

DAILY HANSARD

YOUR VOICE IN PARLIAMENT



THE THIRD MEETING OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT

THURSDAY 1 AUGUST 2024

ENGLISH VERSION

HANSARD NO: 214



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DEPUTY SPEAKER
Hon. P. P. P. Moatlhodi, MP. (Tonota)

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Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly	- Vacant
Learned Parliamentary Counsel	- Advocate L. O. Tlhowe
Senior Assistant Clerk	- Ms K. H. Ketshajwang
Assistant Clerk (E)	- Vacant

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His Honour S. Tsogwane, MP. (Boteti West)	- Vice President
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Hon. Dr L. Kwape, MP. (Kanye South)	- Minister of Foreign Affairs
Hon. M. R. Shamukuni, MP. (Chobe)	- Minister of Justice
Hon. K. K. Autlwetse, MP. (Specially Elected)	- Minister of Local Government and Rural Development
Hon. F. M. M. Molao, MP. (Shashe West)	- Minister of Agriculture
Hon. T.M. Segokgo, MP. (Tlokweng)	- Minister of Communications, Knowledge and Technology
Hon. Dr D. Letsholathebe, MP. (Tati East)	- Minister of Education and Skills Development
Hon. K. S. Gare, MP. (Moshupa-Manyana)	- Minister of Entrepreneurship
Hon. D. M. Mthimkhulu, MP. (Gaborone South)	- Minister of Environment and Tourism
Hon. P. O. Serame, MP. (Specially Elected)	- Minister of Finance
Hon. Dr E. G. Dikoloti MP. (Mmathethe-Molapowabojang)	- Minister of Health
Hon. A. M. Mokgethi, MP. (Gaborone Bonnington North)	- Minister of Labour and Home Affairs
Hon. Dr K. Mzwini, MP. (Specially Elected)	- Minister of Lands and Water Affairs
Hon. L. M. Moagi, MP. (Ramotswa)	- Minister of Minerals and Energy
Hon. M. Kgafela, MP. (Mochudi West)	- Minister of Trade and Industry
Hon. E. M. Molale, MP. (Goodhope-Mabule)	- Minister of Transport and Public Works
Hon. T. M. Rakgare, MP. (Mogoditshane)	- Minister of Youth, Gender, Sport and Culture
Hon. B. S. Gofhamodimo, MP. (Specially Elected)	- Assistant Minister, State President
Hon. S. N. Modukanele, MP. (Lerala -Maunatlala)	- Assistant Minister, Local Government and Rural Development
Hon. T. Monnakgotla, MP. (Kgalagadi North)	- Assistant Minister, Local Government and Rural Development
Hon. M. M. Pule, MP. (Mochudi East)	- Assistant Minister, Local Government and Rural Development
Hon. M. S. Molebatsi, MP. (Mmadinare)	- Assistant Minister, Agriculture
Hon. S. Lelatisitswe, MP. (Boteti East)	- Assistant Minister, Health
Hon. N. W. T. Makwinja, MP. (Lentsweletau-Mmopane)	- Assistant Minister, Education and Skills Development
Hon. B. Manake, MP. (Specially Elected)	- Assistant Minister, Trade and Industry
Hon. H. B. Billy, MP. (Francistown East)	- Assistant Minister, Youth, Gender, Sport and Culture
Hon. A. Lesaso, MP. (Shoshong)	- Assistant Minister, Education and Skills Development

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND THEIR CONSTITUENCIES

Names	Constituency
RULING PARTY (Botswana Democratic Party)	
Hon. L. Kablay, MP. (Government Whip)	Letlhakeng-Lephephe
Hon. Dr U. Dow, MP.	Specially Elected
Hon. P. Majaga, MP.	Nata-Gweta
Hon. M. Balopi, MP.	Gaborone North
Hon. J. S. Brooks, MP.	Kgalagadi South
Hon. C. Greeff, MP.	Gaborone Bonnington South
Hon. T. Letsholo, MP.	Kanye North
Hon. T. F. Leuwe, MP.	Takatokwane
Hon. T. Mangwegape-Healy, MP.	Gaborone Central
Hon. Dr T. Matsheka, MP.	Lobatse
Hon. S. N. Moabi, MP.	Tati West
Hon. P. K. Motaosane, MP.	Thamaga-Kumakwane
Hon. O. Regoeng, MP.	Molepolole North
Hon. J. L. Thiite, MP.	Ghanzi North
OPPOSITION	
(Umbrella for Democratic Change)	
Hon. D. L. Keorapetse, MP. (Leader of the Opposition)	Selebi Phikwe West
Hon. M. G. J. Motsamai, MP. (Opposition Whip)	Ghanzi South
Hon. D. Saleshando, MP.	Maun West
Vacant	Mahalapye East
Hon. Dr K. Gobotswang, MP.	Sefhare-Ramokgonami
Hon. C. K. Hikuama, MP.	Ngami
Hon. K. K. Kapinga, MP	Okavango
Hon. G. Kekgonegile, MP.	Maun East
Hon. T. B. Lucas, MP.	Bobonong
Hon. K. Nkawana, MP.	Selebi Phikwe East
Hon. O. Ramogapi, MP.	Palapye
Hon. Dr N. Tshabang, MP.	Nkange
Hon. D. Tshere, MP.	Mahalapye West
Hon. M. I. Moswaane, MP.	Francistown West
(Botswana Patriotic Front)	
Hon. L. Lesedi, MP.	Serowe South
Hon. B. Mathoothe, MP.	Serowe North
Hon. M. Reatile, MP.	Jwaneng-Mabutsane
Hon. O. Kedikilwe, MP.	Serowe West
(Alliance for Progressives)	
Hon. W. B. Mmolotsi, MP.	Francistown South

