other words what I have said is it doesn't matter you engaged the officer to get the imprest but that officer might only pay \$2.00 or \$10.00 to recover the money in the imprest.

The other complication in it is that many of the officers and people who received the imprests they leave Public Service already. I think there are other difficulties but these are two main areas in which you would like to recovers the imprests is a little bit difficulty and as I was saying before, this one the successive ministers have found it difficult in making this issue.

I don't know may be there are other ways that we can recovering and also some of the officers that received the imprest they are no longer exist in this world now. So it is even harder, well it is impossible.

I don't want to make an excuse but those are the difficulties of my officers to try and recover the imprest from the imprest holders.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: The minister said that some of the imprest holders were also the Member Parliament as well. So minister can you list those people so that

they can stick to themselves it is like that and you may put the list in their pigeonhole or you can read their names now, the members of parliament that still owing the government they did not retiring the imprest.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: If the House is asking that we can do that with this qualification that some of the MPs are not here now. When they are sick, another holds onto it, but it is against the name of the Member of Parliament. A lot of times, it is like that. It is not the MP that holds on to it, but another officer is holding on to it. But in the records, it is against the name of the MP. So when those things come up, you will find out whether it is yours or not, when the list comes.

Mr John Maneniaru: I just want to make a comment on this imprest. \$5 and \$10 deduction, it looks like, it will encourage officers who are imprest holders not to retire because it will not cause too much interest in the Bank. So if they got a huge amount of money on imprest, and the deduction is only \$5, it will take many years. And so why worry to retire it. It is something that the Minister can take note of.

Mr Matthew Wale: This area on imprest has identified a problem. But some reforms as part of those myriad of reforms where the Treasury continue to carry out to tighten up this area. Can the Minister outline how we can arrest this problem where it is now, and going forward 2014 and onwards. So this situation is not repeated. Can the Minister can tell us that.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: Yes, in our pursuit to look for ways to resolve this situation. I am trying to for this section that is inside the Public Financial Management Act that Parliament has just passed. And there is a provision that requires something like some portion of the salary of the officer who holds on to the imprest. It is like, if the government cannot recover it. Automatically, the portion of that salary is claimable by the government, and they give us certain period during

which the officer has to make the retirement. Otherwise, that provision will be invoked. When the Act comes in full force next year, then these provisions will be enforced.

Hon Derek Sikua: On page 104, Item 3005 Telephones and Faxes for the Treasury Division in the Ministry of Finance, there is no allocation for that in 2014. Can the Minister explain this? I tried to look under Headquarter Administration, but telephone and faxes like we have heard earlier was really reduced. What about this Mr Chairman?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I will ask the staff about this. But it does not mean that those at the Treasury do not have telephones, they have. For fax, yes, they do not really use it, but telephone they still have it there, so I have to disappoint my leader for not giving him the answer but I will find out what is wrong here.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: On page 104, the last Head on legislation review, can the Minister indicate which legislation that will be reviewed and is it part of the tax regime review?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: For last year, previous years and this year this House pass a number of legislation that the ministry took so there will be a number of work or activities to do with those legislations. But there are also two or three that the work is going on right now. For instance, the NPF Act or the Credit Union Act or more but we have spent under this Head for all the work on the Public Financial Management Act (PFM) during next year to deal with the manuals and make seminars and such work.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: This item 2501 on page 105 which is about Maintain - Non Residential Buildings. Just for record purposes because the way it is presented here

seem to suggest that if you look row which difference 2013 revised and estimates and 2014 estimates. Hence, it seems to suggest that we will spend something on 2014 but actually there is zero and that is just a comment. May be when you look at how you present the government accounts it is not very clear because it could distort presentation of accounting information.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I thank the note of the very, important comment raised.

Mr Matthew Wale: Chairman on page 104, I just want to know what is the policy of the government on the treasury bills. I know that the current ceiling has been for many years. Actually it went through some review when I was at the Ministry of Finance but it just seems almost a pointless exercise other than when the securities market is down. So it has a resemblance of a security market to keep it there but other than that it does not seem to serve any other pragmatic use in terms of government's intervention in the money supply and other activities in the monetary policy. So can the minister outline that it is still the same thing throughout these past years or whether he has plans going forward from fourteen as to what it could be?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I recognise that this is a policy question on this matter and the Member is correct in pointing to the fact that Treasury Bills Market remains the same at this stage. But with this provision, because we have forty odd million dollars' worth of Treasury Bills which the government still continues to pay the interest.

In terms of the policy question, the government leave this to the Central Bank to use the mopping up instruments, for example, the issuance of Bokolo Bills and other debt instruments use by the Central Bank. So instead of the government coffering up the expense directly, it leaves it to the Central Bank to do it as a monetary policy tool to address the liquidity situation.

Mr Matthew Wale: I just want to follow up on the answer by the minister and therefore government the government or the minister does not see the capacity for growth in this Treasury Bills and activities in the Central Bank because we seem to complain about excess liquidity in the system and that liquidity could be put to good use, hopefully in the private sector but it is not put to good use in the private sector and whether there is productive use for it in the public sector. Perhaps an expansion of government activity on Treasury Bills would enable this to happen. Does the minister have any plans with regards to this or not?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: With regards to the instrument treasury bills, the government use it not really as an intervention tool. Government uses it as fundraising for short term liquidity problems, like fluctuations in revenue where the government usually uses the treasury bills. They are short term securities; some for three months, some six months and maybe nine months at the most. In fact as we will see later on in this Bill, there is a clause which includes that. It is there as a possibility so that if government needs any short term borrowing to balance its cash flow, that facility is there. But as I have said, I emphasised that these short term securities are for short term fluctuations in government revenue. Government does not use it for things like building houses or road and so forth.

Hon Derek Sikua: I would like the minister to explain the appearance of Film withholding Tax non-residence twice in the budget. I think it I dealt with on page 107. I would like to ask the Minister on why we deal with that in this way, and what this nature of the nature of the income?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: This one is obviously a sub head which I have to really understand. I mean, with regards to the question raised by the Leader of Opposition, we have to really look at this because I do not have an answer to his question right now.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Probably before we vote on the budget as well, if it has an effect of having to double up this figure then the revenue should be justified because it is almost \$1million. Maybe when we are looking at this budget at the Committee stage the Minister should consult his officials to take this up because it could affect the total revenue figure.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I do not think that is could cause any real problems with the figures. It is how the printing was done that makes this to appear as if it is double. But the numbers are correct.

Mr Matthew Wale: IRD refund of previous years is nil there.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: If the Honourable Member has referred to the last item on page107, that one too will be taken up under Head 278 which we will see in page 229 where we expect refunds in next year. Next year's budget, the amount will be \$10million.

Hon Derek Sikua: Export license fees are we not going to receive any money from export license fees Mr Chairman? Or is it called something else now? Are we not going to get any money from export license fees Mr Chairman, because I think it is one of our major revenue earner. If you look at the export license fees, we have not reached the other page yet Mr Chairman, but it also appear on the other side, the same treatment they did for withholding non residence tax. Regarding Inland Revenue and this export license fees they also treated it in Customs and Exercise Mr Chairman, for the Minister to aware on that one.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: Why the export license fees is an item by itself, it looks like it is really big but it is taken up in other licenses fees.

There's other difficulty where come out like printing is same thing, you will see that somehow it print NA and repeated same sub head in other page, it's a printing errors.

Mr Matthew Wale: On sub item 111 - targeting wharf examination facility, which is nil in there. Does your ministry no longer need it?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: This is one area at wharf where vehicles normally pass through and are weighed. I do not know why it appears as zero in here but that function still exists at the Customs Department at the wharf. So that activity will still continue, although in terms of targeted expenses associated with this activity is not mentioned in there per say. I will again have to look into this issue with my officers but that activity will still continue.

Mr Matthew Wale: I would like to ask a question on 112 – financial economic development unit, and I would like the Minister to inform the committee of that unit's role.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: This is a very small unit but they are dealing with quite an important function within the Ministry. They deal with the financial institutions, mainly overseas financial institutions like ADB, World Bank, IMF and local financial institutions like NPF and Central Bank. Those are some of the work that they are doing in the Ministry.

Hon Derek Sikua: Page 113 - Insurance, why is there no income from insurance in 2014, and even this year? What happened to this important revenue source?

In 2012 we have a little bit, but there is nothing for this year and next year. What happened?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: This function is one of those functions that used to be with the Ministry. I think its Head was called 'Controller of Insurance' or something like that. This function is now transferred to the Central Bank so the Central Bank now becomes the controller of insurance. They do the regulations and things like that.

Head 273 agreed to.

Head 274: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade-\$38,011,159.00

Pages 123, 124 &125,

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Page 125, Sub Item 6205 - MSG Secretariat; do we have any commitment in 2014? Can the Minister clarify this?

Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi: The MSG Secretariat has now come under subscription and membership to overseas bodies. You will remember that I have also mentioned this during the 2013 Supplementary bill debate. So it is zero because it is now under subscriptions to overseas bodies.

Hon Derek Sikua: Page 125, Sub Item 4015 - Geneva Mission Grants. There is zero for 2014. Can the Minister confirm if we are going to close our office at Geneva?

Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi: The answer is yes and at the beginning of next year the Geneva Mission will be looked after by our office in Brussels.

Mr Matthew Wale: But then the Brussels mission grant has decreased, it seems that Brussels grant is reduced by \$151,000. Does that mean you are actually reducing the personnel as well, and let the personals who serve at Brussels take over the functions like before?

Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi: Yes, the member is correct. In fact when we had our review on our Heads of Missions, Brussels came up with some accurate figures on utilities and so it just reflect some degrees of utilities in Brussels as well. Hence, one of the officers based in Brussels will be serving Geneva as well and he will only have to travel by train or car.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: Is the Auckland office established already or not. Lately people are talking about a move to Wellington, especially relocation of the office from Auckland to Wellington?

Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi: For the information of the committee the office at Wellington is close to completion and it will open in March 2014 if things happen according to plan. That is how far we go on the Wellington Office.

Mr Matthew Wale: On 124 – ‘office rent’. Recently the Ministry was thinking of moving out from the House they are currently occupying. But they yet relocate, is the ministry going to move out anytime soon and move to any government house or not?

Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi: We will be there for another year due to the hardship of finding a government building. So the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will still be there for another year on renewal able basis.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: The Port Moresby High Commissioner, the last High Commissioner was removed because of inappropriate use of funds. What does the ministry do in trying to recover those funds from that previous High Commissioner?

Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi: The Officer concerned is no longer with the ministry as he has been terminated and is still waiting for the final audit of his case. The case is moved on from the Ministry to responsible authorities. So we will inform the House when the final decision is made about this particular case but that of course will come from another authority.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: Thank you minister for answering that. I think we need to make sure that our High Commissioners and Ambassadors are responsible to

funds from the government and by ensuring that this case is resolved. Only then will other Ambassadors and High Commissioners know that if they misuse funds they will also receive the same punishments.

Just on Brussels; the Brussels mission is a one-man mission and there will be lots of work to be done. And now Geneva will be closed and handed over to him. What is the ministry's plan to beef up the manpower for Brussels to assist this one man mission? This is the same for other missions, like Cuba, only one person is there and this person is responsible for a whole heap of countries in the Caribbean and maybe South America, and also New York.

Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi: The Brussels office as of next year will have a counsellor and secretary as well as other officers. You will note from our submissions that we made provisions for new staff next year, which will be posted to some of the Heads of Missions that we have, based on the demand of work at those Heads of Missions.

