

FRIDAY 4TH APRIL 2014

The Speaker, Sir Allan Kemakeza took the chair at 9.47 am.

Prayers.

ATTENDANCE

All Members were present with the exception of the Ministers for Communications & Aviation; Mines & Energy, Fisheries & Marine Resources; Education & Human Resources Development; Infrastructure Development; Finance & Treasury; Commerce, Industries & Labour; Police, National Security & Correctional Services; Culture & Tourism; Forestry; Health & Medical Services; Justice & Legal Affairs; Foreign Affairs & International Relations; National Reconciliation; Provincial Government & Rural Development; Women & Children's Affairs; Agriculture & Livestock; and Public Service and the Members for Fataleka; North West Guadalcanal; Ngella; West Kwara'ae; Malaita Outer Islands; North Malaita; Maringe/Kokota; Temotu Pele; East Are Are; South New Georgia/Rendova/Tetepare; Kia, Havulei, Kokota; East Choiseul; North Guadalcanal; North New Georgia; Aoke/Langalanga

SPEAKER'S MESSAGES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr Speaker: Honourable Members, you might notice that the Order Paper before you is without any Private Members Motions. The Parliamentary House Committee, however, has earlier received a request from the Bills and Legislations Committee to have today, Friday 4th April 2014, to be put aside for the Bills and Legislations Committee to further conduct its inquiry into the Political Parties and Integrity Bill 2014. The Parliamentary House Committee had agreed to request thus the arrangement seen on today's Order Paper. We will now proceed to the next item of business.

STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Gordon Darcy Lilo (*Prime Minister*): Mr Speaker, with your permission I request that the Statement of Government Business for the week ending Friday 11th April 2014 be made on Monday. I seek leave to do that. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Permission is given to do that. I believe the Prime Minister would like to make a short statement before adjournment of Parliament.

PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT

Hon. GORDON DARCY LILO: Thank you Mr Speaker for your understanding in that regard.

As we all know, the country or at least certain parts within the country is now undergoing a severe trough situation. Since Monday at about 4:00pm, the heavy rain has worsened and right now a tropical low situation is now located within our geography some 11.2 degrees latitude south and 158.5 degrees longitude east which covers areas as far as West Bellona to southwest of Guadalcanal island.

This low tropical situation is somewhat stationary. As you can see, the precipitation is really increasing. We are basically experiencing for the first time a severe situation of climate change and our capital city is now being affected. With the situation now being assessed, we have seen the impact of the situation within the central areas of our town where people have to be evacuated from the White River settlements and even to our Correctional Services inmates have to be evacuated. The Police Headquarters are now being flooded. The old Mataniko Bridge has collapsed. The eastern part of the new Mataniko Bridge is basically being held by a very, very thin plate and we are asking the Ministry of Infrastructure to quickly attend to that otherwise services within the capital will be affected.

I am also sad to say that as a result of this situation, we have lost lives; we have casualties where it so far it has been reported that there are four deaths. From all of us, I would like to convey our condolence to the families and relatives of those who are now aggrieved at this point in time.

But that assessment is only up until now and will still continue. With that, I would like to thank the understanding of the Leader of Opposition, whom I called early this morning and also your good self Mr Speaker that we take a break today from Parliament business to assess the situation.

I would expect that by mid-day today, the Minister of Environment who is here will make a declaration on a state basis. We will begin with Honiara to be declared as a natural disaster area and then move onto the plains. The Guadalcanal Plain right now is flooded and I am sure the situation there would be quite worse.

I would like to ask all stakeholder and all of us leaders to stand together for our people. This is a disaster that is unprecedented in proportion in terms of its impacts and it is not one that is static but one that is changing every day. As we go through the business of Parliament in the coming weeks, let us watch the situation carefully. I really want to thank the understanding of your good self, Mr Speaker, the Leader of Opposition and all Members of Parliament in this regard. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Can the Prime Minister move a motion of adjournment please?

Hon. Derek Sikua: Point of Order. With your permission, I just want to say a few words.

Mr Speaker: Yes, permission is given.

Hon. DEREK SIKUA (*Leader of Opposition*): First of all, I would like to sincerely thank the Prime Minister for consulting me through a phone call at about 6:51am this morning for us to adjourn Parliament, which I readily accepted and I am thankful for his understanding as well.

For those of us who have constituencies on the Guadalcanal Plains, we have been up almost all night through receiving calls from our people about the situation regarding flooding in the Plains, especially when the flash flooding happened at night at around 11:30pm which made the situation worse. Even here in Honiara, we have lost lives, as the Prime Minister has mentioned. And so we, on this side of the House are very happy to work with the Government and ask the Government to make all resources possible to assess the situations throughout our country that wherever our people are affected that they be assisted accordingly. I would like to thank the Government and ask the Prime Minister and all government authorities involved to make sure that all the necessary assessments and assistance that is due to our people are given to them.

I do not think anyone of us on this side of the House would have anything against us postponing the meeting this morning. In saying that, I am relaying the message by the Chairman of the Bills and Legislation Committee that the hearing of the Political Parties Integrity Bill this morning will also be postponed because he is stranded on the other side of the Lunga River.

With those few remarks, I would like to thank the Prime Minister again and we support the adjournment. Thank you.

Mr Speaker: Before I officially ask the Prime Minister to adjourn Parliament, I also join the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in asking the general public and all our people in the provinces to take necessary precautions at this time of bad weather. The Prime Minister and also the Leader of the Opposition have related to us the situation affecting our country. I kindly thank both leaders for their wise decision for consulting my office early this morning in regards to the business of Parliament today. I now call on the Prime Minister to move a motion of adjourning Parliament. Thank you.

Hon. Gordon Darcy Lilo: I move that Parliament do now adjourn.

Question agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.00am.