TABLE OF CONTENTS
THE THIRD MEETING OF THE FIFTH SESSION
OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT
THURSDAY 1ST AUGUST, 2024

CONTENTS	PAGE (S)
LEADER OF THE HOUSE'S QUESTION TIME	16
QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER	17-18
GOVERNMENT BILLS	
Access To Information Bill, 2024 (No. 15 Of 2024)	
<i>First Reading</i>	1-3
<i>Motion to Proceed on a Bill As a Matter of Urgency</i>	1
Political Party Funding Bill, 2024 (No. 16 of 2024)	
<i>First Reading</i>	4-5
<i>Motion to Proceed on a Bill As a Matter of Urgency</i>	4
PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL	
Electoral (Amendment) Bill, 2023 (No. 21 of 2023)	
<i>Second Reading (Resumed Debate)</i>	8-15,19-29
Electoral (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (No. 7 of 2024)	
<i>Second Reading</i>	30-48



Thursday 1st August, 2024

THE ASSEMBLY met at 11:00 a.m.

(THE SPEAKER in the Chair)

PRAYERS

* * * *

MR SPEAKER (MR MOATLHODI): Order! Order!
Good morning Honourable Members of Parliament.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Good morning Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Let us start the business of today with presentation of Bills, but before I call upon one of our able Clerks to do that Honourable Members, help me celebrate the Honourable Member of Parliament for Gaborone North as he turns...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: They are quite many.

MR SPEAKER: Yes they are many now, an old man's years are not to be announced.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Applause)...

MR SPEAKER: Today is Honourable Balopi's big day. Pledge the cake. As your Speaker, I love black forest, so from here we should cut it.

First Readings

PRESENTATION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

The following Bills were presented and read a first time.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION BILL, 2024 (NO. 15 OF 2024)

(Minister for State President)

MR SPEAKER: When for Second Reading Honourable Minister?

MOTION TO PROCEED ON A BILL AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

MINISTER FOR STATE PRESIDENT (MR MORWAENG): I beg to move that the Bill be heard as a matter of urgency in accordance with Standing Order 72.3.

MR SPEAKER: I am awaiting your good self to advance your reasons.

MR MORWAENG: Thank you Mr Speaker.

The Bill has not matured as it was only published in the Government Gazette on the 26th of July 2024. Mr Speaker, this Bill is an important piece of legislation that we have all been waiting for. It expands on the right to know as provided for under Section 12 of the Constitution. It has been long waited for and therefore, I propose that this Parliament deals with the important matter forthwith. I believe Honourable Members will agree that it is long overdue.

A piece of legislation such as this one that expands on the fundamental right under Chapter 2 of the Constitution is critical to advance the freedom of expression on a democratic country like Botswana. In relation to this Bill, Section 12 of the Constitution provides that "except with his or her own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his or her freedom of expression. That is to say freedom to receive ideas and information without interference."

Mr Speaker, I therefore, hold the view that this Bill, which seeks to extend the right of members of the public to access to information in possession of public authorities, should be considered while there is time to debate on it before the dissolution of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, for these reasons, I move that the Access to Information Bill, 2024 (No. 15 of 2024) be heard as a matter of urgency.

Honourable Members, we all know that we long pleaded for this Bill to be tabled in Parliament so here it is. I beg to move that the Bill be heard as a matter of urgency. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR KEORAPETSE (SELEBI PHIKWE WEST): Mr Speaker, this is a very important Bill, we all know and we have been waiting for it. The ministry is simply hijacking us because I saw this Bill last night on the Order Paper if I am not mistaken. I have not even read it. Perhaps the Honourable Member should give us time to read it because it is very long. Honourable Member, please give us time to read and interrogate this Bill so that we see what it says.

MR SPEAKER: It is not slotted today Leader of the Opposition, it will be tabled in the not so distant future.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: I thought he said it is a Certificate of Urgency.



MR SPEAKER: Yes, but that does not mean today.