Hon Derek Sikua: The Port Moresby Mission will have a substantial increase in its grants for next year. Why is this huge increase in the grants for the Port Moresby Mission?

Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi: You will recall that after the previous Head of Mission left, the office was looked after by a *Charge-de-affair* and the allocation is increased because we have sent a new Head of Mission and his family. That is the increase that is reflected there.

Hon Derek Sikua: Our Sydney Consulate Office will also undergo a substantial reduction. Can the minister explain the reason as to why we reduce our allocation for the Sydney Consulate Office?

Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi: The funds there are basically to look after the ten bed arrangement we have with St. Vincent Hospital. So apart from the figures, we will also make use of the funds from the government to look after our people who go there because the increase we have previously is to do with some of our leaders that we sent there. So what we have advised other ministries to do is that, if we send a minister then his ministry is responsible for him.

Hon Derek Sikua: I still do not understand our Wellington Mission in the narration we talked about on Auckland mission, and one thing I do not understand is, do we have someone and an office, a consulate or whatever you call it in Auckland this year? Are there a number of people that are manning our Auckland office?

Right, the Minister said that by March next year at the latest we are going to open an office at Wellington. I expect then to see that one of our High Commissioners will be there and therefore the allocation should reflect that too. It will not be \$400,000 I can tell you that, it might be more than a million. How this arrangement has worked from Auckland to Wellington and what is happening this time is what I do not understand.

Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi: For the Auckland consulate there is no one there. The Wellington mission does not appear there but that is catered for under the Auckland mission. Since it will be open up next year that \$400,000 we see there is only for the first quarter but the total allocation of the mission of Wellington will be about \$1.5million.

Hon Derek Sikua: So where is it?

Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi: It is not yet here. We need to give room for others, so when the time comes we will ask for it.

Mr Matthew Wale: If there is no one in Auckland this year what will happen to the \$820,000 revised for 2013?

Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi: That \$820,000 was used to establish the Wellington office so some of our officers are there up to Christmas. As I have mentioned earlier it was allocated for Auckland but we used it to establish the office in Wellington.

Mr Matthew Wale: Chairman, I have seen that under the trade facilitation and trade missions there is nothing recorded there. What is the function of External Trade and how are they going to carry it out?

Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi: The two items referred to by the Honourable Member is covered under conferences, seminars and workshops.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: I cannot understand what the Trade Department is currently doing now. Is it all about seminars and workshops? Just for the country to be aware of what our External Trade Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are doing in terms of enhancing trade in our country.

Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi: The Trade Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is quite important to the Ministry and country as well. Apart from trade promotions the Ministry has already started having consultations with the private sector and that will continue this year. It is also involved in building Solomon Islands capacity to be able to participate not only in regional trade but also to eventually play an active part in the overall multilateral trading system, that will only happen when we have the right capacity.

So the trade division is doing that to help Solomon Islands have the capacity to be able to trade. So we have been attending some trades meetings and conferences. We also think that our trade policy is not well informed for the people

who will be actively or who are actively trading such as the private sector. So we initiated private sector consultations and one will happen again this year, so that our trade policies are clearly understood by the very people that do trade which, and this is the private sector.

Mr Matthew Wale: I am happy to hear that much consultation and engagement is taking place between the ministry and the private sectors. This must also tie into the reforms that the government is considering to encourage manufacturing and so forth in our country. We usually sign these trade agreements but we only export taiyo and round logs. So it is one of the big challenges that require reforms to enable us to participate in meaningfully so that it is not a one way for the balance of trade with each of our trading partners. So it is an important one.

Chairman, I would like the minister to inform the House of the progress of the PACER PLUS arrangements because presumably this unit is engage with this process?

Hon Clay Forau Soalaoi: That is what the trade division is, in fact, trying to address - the supply side, like what you have just said. So that is really what we are trying to address in here.

With PACER PLUS, for the information of the committee, as I speak there are two important issues with Solomon Islands, the first was contented issues are one of which is labour mobility and the other is Development Corporation.

We want ANZ to make some legal commitments on labour mobility because it is not good were suddenly they will say its finish. It was only done under and Memorandum of under Standing which is not legally binding. So our position the Forum Islands Countries is we want ANZ to make some legal commitment on that, which is labour mobility. This is included in the PACER PLUS agreement; it should at least be reflected in a separate agreement but legally binding.

And on development cooperation is that this will be an agreement so in order to implement an agreement it will have its own costs, so it must not be confused with the Solomon Islands, AUSAID and NZAid that comes to us, it should have additional funds for us to implement this agreement, if we are signing it. So that's where we are and I am currently the spokesperson for Forum Island Countries and PACER PLUS. So what you are hearing now is first-hand information.

Head 274 agreed to.

Head 275 – Office of the Governor General: \$12,670,114

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: This Item 1901 - Pensions and Gratuities for the Office of the Governor General; there is a substantial reduction, it is only \$129,292. Maybe the Prime Minister or whoever can explain to us what has happened.

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: I think this has been moved to Head 282 Pensions and Gratuities under the Ministry of Finance. So you will find that there is a reduction there but because of the new Chart of Accounts, these pensions and gratuities have now been moved to the Pensions Head under Head 282.

Hon Derek Sikua: Immediately below that the Item the Member for East Choiseul had asked is Item 1902 - Gratuities under Agreement. There was nothing for 2012, 2013, but in 2014, we have a very small allocation of \$7,843. What is this for? Is it for only one person, or what is this? It seems a bit low in my view. Can the Prime Minister explain this?

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: I think you will find that in almost under every Head, there is a Sub Item on Gratuities under Agreement which basically provides for that,

thank you to the people who may have been engaging under agreement or under contract. So you will find that in almost every ministry. There may be some people engage under agreements that is why they have that one there.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Thank you Prime Minister for informing the Parliament but who are those people that we referred to as “others”.

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: I think there is a continuous training for some officers like; domestic officers and those that are looking after the catering services at the government house and I have been advised that this is what they have been doing every year for those officers to attend here in country, for instance, APTC.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: on page 131, right at the bottom there which is about the Committee of Prorogations of Mercy, it has zero there so can the Prime Minister explain that if they are not going to work on it next or what?

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: It one is for fares and accommodation of members so that has been subsuming into other relevant cost items that are here like fares and accommodation and so that is why it is zero.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: I think the Prime Minister touched on 2712 public servants overseas accommodation is a new item which is 329,000. So is that mean that if the Governor General have a trip overseas, all the public officers will have to go with him?

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: Yes, that is to cater for the officials who are accompanying the Governor General when travelling overseas.

Mr Moffat Fugui: on 301, electricity it seems that the number rotates around \$600,000 to \$500,000. If you watch the Governor General's residence in the night my question is there a statutory number of lights so that we maintain the kind of expense that it incurs? That is just out of curiosity.

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: I think there were some arrears from last year, so that is why there is a fluctuation in the allocation there. So it is now put back to that amount but it is a good suggestion that has been offered by the Member for Central Honiara.

Mr Moffat Fugui: Certainly on general stores and spares, \$200,000 pops up for next year. Is there any explanation for that new development?

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: I think there is no need for some household items, like cleaning detergents and so forth in the past. They created this specifically for items like that, where in the past they may have been included under other equipment's or something like that.

Mr Matthew Wale: Overseas fares for office holder, presumably the Excellency; how many overseas trip and to where is planned for 2014?

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: I think the Excellency is planning a trip to London to farewell Her Majesty.

Mr Matthew Wale: The Committee of Prerogative of Mercy is nil and it was also nil for this year maybe because nothing has been done.

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: What they normally used in the past is that for fares, accommodations and so forth. Now they can cater for that under other items that are directly related to fares and accommodations.

Hon Derek Sikua: I always enjoyed the parties at the Government House but I see that but budget I reduced by almost \$49,000 for Entertainments of His Excellency.

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: I think the main reception that the Excellency host every year is the Queen's Birthday. But last year he has to host two additional ones for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and President of Fiji that is why it was increased and now it comes back to only the Queen's Birthday.

Head 275 agreed to

Head 276 – Health and Medical Services: \$294,141,097

Mr Matthew Wale: On page 136 there is a new medical item there which is called 'medical assessment.' Can the Minister explain what this is?

Hon Charles Sigoto: This medical assessment is to support patients who normally go to St Vincent.

Mr. Matthew Wale: In that case the Minister has to clarify where we support patients that go to St Vincent before; is it a different line item? Is the \$1million adequate to cover this?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Yes, this is a new line of item which comes in to support assessments of patients who will go to St Vincent hospital.

Hon Derek Sikua: There is a big increase of more than \$4million on house rental under headquarter and admin. Can the Minister explain the reason for the increase of house rent of more than \$4million?

Hon Charles Sigoto: This increase is to cater for new graduate doctors from Cuba as well as new staff for the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

Mr John Moffat Fugui: Recently and lately the Ministry have been very progressive in terms of staging seminars and conferences. I have noticed that the head is reduced by more than half a million dollars. Is there any explanation for this in terms of looking towards 2014? This is because we have campaigns on smoking, Aids and the rest of them. Why do we reduce it if this is just the beginning of a good thing?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Yes, this reduction is because HCSSP will cater for other costs that we remove here.

Mr Matthew Wale: On page 137 - Overseas laboratory analysis; it the last one in the list in there. It looks like there is a minor reduction there. I am not sure whether they are in some other provision in some other places but I know for this year, 2013, it took us a long time to settle bills from a number of years back. So the specimens that are being sent were delayed. So some of our patients have been waiting for their results and some have already died.

So I think because we are under providing for that because it's only \$16,000 for 2013 and another \$8,000 in the actuals for 2012. It shows clearly that perhaps those arrears are causing these people dragging themselves in their work on our specimens, thus affecting the results. Minister would you please clarify this to the Committee.

Hon Charles Sigoto: This one comes under the National Medical Laboratory and the cost for this year is reduced because we now have a new pathology laboratory in the country where most of the specimens will be examined.

Mr Matthew Wale: I am very happy to hear this progress. So the Minister is saying that in 2014 this new pathology laboratory will open in Honiara? And where will it be located, and what exact date in 2014 will we benefit from its services?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Yes, we have allocated money to build this laboratory under our national laboratory program for 2014. So I will not promise that we will open it in 2014 but we will work on it and see how far we go. But this histopathology will actually assist our medical doctors to do diagnosis and management in the country.

Mr John Moffat Fugui: Page 137, sub item 2604 there is a huge reduction by \$1,247,481 in training other; Minister may care to explain that.

Hon Charles Sigoto: Can the Member of Parliament for Central Honiara please repeat his question.

Mr John Moffat Fugui: Well, it is on page 137 and a code number 2604 training other which it reduced by more than a million dollars. Can the Minister explain why the huge reduction in there?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Yes, this one will come under budget support.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: The work of the group of HIV and STI program is very important in our country and in hospital they have asked people to undergo voluntary test for HIV and other disease relating to HIV and STIs. In our country, we have a lot of active youths and young people and just recently, we have a report

from the Hospital from the HIV and STI programmes, that there are two new cases of HIV. I suspect that in every case, there must be 10 undetected cases. One reported case, you add 10 undetected. I just want to ask the Minister to confirm the two new reports and briefly, what is the work of this group in trying to address this issue in our country with 65 percent of the population are youths, very active in their social life?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Chairman, I think the main activity that this department involves is awareness, where we continue to educate people, especially our young population to be self-conscious of what HIV and Aid in our country. It is also a matter of policy, especially on voluntary basis, where you go and collect blood. You must a volunteer to do those things. So it needs to be a policy matter where the Ministry is working on to try and address it.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: I will give an example of a policy on Tuberculosis (TB). When a person went to test for TB, the whole household must also test for TB as well. Should we have a policy like that so that family members of a HIV patient are required to test for HIV? We do not make it really compulsory, because it is voluntary at the moment. But we have to protect our health and protect our nation. We should have a HIV policy that is similar to the policy for TB.

Chairman: Honourable Member, I think we have to make reference to an Item that is before us. I believe that is a question that requires an answer but I think it is outside of the scope of our deliberation. But anyway, I will ask the Minister to respond to the comments made by the Member for Central Guadalcanal.

Hon Charles Sigoto: I have taken note of what the colleague member for Central Guadalcanal has said.

Hon Derek Sikua: I was looking at the Staff Establishment and Manpower Register. I have not found this Nursing Council Board. Can the Minister inform the Committee what is the work of the people? Mr Chairman that is just a general question on the Nursing Council Board On page 142. It seems to have a staff of its Secretariat, and then some new Items just appeared this year.

I want the Minister to tell us the role of this group. If it is a Board, it should not incur a lot of money like this.

Hon Charles Sigoto: This nursing council board is one very important area in the Ministry of Health. It actually looks at regulations of Nursing in the country and they are responsible for competences and standards where the nurses have to meet.

Mr Matthew Wale: If that is the case then what legislation reviews will come under the nursing council board?

Hon Charles Sigoto: In this legislative review they look at the new regulation of competencies especially on how best they can meet the standards and practises of the nurses.

Mr Matthew Wale: On page 143, on HIV we know that when people contract HIV in many other jurisdictions it need not be fatal illness and they have to be looked after through medicine and of course a lot of awareness throughout mainstream society the education system and also to communities. It is like if we have hepatitis B that is very big and incurable, it is not necessarily fatal but many people have that. So my question is with regards to the patients who have such illness. Firstly the availability of drugs and treatments and from where that is met as it is an expensive treatment?

Hon Charles Sigoto: I think for all our patients they are currently on treatment and those treatments are met through the global fund.

Mr Moffat Fugui: I am still interested in HIV – ‘Publicity and promotion’. \$82,133 seems to be very small. And just out of interest, what kind of promotion are you doing because the Catholic Church abstinence is our principal, while you tell everybody to use rubber and all these. Hence, what kind of promotion do you undertake because \$82,133 is very small if you disseminate this information through literacy in our schools? As the member for Central Guadalcanal has stated, 70 per cent of them are just juveniles or young people from the age of 10 to 25.

I say these because that amount allocated is very small if you start to put them into booklets and disseminate them into our schools.

Hon Charles Sigoto: This area actually looks at ICE materials. That is information, communication and educational materials. We also have other programs that supplement each other on these ICE materials. Health promotion is also doing something and we also have the budget support for the program.

Committee of Supply is interrupted at 4.30pm

Committee of supply resumes

Mr Moffat Fugui: I ask for your indulgence so that I can ask my last question on HIV. Is HIV as a sexually transmitted disease included in our syllabus for schools? This relates to the question on 2008 on the \$82,133.

Hon Charles Sigoto: STI and HIV are already included in our curriculum.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Page 145, sub-item 2103 – General Stores and Spares on the vector borne disease control. There is a decrease of \$9,154 on that item. Can the Minister confirm if we are not going to buy any supplies for that? Or do we have adequate stock for it? Or what supplies are we paying under that item?

Hon Charles Sigoto: With regards to the General Stores and Spares, we have a budget support from AusAid and Global Funds.

Hon Dr Derek Sikua: In page 144, 'TB and Leprosy programs', I would like to ask a specific question on leprosy. I have seen in the news that leprosy is on the rise again in some countries and I am worried because it is a big problem to us and I think we have already manage to control this disease in the 1950s. Is the Ministry aware of it? Because I the allocation here does not reflect this big threat that might reach our country and would devastate our young people very soon. Can the Minister tell us whether they are doing something to this effect, because of the resurgence of leprosy in other parts of the world?

Hon Charles Sigoto: I think the point that has been raised is true. That is why you will see an amount of \$19,000 actually set aside for the prevention of leprosy. We also have an increase in office stationary to actually support this awareness program of leprosy. We have the support in the budget support for TB and leprosy through the global fund.

Mr Matthew Wale: These two sicknesses - TB and leprosy, is it possible for us to totally eradicate it from our country given the adequate resource over a period of time?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Yes, there is possibility that we can totally eliminate both sicknesses. There are countries that eliminate it but we have to work harder in order to achieve that. Through the help of global fund we are able to do awareness to get patients receive treatments.

Mr Matthew Wale: I would like to ask about malaria. Does malaria come under vector bone diseases or not. In the past, I think the former Minister of Health has talked about an elimination program in Temotu, Makira and maybe Isabel. So I am asking about the progress of this program, is malaria eliminated in those provinces or not?

Hon Charles Sigoto: The two provinces that we want to implement an elimination program at are Temotu and Isabel. For Isabel I the program there is very successful because they have a major reduction of malaria case there. But for Temotu they have also showed signs of reduction as well. So it looks like for the two provinces generally we are trying to achieve what we are trying to do.

Hon Derek Sikua: Item 2106 – rations. This is the rations of our sick people Mr Chairman, its really reduce by just over a million dollars to feed our sick patients. The minister can explain why he reduces the rations for our sick patients I mean its allocation for next year.

Hon Charles Sigoto: Chair, what code is the Leader of Opposition referring to.

Hon Derek Sikua: I am on page 147, item 2106 – rations on page 147. I am questioning the reduction there. Why he reduces the allocation on rations for our sick patients by over a million dollars for 2014.

Hon Charles Sigoto: The hospital will receive the grant here and they use it and we have budget support which will support our patients' rations.

Mr Matthew Wale: Again on page 147: the National Referral Hospital - workers compensation just on top of the page. If we are consistent with the Minister for Finances answer today, all workers compensation has been moved to the Ministry of

Finance. But perhaps this one is for National Referral Hospital itself, given the nature of work there which this allocation provides for in here.

Hon Charles Sigoto: I might not explain this better than the Minister of Finance has explained today but I think this is only for National Referral Hospital.

Mr Matthew Wale: It means that the explanation of the Minister of Finance today is not really true, but it is alright as long as it is provided for because it is compulsory.

Further down on other charges – board expenses, what sorts of board is this?

Hon Charles Sigoto: The National Referral Hospital does have one board; it is the Visitors board which they operate on at the Hospital.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Sub item 2030 – medical assessment; the Minister already answered the question on page 136 on the same sub item - 2030 under Headquarter Admin. It is also to support the requirements to assess the patients that will be sent to Saint Vincent hospital which is same with this sub-item under the National Referral Hospital - medical assessment \$500,000, a new item.

Hon Charles Sigoto: This amount here is to support the cardiac team which will be visiting next year for our heart patients.

Hon Derek Sikua: I like to ask a question concerning the 'Board' here, because it has quite a substantial allocation. Can the Minister explain if this allocation is to pay the allowances of the Board? Because this is under the National Referral Hospital, and the condition of the National Referral Hospital makes me to feel that this Board is not doing anything good to see all the problems that we have at the National Referral Hospital. What is the work of the Board, and why it receives a huge allocation as this?

Hon Charles Sigoto: The body normally meets to look at the affairs of the hospital. I think this increase is done because of the thinking about this autonomous hospital where the Ministry will start to look at.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: On page 148, the last item there, right at the bottom - Specialist Equipment. I am just wondering if the Minister can tell me what this specialise equipment? Is for the Telepathology Centre that you are going to establish next year, or is it a different specialised equipment?

Hon Charles Sigoto: I am not able to explain the reason for this huge reduction for this specialise equipment but we have the funds for the specialised equipment for the general hospital under budget support.

Hon Derek Sikua: I am still on page 147, still on this Board. If this Board is doing what the Minister has said, to look after the affairs of the National Referral Hospital then obviously, they have not been doing a good job. I want the Minister to tell the Committee who the members of the Board are and how long their term is because we seem to give them money to sit for Board Meetings. I do not know what they are talking, or where they are looking.

I am really concern about this Board. Can the Minister tell the Committee who the members of the Board are and how they are appointed?

Hon Charles Sigoto: This body did not have any meetings since it was established so I do not have the list to give you and who the members of the board are.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: I am on pages 146 and 147. Pages 146 and 147 both have the Item 0390-0000-2102: Drugs & Dressings, under the National Referral Hospital and it is only a small amount. I just want to know how that will work. I thought that under

the National Medical Stores we buy those drugs and we supply it to the National Referral Hospital. Is that how it works or that under the National Referral Hospital they will still buy them, especially the drugs and dressings.

There is a token allocation there of \$3,653.00 so how does that really work between the National Referral Hospital and then the national Medical store divisions?

Hon Charles Sigoto: the National medical store provides medicine for everyone in the country and it also supply for the National Referral Hospital as well. But for the specific drugs that they need, the National Referral have to buy their own drugs.

Mr Matthew Wale: First, a comment on page 147 on this board that the Leader of Opposition cannot get his teeth out now, it is important that this board works although you are Tran seasoning to autonomous. The National Referral Hospital is at its lowest it has never been for many, many year and so it must work so that it improve the quality of services that are supposed to be provided there. My question is on 148 and it is with regards to patients' local fares, it has gone down by nearly one million and now I understand why many of my constituents who are sick come to my house to find fares to return back home. This reduction is my concern and I do not understand why it goes down as the population goes up.

Hon Charles Sigoto: I am not sure about this reduction but we also support patients' referral through the budget support.

Mr Moffat Fugui: Just a comment before I ask the question. Well, just this afternoon somebody said that he does not have the sea fare to go home. He is a former patient of the National Referral Hospital so I think the Minister should think about this seriously. This is because when you are sick you are at your lowest and do not have any money hence this is where we can help. In terms of survey and research sub-

head – 43219, can the Minister generously explain why it is zero there for 2014? This sub-head is very important for medical reasons.

Hon Charles Sigoto: I think this survey has been done, we have done it already.

Mr Matthew Wale: On page 149, on the national dental program, incidences on the dental problems and mouth cancer not only from poor dental health but also from betel nut and lime. Hence, my concern here is the awareness programs that should go to schools throughout the country. This is an important activity but there is nothing there for it. If the Minister can clarify if they are still going to do it or not? And if they still do it then where will they get the money from?

Hon Charles Sigoto: They have little money for publicity and promotions but this area comes under health promotion. These people are the ones that actually deal with the information and communication in terms of those programs.

Page 150, 151

Mr Matthew Wale: My question is with regards to equipment of imaging, ultra sound scan and x-ray machine. The last time the scanner broke down the service was out for quite a long time. So I want to ask the Minister and as I understand, there is an equipment committee to look into issues regarding equipment. Do you now have the adequate number of imaging equipment that you need in this division?

Hon Charles Sigoto: We have received some equipment this year and for this year we do send some members of our staff into training to be able to handle such equipment. Those are some of the things that we worked on for this year.

Mr Matthew Wale: I appreciate the answer given by the Minister but it really does not sound good to me. I want to know whether you get adequate numbers that you

need according to the equipment list that your committee submitted to you for funding. Do you actually get them? If not then you need to get those provision ready to supplement the number of equipment that you need? That is the thing that I want you to inform the committee about.

Hon Charles Sigoto: For this year, the order procurement has been done and some of this equipment is here already, some are still to come and so at the moment we do not have everyone that we need. But they will be here soon.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: On page 153 sub item 20506 - maintenance of motor vehicles; there is nothing there. Does that mean that this division does not have any vehicle, and if there is a vehicle, where do you get money for the maintenance of that vehicle?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Vehicle maintenance comes under the budget support.