MR SALESHANDO (MAUN WEST): Mr Speaker, I believe this House knows very well that I long campaigned for the Access to Information Bill. No one can expect me to reject it, but I do not support the proposal to debate it under a certificate of urgency. Indeed, we long waited for it, access to information was a Vision 2016 pillar but we are now in 2024; meaning that we are more than eight years late; more than 10 years because Vision 2016 was long drafted.

What I know about this law or what I once read about it is that, it is very complicated. Yesterday Vice President (VP) said some laws are not weighty, but this is a very weight matter, it talks about rights. This Parliament is about to be dissolved so we cannot come here and present this law under urgency. Some countries used access to information law to make access information difficult so it is not a light matter. You can still use this law to deny people access to information.

I know that we are going for elections and we want to use this law to campaign but I believe it is wrong for such a significant law to be proposed under a certificate of urgency in Parliament. There are many stakeholders who are affected by this law, those who have interest and this means that we are not going to have time to consult them. I do not have time to go and consult my constituents about it. If we have waited for more than 10 years, there is nothing you can say which can convince me that it cannot be one of the Bills which Batswana have to be consulted on so that after elections we will be ready to discuss it. There is no harm. I have long wanted this law, I have asked a lot of question regarding its progress. I have a problem with it being brought now under a certificate of urgency, there is not enough time to consult. Do not forget that publishing it in the Government Gazette is also a way of allowing the nation to assess it. If you propose to discuss it under a certificate of urgency you are basically saying let us exclude the public, we should not afford them the agreed duration, we should pass it by ourselves in Parliament. I know the majority will rule, Government does not consider reasons forwarded. If the majority say, “aye”, then that will be the decision taken but I was saying, this so that at least it can be on record so that in future when you amend laws which you passed under a certificate of urgency because you will have overlooked some things since you were rushing at least it will show on the record that someone tried to advise but majority ruled. Thank you.

MR REATILE (JWANENG-MABUTSANE): Thank you Mr Speaker. Like the Honourable Members said, Access to Information Bill dates from a long time ago. As I said yesterday, if you have not given those who draft the instruction to draft a certain piece of legislation, by the time they finish Batswana are given a duration of 30 days to assess the Bill which will be published in the Government Gazette. It seems as if we are telling Batswana that as the 12th Parliament we do not need their input when it comes to the Constitution. Mr Speaker, this is because Bills are constantly tabled under the certificate of urgency which excludes the citizens of the country. It is as if we are building a pattern which we do not want citizens of the country to contribute to laws which are going to regulate the country. Mr Speaker, you know that after the law passes one cannot argue that they did not know the law existed. Lawyers like Honourable Kapinga usually say, “ignorance of the law is not an excuse.” We should give Batswana the right given to them by the Constitution to review laws, advise their Members of Parliament the likes of Honourable Morwaeng should consult Bakwena so that they can also have an input. That is when we will know that we have covered a lot of ground. That is my only request and also borrow Honourable Morwaeng’s words that this is a consultative Government but in this case we are doing the complete opposite. Let us show that we are a consultative Government by consulting our constituents. We are not their supervisors/bosses, they are our bosses. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MINISTER FOR STATE PRESIDENT (MR MORWAENG): Point of procedure. Mr Speaker, with your permission my explanation is, when Honourable Members stand to debate they should understand that yes, we said certificate of urgency but as you once explained sir, certificate of urgency does not mean today in this case. The issue is that since we have numerous Bills including Private Members’ Bill, we should discuss them first and complete them. If we have passed them, then next week we can attend these Bills. That is my request Mr Speaker, more so that Honourable Saleshando has been saying that this Bill is long overdue. All in all we all know what we are talking about Mokwena. I humbly want to give that explanation. Thank you sir.

MR HIKUAMA (NGAMI): Thank you Honourable Speaker. Let me also perhaps applaud Honourable Morwaeng and his Government for finding it necessary to bring such a Bill. This is a lesson well learnt, they learnt that a Bill of this nature is necessary to the nation.



We have long wanted it so you deserve a round of applause for this. Let me indicate that looking at the current Parliament situation, members are not in the mood to debate a serious issue as this one. Majority of members are in shock after primary elections, the attendance rate is low, members are hurting, there is lack of concentration, they were laughed at so I do not think they are in the right position. The state of mind is not suitable to discuss such a serious issue. I understand Honourable Morwaeng, it is just that I do not want to say the arguments raised by Honourable Saleshando and Honourable Keorapetse because I share the same sentiments. I want to explain this point, Mr Nyola, Honourable Kwape, which is very important that if a person is not in the right state of mind...

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Hikuama, who is Mr Nyola in this House?

MR HIKUAMA: Oh! Sorry, Honourable Kwape, that is his nickname, sorry, I forgot. Mr Speaker you can also see the situation we are in, the way Parliament is failing to form a quorum, so we cannot discuss a Bill of this magnitude given the current situation we are in. Batswana have heard that efforts are there, they cannot punish you during elections. They heard your intention to do good but for the benefit of this country we must withdraw the Bill, it needs to be discussed by people who are fresh not in the state they are in now. That is the point I want to raise and emphasise on in addition to the arguments raised. It will not be appropriate. We will not be doing the right thing, as our focus both mentally and physically will not be fit to ensure that whatever we do does not disadvantage Batswana or exclude anyone. In fact stakeholders in the Access to Information Bill like the media...

MINISTER OF YOUTH, GENDER, SPORT AND CULTURE (MR RAKGARE): Procedure. Thank you very much Mr Speaker. I thought you would stop Honourable Hikuama because it was explained that the Bill is not going to be discussed today. He is now going on and on that he can see the kind of mood people are in because they lost in the primary elections and the attendance is low. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members on this side of the aisle have already indicated that they have other duties to attend to at their constituencies, I am talking about those who won primary elections. The likes of Honourable Motaosane, Honourable Simon Mavange, Honourable Leuwe, Honourable Kablay, Honourable Majaga, I can go on and on, so why allow

Honourable Hikuama to waste such a large amount of Parliament time Mr Speaker? I thought you would stop him because he is trying to entertain Parliament and Batswana who are listening. We know that he did not participate in primary elections, if he did, the voters' roll numbers were low but we cannot say such things because we want to be serious. Mr Speaker, the issue has already been mentioned by the Minister that we are not discussing this Bill currently, we should discuss other serious national issues. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Order! I heard you Minister. You are telling the truth, with the authority awarded to me to be here on Standing Order 5.1 (b) that says when I am here I am your leader and I should preside with complete impartiality. I was going to tell him to conclude and call on the last person.

MR HIKUAMA: Thank you Honourable Speaker. I am grateful of your leadership of not allowing yourself to be influenced by people that are happy. Happiness has its own ways.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Laughter!)...

MR HIKUAMA: If you are not influenced by those that are happy, knowing that the procedure...

MR SPEAKER: Please get back to order.

MR HIKUAMA: ...what is your job, we are grateful. Honourable Rakgare I was about to conclude but you brought up an important issue that we need to look at. The reason why people are rushing to constituency is an indication that constituencies need them, even those that won there are aware that things are not okay there, they need to rectify them. Protests have started, they need to prepare themselves as well. All those hinders them to seriously pay attention when we discuss this Bill. Mr Speaker, can you use your authority and ask the Parliament that we have heard, let us stop here others will look into it. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: You will be the last, it now seems like this issue will be a Boteti thing. Your Honour.

HIS HONOUR THE VICE PRESIDENT (MR TSOGWANE): Mr Speaker, there was supposed to be a procedure from the start when someone request for Certificate of Urgency, requesting that this number will speak from this side and this number from the other side. You could use your powers and not make it seem as if when we take the floor it is only Boteti representatives



that debate. Mr Speaker, I agree with the Minister as we all agree that this Bill is important, it is necessary because it is long overdue. If they were serious people that kept on asking questions about this Bill saying this Bill is important, they could be allowing this Bill to be passed because it is here...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: On a point of order Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Point of order.

MR SALESHANDO: Point of order. When we say imputing improper motives, we mean what Your Honour the Vice President is doing. I have explained that we have long requested this Bill, and we cannot reject it before Parliament but we are concerned about the way the Government is fast tracking it and not allowing 30 days. We waited for it for 10 years, and to be told we cannot be given 30 days. That is what Certificate of Urgency mean. We are denying it its right for 30 days.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: ... (Inaudible) ...

MR SALESHANDO: Yes, actually Vision 2016... (Inaudible) ... 27 years waiting, and eventually when it arrives we are told that we cannot get the 30 days. What the Vice President is saying is that, those that have been asking questions referring to us this side, if we are serious, meaning if we do not agree we are not serious. That is unfair to the request that we are pleading kindly to give the public time to assess this Bill. So, I do not accept the disrespect that he is trying to impose on those that have the proposal that he is not aligned to his. Let us talk politely.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Order! Let me rule your Honour. There is a saying '*Mafoko a Kgotla a mantle otlhe*', (All contributions are accepted) *Mmualebe o bua la gagwe monalente a tle a tswe la gagwe* (Everyone is free to express their views). What Your Honour the Vice President is saying is in no way disrespecting anyone.

MR TSOGWANE: Mr Speaker, I am a very serious person, I am not here to disrespect people and I have an analytic mind. I am assessing the situation, I do not just take everything for that, I do assess when people communicate.

MR SPEAKER: I have ruled your Honour, I have made a ruling.