Mr Matthew Wale: I just want to ask about the National Laboratory program. Earlier today the Minister when asked about overseas lab analysis, says, that it is so small and it will be covered under the national lab program. When I look for it there was nothing to cater for deficiency in the provision for lab analysis and in view of the fact that there is work still done on this lab . It looks like we are going to send everything to Brisbane. Where are we going to pay for it? Is HSSP going to cover it or are we going to look elsewhere?

My second question is with regards to the national laboratory program. Is it going to do everything that is normally done in Australia? But in here there seems to be a reduction on salaries of public servants. So I am not sure whether it means you are going to reallocate the internal staff or you are going to get additional staff. It seems you will need more specialist staff which will be more expensive. But there is a reduction in the salaries of the national laboratory programs.

Hon Charles Sigoto: With regards to histology on specimen, it is posted in the office stationary; I think that is the area we would like to improve to establish this lab.

Mr Matthew Wale: So the office stationary is going to cover for histology? You must sort this out properly so that it is reflected in this item. However, I would like the Minister to address my second question with regards to the national laboratory's manpower requirements in view of the fact that the expectation of the Ministry is that they would overtake most of the work done in Australia.

Hon Charles Sigoto: I think this is not intended to be like this but I think we also have an officer that is going to retire soon.

Page 152, 153

Mr Matthew Wale: I am really concerned about these tests and the Minister's answers left me hanging in mid-air. Under overseas lab there is only a few thousand dollars there. The Minister said that it is covered under the national laboratory but it is clear here that even if the allocation under 'office stationary' goes towards it, it looks like it is grossly under provided for as well.

In terms of its manpower level, and in order for the national laboratory to really take on this role, it is also not provided for. To me this is an area that is a life and death situation at the National Referral Hospital because some of our people in the process of waiting for results passed away. The reason is because we do not pay our bills because we do not provide for them under these allocations. So it would seem to me that the Ministry has fumbled this aspect of the country's health sector and it does need to be sorted out. This is because it does have the potential to result in deaths that could have been prevented.

Hon Charles Sigoto: Yes, Chair, under 'National Referral Hospital' they will also receive \$1.2million for hospital grants so they might look at such concerns.

Mr Matthew Wale: I Just want to follow through in regards to the Ministers answer. This \$1.2million of hospital grants is very small. On that grant, for instance, the allocation (\$1million) for 2013 is not sufficient to purchase toilet papers and soaps insides the bathrooms and so forth. So for us to expect this hospital grant to pay for this histology, I think the budget will be really stretched here. What is really good is for us to have a clear line item for that and on the basis of experience after all these years we allocate a clear amount for it so that test results come back in time and the problem is addressed. This is simply because it can result in a life and death situation that is why I am concerned. But if it is something to do with purchasing a vehicle or overseas trips or then there is no need. But this is life and death and yet we allocate a lot of money to go overseas. We should be allocating money for this because this one is clear so we should allocate adequately for it.

But perhaps this is for the Minister to take note of because it will no longer happen in this budget so that your ministry may sort it out.

Hon Charles Sigoto: I take note of the point raised by my colleague the Member of Parliament for Aoke/Langalanga.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Sub item 2301 – Fuel which is only \$4,100. Do we have vehicles there? that's first question. Is that amount adequate for fuel needs of that unit – the Environmental Health unit? I am asking this because there is also nothing in the budget support as well.

Hon Charles Sigoto: This one has money allocated for it under budget support.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: I have checked in the budget support and there is nothing there on fuel. The corresponding with National Environmental Health in the budget support there is nothing there.

My question is whether this \$4,100 is adequate for fuel supply need for that particular unit. I am asking that question because he is saying that budget support will help out but also there is nothing in there on page 195, is the budget support going to help out with this unit here?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Yes Chair, this Environmental is supported by budget support and it also supported by EU. So we can find assistants there to support the programme.

Hon Derek Sikua: Page 155, Item 2003 on Bank Charges. Mr Chairman, Bank Charges, I usually see under the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Health has just put this allocation of \$1,000 for 2014 for bank charges. All the other years, there is no allocation for this. Can the Minister explain this sudden appearance of bank charges inside his budget under training and research?

Hon Charles Sigoto: I think I cannot explain how that amount comes in there. I cannot explain it.

Mr Matthew Wale: Yes, Mr Chairman, on page 154, under Environmental Health, Item 2204 Board Expenses, this year is nil, last year it was only \$3,127. My question is, do they have a board for environmental health; what is the composition of the board and what is their work?

Hon Charles Sigoto: I will find out about this further, because we understand, we do not have any board under environmental health.

Mr Matthew Wale: I just clarification from the Minister of Finance. A lot of things so far, in education earlier on and now we are on health that the Ministries are not aware of. Is this the result of the system, the Chart of Accounts? It seems to be something is parked in some place where people do not have any idea on. Can you clarify this?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I do not get this particular Head. But what the Honourable Member has said, this occurrence with the numbers appearing at different places is to do with this new Chart of Accounts, where we try to comply with. Some of the numbers when they printed this document, like under my Ministry, the document was printed appear at different columns. So it is just a type or kind sort of error here. But like I said, the total numbers where we will vote on is not change.

Mr Matthew Wale: On research, it has Training and Research, but research is what I want to ask about, how many different researches have happened in our health system and on what areas of interests?

Hon Charles Sigoto: I think the main research that is currently dealt with under the Ministry of Health is no Malaria and this based on Central Islands Province.

Hon Derek Sikua: on page 157, in terms of eye division one of the new allocations that are there to train the provincial nurses, so can the Minister explains the nature of this training for our provinces?

Hon Charles Sigoto: This training for the eye nurses from the provinces and they will come to attach at the National Referral Hospital.

Mr Matthew Wale: Thank you Chairman, 156 on social welfare development but the social welfare service at the bottom has nothing so my first question is does it move

to another place and my second question is do we have these service made available in the provinces or are just provided here in Honiara?

Hon Charles Sigoto: I cannot explain that as well but such services that the social welfare can provide can come under the other areas on the program especially on the budget support.

Mr Matthew Wale: in the budget support that the Minister mentioned is also zero and so it is also not provided there as well. So if the Minister does not know then then perhaps the Minister for Finance can explain why it is zero. It is a small division but it is very important because it deals with some of the most vulnerable people in our society and so it needs to be adequately funded so that is can provide adequate level of service to some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Hon Charles Sigoto: For this service they money is under the provincial grants.

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: On page 157, about this high division can the Minister confirm if they have vehicle and if yes then who have the provisions for the fuels and maintenance of vehicle. This is because if we go on budget support it is zero as well.

Hon Charles Sigoto: The social welfare

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: If it is like that then my question is that the allocation of fuel under sub item 2301 is \$1,573 does not fit and the maintenance of vehicle is \$2,621 which is also not fit as well to maintain that vehicle for a full year and there is nothing in the budget support is nothing as well.

Hon Charles Sigoto: For this year allocation that is what the budget division give us and so we will just see how we can support them next year.

Mr Derek Sikua: This eye division did some good job to return the eye sight of some of the old people and they are very happy about it. I just want to ask the Minister, where we put money to bring this important service to our people who have problem with their eye sight. This is because it is a good one but I am also feel sorry if we do not provide money for it but can the Minister assure us where they put the money to bring these overseas Doctor especially for 2014?

Hon Charles Sigoto: The team that normally come annually are being funded through Australia.

Pages 158 & 159

Mr Matthew Wale: 158 on Malaita Province, the health services grants; the hospital is \$2.2million, Church hospital grant is \$2.6million and that is more than the provincial hospital. I presume that is Kilu'ufi and may be Malu'u and so can the Minister confirms if Malu'u is inside and if Malu'u is not inside then where is Malu'u covered. Also, if Malu'u is not inside then how come Kilu'ufi is less than Atoifi?

Hon Charles Sigoto: I think there are two grants, one is primary and the other is hospital and so most of the peripheral area health centres come under this \$5.3million. This one that goes direct to the hospital will go straight to Kilu'ufi.

Mr Matthew Wale: If that is the case then the second part of my question is, why Atoifi does has \$2.5million and Kilu'ufi which is a bigger hospital and has a bigger catchment is allocated \$2.1million. And so what are the basis of such calculations.

Hon Charles Sigoto: I think for this one at Atoifi has been looking after the health centres of East Malaita and that is why it goes up like that. For Kilu'ufi it has \$5million to cater for the rest of the clinics around Malaita because Atoifi signed an agreement to look after those ones at East Malaita, thank you.

Hon Derek Sikua: Item 4054; the grant that goes towards school of nursing at Atoifi is very small. What is this grant for because it seems to be very small? Can the Minister explain what this grant is for?

Hon Charles Sigoto: I think this amount is to support the church to run the school.

Hon Peter Shanel Agovaka: Mr Chairman, if you visit Makira/Ulawa province at their hospital, it is actually running down and I am wondering whether the last item under health service grant would be able to assist in the renovation. Or is it inside the development plan? Can the Minister confirm on whether the renovation of the hospital is in the development plan or is it in the health service grant.

Hon Charles Sigoto: Renovation comes under development budget.

Hon Matthew Wale: I would like the Minister to inform the House on how many doctors are there in Kilu'ufi now.

Hon. Charles Sigoto: I do not have the actual figure with me but I think we have about four doctors at Kilu'ufi.

Hon Matthew Wale: Kilu'ufi is a centre for some us and some of us might end there so we have to look after it very carefully because it has a mental unit and I wonder what work; because I think there are some up grading work because during Christmas all the patients might be having their Christmas in communities because

some work has been going on but that work has been protracted. Can the Minister inform the House on when the work on the mental unit is going to complete and how many programs do they have for patients that perhaps should go back under the supervision and treatment on this unit?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Yes, the work on the Psychiatric unit in Auki is on-going.

Hon Derek Sikua: Just a general question on page 159. Sometimes ago there has been problems in recruiting a doctor for our hospital in Kirakira; I would like the Minister to inform the House on whether that problem is solved and that we have a resident doctor or doctors in Kirakira now.

Hon Charles Sigoto: Currently we do not have any doctor in Kirakira but I think a doctor will go to Kirakira in January next year.

Mr Moffat Fugui: I would like the Minister to clarify his previous question on behalf of our people in Makira. When do we expect the doctor to go to Kirakira?

Hon Charles Sigoto: I think our posting committee has already discussed this and the new doctor will be posted to Kirakira in January.

Mr Matthew Wale: I would like to ask about Helena Goldie School of Nursing, I supposed same question will apply for Atoifi school of nursing, accreditation between those two schools here and within the program of SINU and recognition of qualifications where these schools here conferring to the graduates and whether they were recognized and be employed in service, I don't know what level as they come as for registered nurses or still nurse aid or something like that for Minister to inform the committee.

Hon Charles Sigoto: Chair, I think currently the Nursing Council is working on this which they are trying to unifying the curriculum from where they are reaching is I am unable to make it available of decisions in which they are reaching at this time but the Nursing Council is working on it in unifying the curriculum.

Mr Matthew Wale: So now the graduates from those two schools, actually Malu'u is also doing it but I think Malu'u is specifically for Nurse Aid training but we did not give any assistance presumably that comes under primary health services grants yeah.

But currently what kind of qualification do they conferring to their graduates and how do we treat them when we employing them.

Hon Charles Sigoto: Currently those graduates the government is employing them, when they are graduate they are graduated with diploma. What Nursing Council is trying to do is to look into the curriculum so that everybody studies in same areas and so forth.