MR TSOGWANE: You have ruled and I am agreeing with your ruling, I am not opposing your ruling, so that

is what I am saying. It is just to buttress what you said that, when you seriously want something so that it can help people, and it is presented in a particular manner. We know that Parliament will be dissolved and some Members may not come back. However, they would have gone with good ideas which could help this Bill. It is a fact that, not all of us will come back. It is a fact and maybe a person that could help with ideas is the one who will leave. It is just changing words, someone mentioned that even if it is after elections and that is what scared me a lot, so 30 days is not a problem, it does not mean now. 30 days is meant for people to see, they could see even in 15 or 20 days. 30 days is just a law, it is not a magical number that someone can stand and say... that is why there is a law that made sure that there is a Certificate of Urgency. Those people were very intelligent who decided on the duration, and that when it is urgent, issues can be brought to Parliament under a Certificate Urgency in 30 days. So the law will not be violated. The Minister mentioned that he did not say this Bill should be discussed today, he mentioned that within 30 days if there is not much business in Parliament and Batswana have all seen it, he will bring it here. It can be 10, 15, 20, 29 or 30 days if the Parliamentary business is still on, while we are busy crafting other laws. That should not scare us. Mr Speaker, I take it that we collectively agree that this is an important Bill, and we all agree that those that had a proposal that it can be done after elections have changed and I am now saying 30 days, it is okay. I take it that within that period the Minister will find time to present the Bill here, because it is an important law that we need and it does not mean if it was not implemented then, it was unwanted. There were reasons, reviews being made, consultations made with stakeholders because the Government does not only craft the law and present it here without consulting with other stakeholders. It was imperative for the Minister to present the Bill now. I support him that it should be presented through Certificate of Urgency if time permits, and if it does not, we will be covered, to discuss this important law. Thank you, Mr Speaker, I support the Bill under a Certificate of Urgency.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Order! Honourable Members. I am requesting that Your Honour should be the last one.

Question put and **agreed to.**

Second Reading-Later Date.



DATA PROTECTION BILL, 2024 (NO. 19 OF 2024)

(Minister for State President)

MOTION TO PROCEED ON A BILL AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

MINISTER FOR STATE PRESIDENT (MR MORWAENG): Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill be heard as a matter of urgency in accordance with Standing Order 72.3. Mr Speaker, the Bill has not matured as it was only published in the Extra Ordinary Government Gazette on the 26th July 2024. However, as the Data Protection Bill is intended to protect fundamental rights and freedoms of natural persons in so far as they relate to their privacy and protection of personal data, we need to consider and debate it now. I am of the view that this Bill is very important and delaying it to the last week of Parliament will curtail its proper debate. This Bill affects all the citizens of this country as it seeks to regulate the protection of their personal data and ensure that their privacy in relation to their personal data is maintained. It requires thorough consideration and debate before the dissolution of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, the Data Protection Bill is a critical piece of legislation in so far as it relates to anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism and counter-proliferation financing. I will expand on this in my Second Reading stage but point it out for now to emphasise its importance. Mr Speaker, for these reasons, I move that the Data Protection Bill, 2024 (19 of 2024) be heard as a matter of urgency.

Briefly and through your permission Mr Speaker, Data Protection Bill because we had Data Protection Act and Parliament has been amending it. During that process, I thought to bring this Bill so that it may repeal the existing one in due process. So Mr Speaker, this means this Bill aligns with the one that we discussed before. Therefore Honourable Members, my request is that, let us review this one as soon as possible just like we did with the first one. Mr Speaker, I came up with this Bill because of what we already know regarding this issue. Just like the first time, my request is that, though it has not matured for a period of 30 days, let us discuss it before end of this meeting. I am not asking the House to discuss it today Mr Speaker. Therefore, I beg the Honourable Members to support my Bill.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Order! Honourable Members, be very brief Honourable Member for Jwaneng-Mabutsane.

MR REATILE (JWANENG-MABUTSANE): Honourable Morwaeng mentioned that this Bill aligns with Data Protection Act of 2018, so it is better for him to give more details since the House has not yet got the opportunity to appreciate it and to avoid an instance where it appears as if we continually reject everything. He must indicate new clauses that come with this Bill; be it four or ten so that we may focus on them. Mr Speaker, he indicated that it has been to Parliament before, he requested to withdraw it and now he wants to repeal it. So he must give reasons why he decided to withdraw the previous one or at least tell us about the amendment. It is clear that he cannot talk about the amendment under Data Protection because he previously came to Parliament to repeal the existing one before. Therefore, he cannot tell us that it has always been there. The truth is, it ceased to operate, Botswana has been running its affairs without Data Protection Act.