Mr Matthew Wale: Some years ago one of the regional programs was to have been based at one of these two schools of nursing, specifically to train nurses for age care. I think it might be in Atoifi for the Canadian Markets.

Now I seem to remember such I think coming to Cabinet when I was in Cabinet in the last House and getting government approval but I like a little bit up date from Minister whether this thing did go ahead or its fall through the loops somewhere.

Hon Charles Sigoto: Chair, I think plan to carry out that program in Atoifi so they come around and do a feasibility study but that program is not yet carried out.

Hon Derek Sikua: I like the Minister to inform the committee of how many of our doctors worked in our hospital in Western Province and how many of our doctors worked in our hospital in Ysabel Province.

Hon Charles Sigoto: Chair, in Ysabel Province there is one doctor and in Western Province I think there were four doctors.

Mr Selwyn Riumana: I know in Ysabel Province we only have one doctor.

Does the ministry have any plan to increase a number of doctors in Ysabel Province?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Ysabel province actually it has two doctors but the other one is currently on special leave so that's why we have one in there.

Mr John Moffat Fugui: In Western Province, and of course in Malaita, they have given them Church grants. I do not see that for Isabel. If that is the case, what is the justification or what are the reasons that we do not have Church grants given to Isabel province.

Hon Charles Sigoto: Those Church grants were only given to Atoifi and Helena Goldie.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: On page 163, the Church grant, I believe this must be Good Samaritan hospital. My complain or concern is, it is \$912,000 compared to the Church Grant to Atoifi and Helena Goldie Hospital whose grants are so huge. Is there any justification or a reason as to why the grant for Guadalcanal is small?

Hon Charles Sigoto: The grant is for the Good Samaritan Hospital, and I think this grant is like that because the Good Samaritan Hospital is small compared to the other two.

Hon Derek Sikua: Again I want to ask the Minister to tell the Committee on how many doctors are there in the Central Province, and how many are serving Guadalcanal Province.

Hon Charles Sigoto: For Guadalcanal, there are two doctors. For Central Province, currently we do not have any doctors there. But the posting Committee has already met to post a doctor there in 2014.

Hon Derek Sikua: I want to ask the Minister. What is the problem with posting of doctors to our provincial hospitals? Is it because we are short of doctors or when the posting Committee posted a doctor to the provincial hospitals, the doctors do not want to go. If the doctors are the ones that do not want to go, what measures is your Ministry going to take to discipline or penalise the doctors that do not want to go to the provincial hospitals.

Hon Charles Sigoto: I think the main reason we have is, the shortage of doctors in this country. Because the number of our graduate doctors overseas do not want to come back. So I think the main reason is the shortage of doctors.

Pages 162 & 163

Mr John Moffat Fugui: I just want to comment, and then I will ask the question. The answer that the Minister has just given is a very poor answer that I do not even want to believe because it is his responsibility to make sure that doctors are there. Mr Chairman, that is not a good enough answer. It is least good, but a worst answer. So we must put doctors where our people live.

My question for the Minister is that, what sort of incentives, up and above, what they are remunerated, we give, so that doctors go to the places where our people live because we are talking about lives here, we enjoy it here but people there are sick and have problem is not good enough, so can the Minister answer that?

Hon Charles Sigoto: I think the area where the ministry is working at the moment is the reviewing of their scheme of service for the Doctors, so that their incentives are well taken care off. The other area is on the specialised retention program where the Ministry is working with the National Referral Hospital to put little money into it.

Mr Matthew Wale: In terms of Aviation for many years pass until this year the Member for Lau/Mbaelelea has successfully open the second international airport and then you spoil him by reallocating \$20million from him which he should use to complete the terminal. But anyway what is important is that we now have another international airport but in terms of Referral Hospital we should also have another Referral Hospital. If tsunami comes and then National Referral is washed away then what will we do and that is the question that I want ask the Ministry about with regards to contingency planning. As the days that we are living now are last days and so we should have another Referral Hospital.

Hon Charles Sigoto: I think the Ministry is trying to upgrade Gizo hospital and Kilu'ufi hospital.

Mr Matthew Wale: I am happy to hear that but for Gizo the tsunami just hit last time and so for this upgrade what will involve in it and when is it going to start to get two hospital to the level that they are strong as Referral hospital that we need.

Hon Charles Sigoto: I do not get the question.

Mr Matthew Wale: I just want to know about this upgrade that you will do on these two hospitals .That is when is it going to start?

Hon Charles Sigoto: I think what we are working on is to create specialised posts so that once this retention program is working then we will start to deploy consultants to them.

Mr Matthew Wale: I am happy to hear the answer that the Minister gives but when is it going to start?

Hon Charles Sigoto: We have already created those posts and ready to deploy surgeons. We have already deployed a surgeon to Kilu'ufi. In Kilu'ufi we already posted a surgeon there. So we have already begun.

Mr Selwyn Riumana: Mr Chairman, the level of funding on the health service grant primary, what are the factors to determine on how much funding is being given to provinces?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Thank you Chair, we have a policy at the Ministry of Health which we called it the role delineation and which determine the level of services and staff and like that. That determines the allocation that goes to the provinces.

Hon Derek Sikua: Just my usual question on page 164 and 165 with regards to the number of doctors that we have in Lata, Temotu province and Taro, in Choiseul province. Can the Minister inform the Committee?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Temotu has one, in Choiseul we posted one there but when he reached there, there was no accommodation for him. So, currently he is in Gizo and as soon as his house is complete he will go to Choiseul.

Hon Derek Sikua: I just want to ask the Minister on whether there is any doctor in Tigoa, in Rennell and Bellona province?

Hon Charles Sigoto: They have one doctor there but he is based in Honiara but normally he made visits to Rennell and Bellona.

Mr Matthew Wale: Why is that? Is it because there is no accommodation in Tigoa?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Next year we are planning to post the doctor there.

Pages 168, 169, 170 & 171

Mr Matthew Wale: In page 168; 'Physiotherapy and rehabilitation.' I would like to know on how many qualified therapist are in this unit.

Hon Charles Sigoto: Chair, I do not have the actual number but I can provide the list in the pigeon holes.

Mr Douglas Ete: Can we go back to page 167-*Public health laboratory*. This is one of the departments that is always been underfunded and not supported under an annual budget of the Ministry of Health and once you look at it in here, the equipment and those other things here they almost like to take them away. So I would like to ask the Minister why is that happening?

Hon Charles Sigoto: This is one of our new division and we do not overlook it in our budget support- we have a little bit of money for it there.

Mr Matthew Wale: National Mental Health Programs here around the world mental health Mr Chairman, is becoming an increasing problem. The mental health of people is becoming one of the main health issue for countries and we can laugh at it

because we think it is a bit funny but when it slowly creep up on you, you may not realize but when it hits you it is probably late by then.

And so I wonder if there is some research being done Mr Chairman, under our national mental health programs to ascertain the level of this problem whether this problem is increasing in our society and in what sectors of our society perhaps identifying causes and perhaps how we can respond in it, if there is such work happening I like the Minister to inform the committee but if there is also no work in it for the Minister to also inform the committee as well and may be to tell the idea of government as to whether they want to commission such research for informing policy formulation.

Hon Charles Sigoto: We are not conducting any research in mental health in this country but it is part of the non-communicable disease that we are trying addressing them together but we are yet to carry out specific research. Thank you.

Mr Douglas Ete: This Kilu'ufi hospital is uninhabitable now and I think there was a change of thinking to bring it back to Honiara and also in Honiara this clinic is not like a clinic now. People are coming and just throwing human waste underneath those places in Honiara just towards the sides and it is no longer like a hospital it needs to be improved both Kilu'ufi and the one in Honiara.

What is the thinking of government about it because I have not seen any head in here to support that arrangement?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Well in Kilu'ufi the work is currently going on and I will take note of the point raised by the Member of Parliament for East Honiara.

Mr Moffat Fugui: Thank you Chairman for privileging me with the last question. How many psychiatric doctors do we have now, and how many are in training?

Hon Charles Sigoto: We have only one psychiatric doctor in the country, and one is currently on training now.

Mr Moffat Fugui: Thank you Chairman for your generosity. The Minister has just eluded the last part of it. So how many psychiatrist students are now in training so that we deal with the problem? It is ever increasing problem, where we just take for granted. Chairman, all over the country, we are already, very serious with this sort. So how many are now in training?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Chair, only one is current in training. One is already working with us.

Mr Matthew Wale: Thank you Chairman for your due indulgence, most gracious. Sir, I just want to know, because Kilu'ufi is closed, and the capacity of the facilities here at the National Referral Hospital is limited. What has happened when we have patients? What have you done, you just release them to their homes? Because it looks like the capacity for us to deal with this issue is a bit constraint at this present moment. What steps should families be taking when faced with this problem?

Hon Charles Sigoto: Chair, psychiatric services at Kilu'ufi is not totally closed down. We have psychiatric nurses who are still there. Only the doctor has returned here. With regards to services, it is still provided there.

Head 276 agreed to.

Head 277 Infrastructure Development-\$63million

Mr Matthew Wale: With regards to income on Sub Item 216-Headquarter Admin-Rechargeable Works. The actual in 2012 was \$1.3 and the provision is 864 for the budget for next year and I want to know why the Ministry anticipate such reduction from the actuals or money that they called from this one of 2012.

Hon Seth Gukuna: Chairman, somehow the Ministry fail and that we will not going to do much work next year and we felt that most of the works that we did this year are done. So we hope this amount will truly reflect what we thought that will be actual work done for the next financial year.

Mr Matthew Wale: Can the Minister clarify which rechargeable works is he referring to and that they collect money from?

Hon Seth Gukuna: thank you chairman, the ministry has involved a lot of work even in the private work. That is sometimes they hire our staff especially our engineers and the professionals of the Ministry of Infrastructure Development. Hence, from that kind of work we put charges on them because sometimes Gold ridge mine hire them to design their works and there are also other entities that hire us and so that is where this revenue come from.

Mr Douglas Ete: I am still in the revenue that is on 215, just this year the actuals according to the revised budget they said that they will make money in terms of the lights. That is when the ships come and see it they will be paying that fee but then you will find here on page 215 the revenue of this year that is 2013 fiscal year was \$46million and the estimated projection for next year 2014 has drop to \$11million. Hence, what would account for that drop in the revenue of the Ministry of Infrastructure & Development?

Hon Seth Gukuna: The Honourable colleague goes well ahead into page 220 that talks about light revenue and I can respond to him if that is okay. But I believe we are still 115, 116 and 117.

Hon Derek Sikua: I want to ask my good friend the Minister of Infrastructure development to explain this new allocation on item 2409 Office rent. That is a new allocation for 2014 and it is about \$200,000 hence what office are you going to rent and where is that?

Hon Seth Gukuna: Thank you Leader of Opposition, if you go pass the Office of Infrastructure Development you would have notice that over the last year or so we have been trying to make our office look nice. Hence, we have carried out extensive maintenance work on 6.07 – 6.12 As of next year we plan to go inside the office and do a major repair and maintenance on floor number one and floor number two. That will mean that we will have to move them out to some other places so we have made provisions to cater for that moving out and those repair work.

Mr Mathew Wale: I go back through the rechargeable works of the income on page 216, when the engineers went to do little works for private individuals or companies, on different services, maybe on marine going to Japan to bring a ship, or some other engineering or gold ridge works or something like that, these are standard rates that you charge it and also do you allow them to levy something extra on top of that so that they can take it personally?