Mr Speaker, it is important for the House to understand that we are debating a fresh Bill therefore, we must not debate it as if it has been there because he came to Parliament after some months to repeal the previous one. He told the house that he had thrown it out the window. So it is necessary for Honourable Morwaeng to highlight that you have reviewed the previous Act which was approved by Parliament, and that you now came up with five clauses under a Certificate of urgency which should be our main focus as Parliament. That way, I will support you because they are just few clauses that we should not worry about. Batswana will also understand that they have already scrutinised and agreed with the larger part of the Bill which was also passed by Parliament. You should also highlight that when you realised that some of its clauses were lagging behind, you decided to request the House to withdraw it and bring them in due time. So you finally presented it as a result. Sir, this is all the information needed under this Bill. Consequently Honourable Morwaeng, it is not easy for me to determine whether I agree or disagree with you. Thank you sir.

MR MORWAENG: Thank you sir. Honourable Reatile, you mentioned that Data Protection Act has always been there and you will note that your explanation is one of the things that made it unsuccessful and therefore, poorly implemented. You also mentioned that, I repealed it. So in response to your explanation, indeed



my ministry reviewed and noted some of the things that may improve it. For this reason, this Bill comes along with some clauses which restrict us from commencing it at once. This we do considering some things, network and advice from the stakeholders as we collaborate with them, including other countries. So Honourable Member, our main intention is to come up with sound points to avoid instances where you end up blaming us for failure to exercise the law. Our major area of interest is the obstacles that Honourable Member talked about, we also realised that indeed they call for review so that it may operate accordingly. I thank you.

Question put and **agreed to.**

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Murmurs)...

POLITICAL PARTY FUNDING BILL, 2024 (NO. 16 OF 2024)

(Minister for State President)

MR SPEAKER: When for Second Reading Honourable Minister?

MOTION TO PROCEED ON A BILL AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

MINISTER FOR STATE PRESIDENT (MR MORWAENG): Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill be heard as a matter of urgency in accordance with Standing Order 72.3.

Mr Speaker, the Political Party Funding Bill, 2024 has not matured as it was only published in the Extraordinary Government Gazette of the 26th of July 2024. I move that it be dealt with under a Certificate of Urgency for the following reasons;

- This Parliament will remember that one of the recommendations of the Commission on the Review of the Constitution is to provide for political party funding in Botswana. This Bill gives effect to this recommendation. It is important that this Parliament recognises the privilege it has to be the one which will make this law. In this way, I move that we consider and debate this Bill given its importance to our politics and our democracy.
- Mr Speaker, this Bill recognises the role that political parties play in our democratic society and provides for their funding. There have been many calls over many years for political party funding to

be provided for in this country. It is therefore critical that we deal with this Bill in this Parliament and deal with it immediately.

- Mr Speaker, it is my view that this Bill should be considered while there is time to debate on it before the dissolution of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, for these reasons, I move that the Political Party Funding Bill, 2024 (No. 16 of 2024) be heard as a matter of urgency.

Just like others before this one Mr Speaker, I humbly submit that as we are all aware, this is an issue that was not brought by the Government but Batswana and it was submitted to the Constitutional Review. Constitutional Review Report made that recommendation to Government to fund political parties to function in Botswana for the benefit of our democracy. Mr Speaker, since Parliament will soon go into dissolution, we agreed that it should be brought here today. We have discussed it at the All Party Conference. Therefore, that covers consultation with politics. Political parties contributed to this Bill. I therefore plead that just like others that I...

MR SALESHANDO: Clarification. The clarification sought Honourable Morwaeng, if possible you can answer by saying 'yes' or 'no'. Elections are coming in October, that is what you told us last time in Parliament. Are we making this law to provide funding before October elections? If the answer is 'yes', I can understand the urgency. If the answer is 'no', where is the urgency if this law is meant to release funding after October?

MR MORWAENG: Thank you. Mr Speaker, do you allow me to respond to him?

MR SPEAKER: You are permitted sir.

MR MORWAENG: Thank you sir. Honourable Saleshando, like you said that the answer should be 'yes' or 'no'; I am not a child, you cannot prescribe how I should answer. You ask and I respond; you do not get to instruct me to either answer by saying 'yes' or 'no'.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Laughter!)...

MR MORWAENG: So Honourable Member, whether funding is provided before or after elections, it is still urgent. So, Honourable Saleshando, everything will be clarified during the debate. My humble request for the benefit of our country's democracy and what we have agreed on...



MR SALESHANDO: Procedure Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I asked a question, I think I deserve an answer. Even if it is not a 'yes' or 'no' answer, he cannot ignore me so that I understand his urgency.

He has read the Bill, he is the mover and he understands it. We have just been informed right now as it is presented to us. Before voting, I should know if I am voting for something which is urgent because funding will be provided for before October. That is all I am asking for. It cannot be so difficult for the Minister to state when funding for the Bill that he is proposing will be delivered so that I understand its urgency. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Order! In all fairness to Honourable Saleshando, it is quite in order to be very precise Honourable Minister in your answer, please.

MR MORWAENG: Mr Speaker, I will be precise as requested. Our reasons for urgency of this Bill, firstly, Parliament is about to be dissolved, that is the main point. Funding should be released before or after Parliament dissolution. Therefore, as Government, we believe it should be presented.

Another point Honourable Saleshando is that we agreed at All Parties Caucus where your party was also represented that I should present this Bill. So, it is under All Parties Caucus mandate, your party included that I am presenting it. Therefore, I am here under instruction to request to present this Bill urgently. That is my request.

HIS HONOUR THE VICE PRESIDENT (MR TSOGWANE): Clarification. That is true, you are not a child, you are responding like an adult. It is true that Parliament will be dissolved. I want you to clarify that there are reasons, especially when it comes to the last days because elections are eminent and Parliament quorum will suffer. The day will pass with no quorum because people have gone for elections. Is that not a valid reason that while there is still time and Honourable Members are available then these important Bills could be passed?

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Procedure Mr Speaker!

MR SPEAKER: His Honour the Vice President (VP) stood on procedure if I am not wrong. Honourable Minister, please respond to what the Leader of the House was asking.

MR MORWAENG: That is true, I cannot add anything

to that. It is straight forward more especially that consultation was made. Batswana discussed this matter throughout the country. So there is no excuse of going to consult Batswana first because Batswana have spoken and made their desire known.

Two; Mr Speaker, the Bill that I am bringing, all the parties at All Party Conference, including Honourable Saleshando's party made a contribution. The Bill that we are bringing is a product of discussion with all political parties.

Therefore Mr Speaker, my request is that we should not beat around the bush because Batswana were consulted.

MR SALESHANDO: On a point of order. Mr Speaker, I asked a question, the Speaker made a ruling that I deserve a clear answer. Honourable Morwaeng says we should stop grasping at bits and pieces, but in all the time he has taken on the floor he did not answer the question. The Bill that you introduced which I agree with you that, the parties agreed that it should be done, I know everything you are saying. I have only one question; the urgency, is it part of it? Is it because we want to release money before we go for elections or we do not intend to release funds before elections? You know it because you read it. If you had given us time, I would also read it and say it is written here that it is something we will see after October, he has the privilege of having read it. So clarify it so that when we vote, we do it having a better understanding of this urgency. It is just a request for you to answer whether you intend to release funds after elections? It is nothing difficult.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Procedure Mr Speaker.

MR MORWANG: Mr Speaker, I was saying...

MR SPEAKER: Wait Minister. Honourable Minister, you are really putting me on for lack of a diplomatic word, on a precarious situation. In the sense that the last part of the question that Honourable Member for Maun West posed, if the funding is not going to be done soon, what is the urgency about? This is the important portion of the question, that is the reason why you hear me say you getting me slotted on a precarious situation. I pray for your cooperation Honourable Minister, please!

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Procedure Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Saleshando stood on a point of what you are saying. Let the Minister respond, we will come to you.



MR MORWAENG: Mr Speaker, I implore that we do not make the mistake of believing that the issue of when funds will be released is the only one determining the urgency of the matter. So I want to clarify that, that is not the only reason. I said this Bill, which I have presented, Honourable Saleshando is the one who asked a question and explained the way he did. So Honourable Saleshando and I have brought this Bill which we drafted through his party. Honourable Saleshando because his party has a copy of this Bill. Honourable Saleshando cannot say he does not know this Bill, when his representative were present when the Bill was drafted. So in short, I cannot bring a Bill with Honourable Saleshando to Parliament, then when we are in Parliament he says he does not know about it. I said this Bill is a product of our discussions with Honourable Saleshando. So Mr Speaker, I explained that, whether funds will be released before or after, I do not want to reveal the secret that Honourable Saleshando...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: You said there is no money.

MR MORWAENG: Yes I do not want to reveal that one. We should not touch on that issue because you said we should try and use our words properly. Let us accept that, this funding is going to be provided before or after, and this still makes it urgent. What I am saying is that, in any case, it is for Parliament to decide, not for me. So if you think that it is not urgent, when others say it is urgent, Parliament should decide. Parliament decides.

MR SPEAKER: You have made your point Honourable Minister.

MR TSHERE: Point of procedure. Mr Speaker, my procedure is that we should bring the House to order just to handle the conflict. The Bill that they tabled which I have already forgotten, is brief. At Clause 5 (4) it says and I want to quote with your permission Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Do quote.

MR TSHERE: Before I quote, it speaks to the disbursement and I quote, "the secretary shall disburse the first instalment of the monies immediately after the general elections and thereafter at the beginning of each financial year." So the proposed law here suggests that the monies will come after general elections and thereafter, it will keep coming every beginning of the financial year. So there is no need for us to argue, maybe he is the one who is supposed to clarify if the provision of the Bill he is talking about, means the funds will be disbursed before or after. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Tshere.