I just thought of the embalment at the National Referral Hospital, the NRH collect a part and another part go to the Doctor who do the embalment seems to be unacceptable arrangement. And engineers professionals and whether such a scheme is also used to help them if they are doing such a work. But the main question is whether you have standard rates that you have charged these companies?

Hon Seth Gukuna: Thank you Colleague. I guess we have some standard charges for that one. And we will not go and charge it just anyhow. I guess it will base on the kind of work that will be done and how long the work will take. My Officials will know. I would imagine that it will have some standard rates to guide the pricing of the kind of work outside our normal Government and Public responsibilities.

I have just been advised too that, maybe it will be used for that reduction in that amount that shows the increase in capacity in other organisations, other private sectors, and other Ministries' capacities. So there comes in the expectation that maybe drags on, and capacities in other areas increase, maybe the ministry will not get to involve now. But as to the core question that my colleague asked, I will imagine that there would be some standard charge rates for that one.

Hon Derek Sikua: My good friend the Minister for Infrastructure really does not have any money to travel next year. Does this really reflect your work there Mr Chairman.

I know the Minister of works hardly travel but you really do not think of taking any overseas trip next year, my good friend the, Minister of Infrastructure? You will not have any money for that or the Prime Minister who just walked in now will feel sorry for you and will give some money for you or what will happen here Mr Chairman. Thank you.

Hon Seth Gukuna: I told them to put zero there, but they put some money there so I do not know where their thinking is.

Mr Matthew Wale: On page 218, Land Transport Division. I like to know there are three allocations here for maintain roads and bridges, maintain structures, airfields and wharves, and how that relates to or does not relate to the National Transport Fund which is 10 million. Whether these are separate or these could be under the

programs of National Transport Fund 6.12 – 6.17 programs on the national transport fund, just for the Minister to clarify.

Hon Seth Gukuna: Chairman, all these Heads are for maintenance including the National Transport Fund (NTF). In the development budget there is provision for NTF and that is used mainly for forward work but all these accounts like for bridges and roads; NTF deals with whatever is funded out of it in the development budget.

Mr Matthew Wale: In that case Mr Chairman I am glad to hear this. How many additional new kilometres of roading does the Ministry plans to build in 2014.

Hon Seth Gukuna: Thank you Chairman, I think the understanding in the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development and the Government including past governments is that we strive to achieve some kind of completion of roads that is total up to 100kikometers. Sometime we fail and sometimes we go through but that is the understanding objective of the Ministry in terms of establishing roads.

Mr Moffat Fugui: We are under land transport division; are very ignorant of why Trans shipping comes under the land transport division if the Minister can care to answer that?

Hon Seth Gukuna: Chairman that amount is very minimal and there are a lot of overlaps on our work, and I think that land transport; it is true that it has nothing to do with sea or marine as we would have expect on this.....FTR.....shipping. But for some reason with regard to convenience and our inter offices work; as some work we have taken against.....FTR.....shipping in the offices. Even at the headquarters too, it might not appear properly in the accounts but we do incur some administration course.

Hon Derek Sikua: Page 218. Just a general question to the Minister; With the maintenance funds on roads, bridges, structure, airfield and wharfs including the NTF \$10million; Can the Minister inform the Committee on how the Ministry can allocate those funds if someone wants to apply for it, what do you do with those funds? Do you allocate them to certain parts of the country or provinces? Just for the Minister to explain on how these funds are allocated. For example, I am applying for those funds to repair roads and bridges in North East Guadalcanal.

Hon Seth Gukuna: The activities of the Ministry in terms of distribution or maintaining bridges and wharfs and all that relates directly to our National Transport Fund. We have a plan; I believe that when we are on the previous government we also have the same plan. We try as much as possible to stick to that plan, but then off course when we have resources that are limited or when we have resources that are not enough and when we come to the idea of equal distribution of these resource sometimes it distorts the efforts of the Ministry to stick to that National Transport Fund, sorry, stick to those allocations. But basically the guiding documents that guides the distribution of our maintenance funds is based on this NTF **6:22 – 6:27** we try to involve communities in some of these projects. So we try to bring those projects as close as possible to the communities by involving them in labour-based, small contractors or small group of people. I think the list that you refer to are just labour-based groups; they entirely used things like wheel barrows and other things to maintain the road. The operation at the NTF is run by a board. It has nothing to do with MID in terms of awarding those contracts.

Mr Matthew Wale: There are a number of problems when the Ministry dig the road and the villagers nearby came and dig drains across the road, or you tar sealed the road, they dig drains and make bumps to slow the traffic down. Even in town, some roads in town, residents around those areas also did those kinds of things. There are problems with road reserve as well, where the Ministry of Lands allocate road

reserve and sometimes people just squat on the road reserve areas. So I am just wondering who is responsible for this, and to make sure that we do not repeat the expenditure when works on the roads are already done, then people come and destroy. If the Ministry consult with communities that road went through their area, and they want road hump. Perhaps in the construction, that could be part of the design, so that it satisfy the safety needs of communities around that stretch of road, but also at the same time it is not too much of a nuisance to traffic as well. But I just want to know, because it needs a little bit of publicity and promotion as well. But I do not see any money under the Land Transport Division to make people more aware of the legal issue surrounding road.

Hon Seth Gukuna: Just before I come to your question. I just want to give some information to the previous colleague who asked about the NTF. You may have notice that a report is being distributed as well. I think if you are very interested in NTF, it is important that you read that audit report about the NTF.

Your question, one of the Bills that we have been trying to introduce, and I believe it has been passed to another entity to do some work with it, is this Infrastructure Management Bill. That is supposed to be a very good Bill, but the consultants or experts who have been looking through that Bill think that there should be some work redone on it. So it has been passed on to some other institutions and entities to rewrite or redo that Bill. But that Bill is supposed to deal with our road environment, including those people that build on the road sides.

When this Bill will come to this House, I do not really any idea. But it is a good Bill. All I can say is, it is a good Bill. I have seen the initial copies of it. We need to pass it, but we have been asking for it, we have looking for it, but somehow it is a bit slow. It cost us a lot of money. Until next it is passed on to other people. But you know our place at Ngossi; I have also put a bump because vehicles are going very fast. But it is not tar, just ground. People get endangered because people just drive so fast in some areas where they should not be driving so fast. So people take this thing

themselves and build their own bump, trying to tell these people to slow down and drive with common sense 6.27 – 6.32 because the place is small. But I guess that when this management infrastructure Bill is finally finalised then the next minister of MID will bring it here and it will help to set a lot of legal powers from the Ministry and especially for road authorities to try and deal with congestions and people who are building on the side road. If you go up at Lunga the area near to Henderson you will notice that people are already building houses on the roads that was declared on 1964 as public road and that the perimeter were already set out. We went there and try to talk to them but they nearly throw stones at us and we run away.

Hon Derek Sikua: I want to ask about the item 2512 especially about the maintenance of ships. There is a substantive amount there, of more than \$300, 000 and so do the government still have ships? I know that there was a landing craft ship so are we still repairing this landing craft ship yet? Other than that I want to ask if we still have ships to maintenance that are under this allocation.

Hon Seth Gukuna: We still have some search & rescue crafts so we use that Head to cater for them and sometimes we use to help the people who offer services for the government. But it is mainly to deal with search & rescue craft in the marine.

Mr Matthew Wale: My last question on land transportation in term of the road. The land acquisition of the roads I know that last time or few years ago there was publicity argument about road that goes from Lunga Bridge to Henderson that is illegal as it inside the Levers Solomon's land and so I wonder if this issue has been resolved by having it properly acquired but again it beg the question for all other roads if they have been properly acquired or not yet?

Hon Seth Gukuna: My Permanent Secretary has advise me that this particular road that you are referring to, that stretch from the bridge to the Henderson. Our Ministry has been doing some acquitting land and we are working on it to have that place declared as a public road.

Mr Peter Shanel Agovaka: This week one ship capsized on this way to Malaita now I am just wondering whether those on the marine division do their work as many of our people are travelling back to their province. Is there any check that this division does as stated in the regulation or shipping Act for the safety of these travelling ships? Also can the minister confirm if the marine are working for the safety of the ships? This is because in here it is zero and so what will we do for next year?

Hon Seth Gukuna: Yes, let me assure this country that the ministry through its marine division, it does its best to make sure there safety at the wharf when our ships depart for the provinces. The particular sad incidents that happened the marine 6.32 – 6.37 to do their work with the Police for some reasons which you would have read on the paper this morning that the boss of the ship have decide to take off under cover of darkness in the early morning. That ship was actually detained, waiting for proper checks in the morning but it took off. You would know that marine is under Police doing operations.

If that person obeyed the checks that have been put at the wharf this incident would not have happened. It will always happen even if we give to the best to ensure that it does not happen; people will always try to act smart, and I believe this is what has happened. But let me assure you my colleague that, yes, as of 1st December to January next year the Ministry will try its best to ensure that there is safety on the loading of ships at the wharf.

Mr James Tora: On page 211, Franchise shipping, I have seen that there is a zero there. If the Honourable Minister can inform the Committee on whether this

program has still continued but if it continued, is there any mechanism system in place to monitor shipping companies that have been offered this contract to run uneconomical routes because I have seen that many ships usually puts up high freights and high rates of fare so I would like to know on whether there is a control or monitoring mechanism in place?

Hon Seth Gukuna: As you know the actual funding of **Franchise** shipping program is done by the aid donor which is the Asian Development Bank (ADB) which should appear on our non-appropriated funds. This amount is mainly to cater for the administration of **franchise** shipping. I have been told that the eight routes that have been identified as being qualified; this Shipping....**FTR**..... is all in operational and that should explain why we think that this particular Head should not incur any cost unless it comes to tender again and retender and invite tenders for those routes. But at the moment the eight routes that were identified as qualified for **franchise** shipping is all occupied. So we expect that we should not be dealing with anymore tender and recalling of tenders.

Mr Matthew Wale: We have earn money from those lights and during the Public Accounts Committee officials said that our people too were stealing some solar panels and things like that and those lights were not able to function so when those big ships went past the lights they do not see them so they do not want to pay fees for those lights. I want to know on how many of those lights were not functioning, and how many years do those lights not working because there is a substantial reduction in the fees which we estimate to collect from this particular revenue.

Hon Seth Gukuna: Actually seven of those lights were non-functional and it happens to be the important ones that should guide the international ships that come in. You have rightly pointed out that since they were taken out of service **6.37 – 6.42** those ships and international companies refuse to pay us. One of the issues that

relates to the damaging and removal of those lightings are land issues, and we thought that we should start addressing the issue of land. So if you look down further there, there is land rent cost of more than quarter million dollars which is a new cost and we thought that we should use that to try and address issues that affects our lightings, and that claims for lease on those locations addressed, so that is why we put in some extra money there to try and lease those places. But you are correct that seven of our important lights were removed and as a result international seafarers that come here are reluctant to give us payments. That is why the amount that we expect last year does not come out to the amount that appears in our local papers.

Mr Matthew Wale: I would like to follow through on that question. Does those seven lights being damage for the full year of 2013 or was it damaged since 2012 as well?

Hon Seth Gukuna: For that question I really have to ask my Permanent Secretary to give me the details for it, but he just said that we have replaced those lights two or three times. But I am sure that the whole of last year we did not; we do not have the money because when we replace them they were damaged. I think those lights might have already been damaged; it is not cheap because it cost the Ministry a lot of money to repair those lights.

Mr Matthew Wale: I am following through on this question because when I look at the actuals for 2012 it was 8.2m which is almost similar to the estimate of 2014 which is 8.8, yet 2013 which is this year increase to 44m. So if those lights were still in operation in 2012 and only picks up 8.2m then perhaps the estimate for 2014 is about right but obviously in 2013 there was some expectation of increase collections that did not materialized. So assuming more of those lights becoming non-functional in 2013 and going into 2014 is the reason for this huge reduction.

So my question is, now that you have a quarter of a million for land rent, will it resolve those issues and landowners will not damage our lights there? Should that not be reflected in the estimates of fees that you would collect because if you repair them hopefully you will pay the rent and landowner will be happy so they will not damage them? And where do you provide for this repair? Where are going to get money to repair those lights?

Hon Seth Gukuna: As you correctly induce from the figures, in 2010 and 2011 most of these lights were not yet installed. This program has went on for the last five or six years, I agree with you that there were some expectation in 2012 when these lighting systems were finally installed that we would capture good revenue this year but it did not happen, but it then went down to a level where we thought that we either go back to the level or we put in some figures that would also turn out so whichever way we decide to go is up to us. But I guess we opted to think that it is safer to maintain and go back to where we were and if it works out with this provision of land rental then we will have some good revenue.

In terms of replacing those lightings, actually there is a provision in the NTF that caters for that. It is still part of the marine transport system; of our transport system NTF **6.42 – 6.47** Marine transport system where of our transport systems were NPF is ...?.... So there is a little provision in there to try and cater for this maintenance things for changing those lights.

Head 277 agreed to

Head 278 – National Debt Servicing - \$49,902,642.00

Mr Matthew Wale: You will provide dinner at kitchen today. Thank you Chairman, I was hungry that is why I ask about kitchen, whether there will a little of food for us in evening.

But I would like to ask on page 228 about the community service obligation were earlier on today the minister have said, when I ask about the basis of this estimate and the Honourable Minister the most Honourable Minister have said, or Right Honourable he is saying that part of SOE regime is that they submitted their submissions in non-commercial or non-profitable services that can tendering and therefore government should subsidizing.

So I would like to know on this provision total of \$39,9million for the community services obligation payment, it is out of a total of what is in every SOEs they submitted their submissions so that we can see whether this \$39.9million is adequate given the level of perceive need from the SOEs.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: When the SOEs submitting their submissions every year then there is it triggered off a discussion between the ministries under this particular this particular SOE on those numbers here. And usually what they have submitted those are as much as possible they are retaining, they try and justifying the service that they are providing where it did not earn 6:47 – 6:52 not commercially and economically viable for the entity. So when they discuss this submission, what they conclude goes in the budget as Community Service Obligation (CSO).

Hon Derek Sikua: Thank you Mr Chairman. I just want to ask a question in relation to the Exim Loan Principal. It is Item 5940 Exim Loan Principal, is our Government responsible for paying this or the ROC Government?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I will need your guidance here Chair. This Head is Statutory and it is not in the Bill. So I just want to know whether we can discuss or Committee can debate this.

Chairman: Honourable Members, I begin to understand that this Head 278 is a Schedule to the Bill. The Recurrent Expenditure that supposed to be the Schedule of the Bill listed this Head to be a Schedule to the Bill.

Hon Derek Sikua: Mr Chairman, I know we can discuss it, but we cannot vote on it. I just got a whisper beside from my friend from East Choiseul that we pay the principal and ROC will pay the interest. It is straight forward, I have given been given the answer already.

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I have no comments Sir.

Chairman: I begin to understand that Head 278 is a Schedule to the Bill. But if the Committee suggest or otherwise believe that this should not be put to vote, then what we can work in order to resolve this confusion, is to discuss it and then having us say yes. Then we move on to the Parliament, that we will put to vote.

Mr Matthew Wale: If what the Leader of Opposition has said is correct that we pay the principal of the Exim Loan, then ROC pay the interest **6.52 – 6.57** That is the arrangement, I mean the member for East Choiseul was the Prime Minister during that time and so that is still fresh on this memory especially about loan agreement. So if that is the arrangement then what is the reason for us to jump it up because it was \$1.7million on 2013 budget but for this year we want to pay \$11.8million?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I will have to look up for my officials to give me the details but as I understand it that this is the part or obligation that the government must pay on annual basis. But I will get the information on how the number has been derived.

Mr Douglas Ete: How much is the total debt of the country for both domestic and foreign? This question was asked to the Central Bank and I am asking for this because in year 2012 \$240million was allotted under the debt Head. But when the supplementary come we use \$115million more for recurrent and that worries some of us but they said that you have a good management in terms of debt servicing. Hence, how much is the total debt so the people of this country know as well that we have debts for both multilateral and soft loans?

Hon Rick Houenipwela: I should remember as I was looking at the figures last week but now I cannot recall the exact numbers. But what I only can recall is that our debt position has come down really significantly since 2005 to the extent that at one stage debt to GDP ratio was over 50 per cent and for this year it is 14 per cent. But if the Honourable want the exact figure I can extract them so that you will see it because they are there and I can put it at your pigeon hole. **6.57 – 7.02**

Head 278 agreed to

Mr Manasseh Sogavare: Page 238 on the securities sub item 2419, where are we going to pay them under for next year?

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: Unfortunately under this particular section I do not have any advice on but I think it would be somewhere on the salaries.

Hon Derek Sikua: Just for the Prime Minister to confirm that we are not going to have women in Parliament next year.

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: Again the advice that is given to me is quite; somehow has nothing on this particular one but I am sure that there are other programs which Parliament has made arrangements that I think can cater for women in Parliament.

Hon Derek Sikua: The item on uniforms, 2901; there will be a huge increase on it for uniforms. Is Parliament going to have uniforms in 2014? Just for the Prime Minister to inform the Committee on.

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: I think it is always good for us to identify our staff in Parliament and one way to do that is that they must be provided with uniforms **7.02 – 7.07** they must be provided with uniforms to show that men and women who provide services here at the National Parliament of Solomon Islands must be given the respect. Because in the past we have seen that staff at the National Parliament were like people selling butternuts along the road. So we need to thank the Speaker and the others who came up with that decision that we are to provide uniforms to staff.

Mr Matthew Wale: The electricity at 239 has a significant growth and understandable that the Paul Tovua Complex is new so the consumption of power has increased. But if you look at the amount it seems to be too much and I wonder whether there is inefficiencies in the electrical systems here like air-condition and all these and whether it is possible to get electrical engineering firm to review it and to bring that cost to a more sustainable level. The aspect to this is the air-condition is either hot or it is going to be freezing; when some of us are getting diabetes and when cold or **pneumonia** it makes me a bit worried. So maybe that relates to this problem of electricity but we should get some qualified engineers to have a review of this building in particular because it is quite old so to see if there are some efficiencies that could be gained.

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: Thank you Sir, obviously in all government buildings we need to have good energetic to them so that energy consumption is justified and commensurate with level of activities staff in offices have carried out. In the past I

when I am at the Ministry of Mines and Energy; as you know Chairman I am the first Director of Energy and I normally carryout energy audit of all government buildings. But if the observation at the PT Complex like that I think there is a need for us to carryout energy audit and then come up with various conservation measures not only in terms of the behaviour of people using the office but even the appliances that we used. But if you look behind the PT complex you would see some solar panels there. I do not know on whether those panels have helped to share energy from the main grid to just there, or I do not know how it will provide the kind of energy savings that we expect. Some said that the panels at the PT complex and those at the Prime Minister's Office are malfunctioning. So I think we should remove them and we sell them, no, we do not do that. But one of the increasing requirements on the energy here; because you know that Chairmen of our Parliamentary Committees, so we have increased from five to 10 Committees **7.07 – 7.12** that is why we have to pay for gas and electricity for our chairman in the standing committee. Some of our chairman is doing their task and some of them are not and that one is another thing to think about it so Chairman, you try and look at some of those chairman.

But I think the Member of Parliament for Aoke/Langalanga raised a good point about the need for us to carryout energy audit not only in here but in every government buildings.

Mr John Maneniaru: On page 239 head 3004, the increase in this head here, is it because the Parliament of all those costs it was share maybe and now its comes back to Parliament or because it's a huge increase in that cost.

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: Chair, yeah, its because of the I think we need to meet some of the previous costs of broadcasting in the proceedings in parliament, the committees in parliament and now we have to increase this service to also include

internet and other wireless things that we have in here I think Satsol and those as well.

Hon Derek Sikua: On page 239 the allocation of water 3008 you will it from 2012 to 2014 the trend is that the bill is going up and I guess that is partly because of the operation or coming of stream of the PT Complex. But I am noticing quite recently, there were a lot of ministers and members they also used the water there to wash their vehicles. Yeah I am also a member of House committee and I don't remember anytime to allow members to come and wash their vehicles on this water of Parliament. So we must a little bit careful, if you want to wash your car then you must go and wash it in the river not in here because this is not a car wash.

So that one is also contribute to the increase of this bill of Parliament so please colleagues don't come and use the water in Parliament to wash your vehicles and also the Parliament bus you go and wash it in the river.

Head 279 agreed to:

Chairman: Honourable Members I understand that the Prime Minister wishes to adjourn committee proceedings. I will now ask him to take the necessary steps.

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: The further proceedings of the Committee be now adjourned. **7:12 – 7:17**

Question agreed to

Parliament resumes

MOTIONS

Special Adjournment

Hon GORDON DARCY LILO (*Prime Minister*): I moved that at the adjournment of Parliament today on Thursday 19th of December, 2013, Parliament shall then stand adjourn to Monday the 23rd of December, 2013.

Sir, as you know that during the course of the week, we have been discussing the 2014 Appropriation Bill 2013 at the Second Reading. And that up to now, we have proceeded with the Committee of Supply. But Sir, Christmas Day will be Wednesday next week. And Christmas as we all know is a very important event in our lives every Christians. Most of Christian religions will have this as a time for us to renew our lives to what the Saviour has done for us humanity. And just looking at the time, Wednesday and considering the fact that shipping services to most of our Constituencies normally happens during the weekends. Like those of us in the Western Province, it will be Saturdays and Sundays.

I am sure there is a higher expectation on us as leaders of our Constituencies to show where we can make arrangements to help our people in our Constituencies, our churches, our very good Christians throughout the country to get prepared for this occasion. We all know that during the week, normally the shipping services will not go to most of our Constituencies. Most of the Shipping Services will travel during weekends only. I think we have made arrangements through Parliament that the remaining portion of the MPs discretion in Parliament be paid to Members of Parliament so that we can help us to help our people in our Constituencies where we can, and we must not be selfish to them about this. Like the MP for Aoke/Langalanga said yesterday that, we must give whatever that is given to us to the people. Otherwise it will be like the parable that he told us that only some will benefit, and some will not.

So I am just announcing this. In fact the Ministry of Finance is now in the process of delivering it here, so all of us will go to this nicely built counter where the Speaker has built for us. It is like a trade store at home, the counter outside there,

where we will all stand and receive everything there. But I think it is good that it is inside. Because it is outside, those people outside will come and stand with us at the counter. But it is coming **7.17 – 7.22** I feel and I am sure that all of us will agree that we should get ourselves prepare this weekend. Tomorrow is Friday and we must run our last commitments that we have to do because at this time of the year only two are very important. That is Christmas and the New Year but I think what is more important is Christmas because this is the time where God humble himself and come to born at this poor place in a manger.

Every one of us was born at the hospital or is there anyone that was not born from the hospital? Hence we were born on good places and that shows the significance that God have for us the human beings and I always those two, that is Christmas to creation. During the time of creation when we sinned who do you think came to rescue us and evangelise us at the beginning? Well, it was God himself that actually came down and so we should do the same thing. So I think it is only appropriate that we give time for tomorrow for us to go for break, do our final things and then ship things to our people back at our constituencies and on Monday when we come back we will not be worry about anything. We have to make use of Monday and Tuesday and after that we ready for Christmas but I know the leftover of our micro fund will come and want to encourage all of us to use that help our people during the Christmas.

Regarding our Church, I think the Member of East Choiseul and myself we have the pathfinders here in town and so I think we will be very busy during this weekend to send them back. Hence, I think it is only proper that we give ourselves time tomorrow so that we can prepare over the weekend as all the shipping services are controlled by some of us. That is the very simply reason behind this motion and I believe that it is only appropriate that we give ourselves time for us to break a bit and then we come back on Monday and we continue again with the important business which is the consideration of the budget. With those remarks I beg to move

that the adjournment of Parliament on Thursday 19th of December 2013 shall stand adjourn to Monday the 23rd December 2013.

Hon DEREK SIKUA (*Leader of Opposition*): The motion the Prime Minister moved sounds very, very attractive to me at this stage because I am very tired. Although I did not come in yesterday because I felt a little bit sick but I understand that earlier on **7.22** the Government is asking the House Committee to give tomorrow as a normal government business day and my understanding in conclusion of the House Committee is that we deal with Private Members first and then maybe in the afternoon we continue with the committee of supply or so forth in this budget.

So meaning that today, I mean tomorrow will be a full day for us in here as well, dealing with private members motions first I think there's one or two, maybe one and then we will continue on to deal within the budgets maybe in the afternoon.

And, looking through the lists here in first schedule yeah its looks like it will move fast than possible that we will finishing this committee of supply in this budget as of tomorrow and then we allow Monday and Tuesday for the sine die motion.

So I am little bit like its sounds attractive but if we get it out of the way tomorrow and then come back for sine die of next week then I think that one is a little bit sounds alright to me.

But then again I understand the position that most of my colleagues they are in now because I am a member of parliament for this island, so if I want to go to my home, I just jump inside my vehicle then one hour later I am at my house in the village. So I think something that the reasons were the Prime Minister have said is also true because a lot of us from Western Province and other provinces and may need tomorrow to buy something and then send them off by boat during weekend to go to various villages before we go ahead with meeting then when we finish on Tuesday, then maybe on Christmas day you might fly to your home villages or

whatever your form of transport taking you to the various lovely villages and provinces.

So I am a bit of you know there's a tight spot in here, whilst I like to finished this budget quickly and get it out of my way, I also understand the situation of every colleague in here which they live in other provinces and faraway places.

And so, I would live it up to the House now to vote on this motion but I would prefer to keep going and finish this but it's the majority that it will rule as our democratic system is entailing so I will say like this.

Mr JOHN MANENIARU (*West Are'Are*): I would also like to join the colleague Leader of the Opposition to thank the Prime Minister for seeing its fit at this point in time for moving this motion.

I am was sitting the whole day but its looks like all of us would like to get out from here because it is too cold in this place so on that note I would like to thank the Prime Minister in moving this motion so that it gives us a little bit of rest.

I am thinking about what the Honourable Prime Minister have put aside as a back ground of this motion regarding the Christmas, it is very true when the Prime Minister is a bit briefing in this motion which I am listen and its makes my heart a bit lift again because he seems to pray like Pastor and it's a good way to start the preparation of the weekend for our Christmas.

The only thing which I would like to registered here is **7.27 – 7.32** some of us have missed our families. It is a time of the year when we should spend time with our children. I think for some of us it is the second Christmas in a row that we are not able to join our children and our wives because they have already gone to the villages while we are still here working. This is because Parliaments work is very important. I see that our job is actually an important work, the budget is very, very important. But it is two years in row where we have denied the rights of our families and our children to have their fathers with them during this special occasion to celebrate Christmas, especially in our villages.

Some of you have access to transportation where you have access to air service and ships like Aoke/Langalanga and those from the Western Province, you are very fortunate. For us in South Malaita it is very difficult and we have to stay here. So this motion will not help us but it only saddens us because Parasi airstrip is closed, Afutara is also closed so there is no way. So that makes me really sorry because some of you will go on the weekend while some of us will have to wait for Monday.

I would like to say that if we are going to continue like this, maybe in the next budget the Minister of Finance should make a provision to charter helicopters or speed boats for some of us who do not have easy access. This is so that we can easily join our families and children. Because only some of you can fly because you have easy access while some of us will remain here in Honiara. So do consider these things. If the government continues to bring important bills such as this budget in December—I remember last year it is also like this. The government should allocate money so that some of us can access it and hire speed boats to South Malaita because Parasi airstrip is closed. That is what I want to highlight in regards to what the Prime Minister has said, that it is Christmas time a time of the year when we should join our families.

I also join the Prime Minister to call upon us; Christmas is a time for us to reflect back on what we have gone through throughout the months of the year, and it is also a time for us join our churches and pray for our country and ourselves. I think we are the heart of this country in terms of the highest decision making. And if we need to repent then we should repent by asking the Holy Spirit and saviour who was born in Christmas to help us repent from our sins, especially the sins we have done wrong against our constituents including our country men and women through our decision making and whatever we have done wrong throughout the year. So I join the Prime Minister to echo those words to us all. Now that we are going to come back here on Monday I would also like to register those thoughts.

Mr MANASSEH SOGAVARE (*East Choiseul*): I also join the Leader of the Opposition for Parliament to vote or cast their vote on this motion. I struggled to follow the mind of the Prime Minister, when the Prime Minister reads the statement of government business he puts us under serious pressure that we are going to finish tomorrow but suddenly **7.32 – 7.37** Prime Minister become so ...?.... that we will extend to next week and of course for the reasons as he has said.

The Leader is referring to because of request of the government for allowing tomorrow for the government to continue with the business of government start of course within the private members motion but of course whatever we do in this House it based on the motions and how we tendering the reasons and of course if the majority on it then that's how it goes. It doesn't matter the government business have read already so it can be subject to further decisions on vote of parliament it's like that.

So that's I take as the approach the Prime Minister is taking now for placing on the floor of Parliament again for us to decide on his proposal.

We are happy that the Prime Minister assured us that they will paying those balances so that we are assisting our people in Christmas, reminds me of this prayer by this small kid, he is reciting Lords' prayer and he is praying like this, forgive us our Christmases and we forgive those Christmas against us, a very genuine mistake but speak moral inside it, just only Christmas we suddenly become very generous give us.

We have, well if it is the Prime Minister so kind tomorrow giving us the cheque of \$18,000.000 each, we have outstanding of \$400,000 our money from ROC funds and by next week this year will finished Mr Speaker and some of us we have projects to which is tied to specific projects for us to delivered to our people before the end of year now Mr Speaker, and what does holds them up.

My understanding is that people who retire then you should pay theirs to them and it's still hold up until today. So if you are so genuine and the reasons here for us to help our people, it might as well you also released this \$400,000 to our

accounts and this funded by ROC, if it sit down there in Central Bank or somewhere it is in our country now so you should have releasing it now, so that it will really ...?... the thinking were the Prime Minister have said in this floor of Parliament, \$18,000 is just a peanut and there's nothing enough to help our people.

To send the pathfinders as what the Prime Minister have said, it will costing us \$70,000.00 to send those groups back to their villages and its like that so yeah and the parliament will voting that motion.

Of course we really come and throughout those week, so tomorrow we must geared for discussing some of the Private Members Motion and that's short of good motion that will come tomorrow but there will no private members motion.

So we will leave it to the floor of Parliament, then we will vote on this proposition that the Prime Minister have put in. But the last reminder is that this \$400,000.00 must come before the end of this year so that we deliver it to our people.

Mr MATTHEW WALE (*Aoke/Langalanga*): I do not have anything to add on but I just think I mean the reason given by the honourable Prime Minister for his motion. **7:37** would it not be better that we finish way before Tuesday so that Members can go home and spend time with families and Constituents and so forth, than condemn a number of Members to spending Christmas in town. So it is like that, perhaps he could amend the motion, the date and we will come back on the 27th December or something like that. So tomorrow, we will go and then 26th December, we will come back, and 27th, 28th and 29th, the budget will pass, then the \$400,000 will come and we send it to the people at home. If it is like this, it will be very good.

Mr Speaker, because we will break tomorrow and then we come back again, by Tuesday night we will not have time to travel home. This is just my concern. Then tomorrow being a private Members day. It is the only day in this meeting because it will end sine die that private members get to have a say and we will it, it is like we are suppressing the voice of the private members, the only opportunity that they have to move motions, and I have one motion for tomorrow on the Audit Report of

the Scholarship, which is ready for tomorrow. And the House Committee is very generous, of course, there was an earlier special adjournment, so request from the Prime Minister for that first Friday to be used as a government business day is not materialized, but the House Committee granted that. And the Prime Minister's request for tomorrow to be government day is also granted subject to Parliament dispensing with the motion for tomorrow. But there is that element of not allowing the voice of private members also to come through in terms of business before the House. That is another concern. I know all of these things are compressed. But I think the ideal situation is just the date, rather than we come back on Monday, we should come back and start on the 27th December. This will be good if the Prime Minister consider amending that date. I will be very happy in the Christmas spirit.

Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo: I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition, Leader of the Independent, Members for East Choiseul and Aoke/Langalanga, who have made some very, very valid remarks about issues and circumstances that we need to consider in relation to this motion.

I think all of us are now focusing on Christmas. Christmas is not just a name. Surely there are a lot of people who made their own jokes about Christmas, but all of us know the name in itself has a deeper meaning to it, the event itself as well. And in fact, if we look deeper into what it is, it has a lot of meaning to us. That is the part I think we need to give a little of time, and of course like the Member for East Choiseul had said, so that we do not do nothing for our people in this Christmas. I am really sure about the funding's that come to us, like I said I do not control the Constituency funding, our Ward Committees are the ones that control it. Sometimes they might lie to me **7.42** the only one that I thought that is still available is the \$18,000 that is here at the Parliament. But if that outstanding is still there then I think we can do something because we should not deprive our people what is rightly due to them and I am sure that something can be worked out and I think the Minister of

Finance and Treasury is there and we hope he is going to think about something to come up to sort this out.

I know that some of us will feel sorry but I think we should not; instead we should sit down and think very deeply about this important Christian event. But it funny because those who are far away can there quickly and return while those who live close find it so difficult to even to get there. For instance, the Leader of Opposition and I can fly to Gizo and return on the same day and I think he is more advantage than me because he can travel only for one day. But to go to Weather coast Honourable David Day Pacha will have to go by boat and that depends on the weather.

Having considered all the points that have been raised I think it is only fair that we give ourselves a break tomorrow. I have asked the government side on whatever motion that we notice to discuss here to put aside especially different kinds of report including the audit of the transport fund. The Minister want to notice a motion as well but we tell him to leave it and so I want to make it clear that we might deprive the private members because we even deprive the Minister for not moving some of the motions on the reports that came in. But for now, I am sure that all of us have agreed and I hope the Leader of Opposition will slowly agree and the Leader of Independent has agreed and member for East Choiseul has agreed and so I am sure that all of us will agree, that at the adjournment of today Thursday of 19th December 2013 the Parliament shall stand adjourn to Monday the 23rd of December 2013 and I would like to wish all of you a very, very blessed weekend and I beg to move.

Question agreed to

The House adjourned at 7.44pm