MR LUCAS: Point of order. Mr Speaker, I know that Honourable Tshere is not the Minister of State President. He can assist, the question was asked and a response was requested, and you highlighted that Honourable Morwaeng should answer the question. I do not know if he is refusing or not. There is a word that I wanted to use but I am not going to say it because when Mr Speaker makes the decision that you should answer a question, you have to answer it. Will these funds be disbursed before or after elections Honourable Minister? Answer the question!

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Murmurs)...

MR SPEAKER: Order! Order! Listen Honourable Members. No Honourable Members, when each one of us stands up and comes with their point, I am obligated to listen to it and respect it. I could not agree more with Honourable Tshere, he read the Bill very clearly, succinctly. So we all know.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: ...(Inaudible)...

MR SPEAKER: No! No! No! Honourable Tshere has brought us into the light. Thank you for enlightening this House. Thank you very much. I am now going to put a question.

Question put and **agreed to.**

Second Reading – **Later Date.**

MR SPEAKER: We are not going to go into the Second Reading of these Bills that we have just passed. We are going to go to the notice of Motions and Orders of the day; the Electoral (Amendment) Bill. We agreed that we are not going to pass these Bills today.

...Silence...

MR SPEAKER: Just give me a second for administrative checks and balances, I will be with you Honourable Members. Order! Order! Let us all be quiet Honourable Members, let us all be quiet, Rotwe!

**ELECTORAL (AMENDMENT) BILL,
2023 (NO. 21 OF 2023)**

**Second Reading
(Resumed Debate)**



MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the debate on this Bill is resuming. When the House adjourned yesterday, Honourable Leader of the House was on the floor debating and he is left with 15 minutes 53 seconds.

HIS HONOUR THE VICE PRESIDENT (MR TSOGWANE): Mr Speaker, thank you...

DR DOW: On a point of procedure. Mr Speaker, I raise this matter humbly. Proceedings of this Parliament are documented by officers who have been employed specifically for this job, so our future grand children can read in future. So when you address a Member of Parliament (MP) as Rotwe (Baboon), what do you expect these officers to write?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Laughter!)

DR DOW: I know that I have raised this Mr Speaker, with you privately and I raised it in the House. I know that you do not mean it in any other way but it is important that the record of these proceedings be such that, the future generations can read and understand. What should they write when you say 'Rotwe?' I think it is important to address Members of this House as the rules say in order to make their jobs easier. They should not wonder who, 'Rotwe' is. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: You have made your point, thank you very much. It is because you were absent earlier Honourable Dow, because earlier on, Honourable Hikuama addressed someone as 'nnyola' and when I asked who 'nnyola' was, he apologised and explained that he was calling him with his home name. So pardon me Honourable Members.

MR NKAWANA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Your elder brother, the substantive Speaker, yesterday indicated that we should increase the number of speakers. It was also agreed that those who had not been able to debate, will be awarded the opportunity because the number has been five without awarding all of us the opportunity. Here is my concern Mr Speaker; I am aware that you must catch the Speaker's eye in order to be given an opportunity to speak. You would find that from that small number, some people are slower while others are faster in catching your eye. As for others, you may not hear from them throughout the entire Bill, or perhaps you ignore them unintentionally. You will forgive me Mr Speaker. I could point them out right now: these three here are never given a slot, while other members repeat themselves. One person will comment on every Bill,

while other members are overlooked. Please help us, Mr Speaker. You should have a mechanism to identify those who are constantly speaking. We would all be standing, so you need to use your discretion to select who speaks. My question is, is it right for the same people to keep repeating themselves?

MR BALOPI: On a point of procedure. Thank you Mr Speaker. I want to comment on what Honourable Kgoberego said. Catching the Speaker's eye, means standing up. All of us here, when we attempt to stand up to catch the Speaker's eye, in some instances, would defy physics. There are people like Honourable Kgoberego and others who cannot stand up as quickly as Honourable Rakgare. I think it is very important to try and define this catching the Speaker's eye because I have observed it. It all depends on how quickly you get up. You might find that someone wants to talk but fails to stand up as quickly as other Honourable Members. Therefore, what else can be done? I seek your guidance. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Order! Honourable Members, you were the ones who decided at the General Assembly that Parliament should convene in the morning and again at 2:00 p.m. in order to push most of the work. I am concerned about how much time we waste trying to refine the nitty-gritties.

Honourable Member for Selebi Phikwe, I can speak on behalf of the substantive Speaker in his absence. I do not just speak for him because he is the Speaker, however, his eyes can see everyone, whether they are standing or not. When I am here, I can see all of you Honourable Members. I can point at those who have never stood since the time we convened. I know them, I would not be mistakenly picking them out. If it happens that someone can stand and my eyes do not catch them, they usually notify me of that and I indeed humbly apologise and call on them. That is the procedure.

Honourable Leader of the House, please advise. I had thought that yesterday there was a complaint lodged, urging us to increase the number of speakers on top of the 15 that we have agreed upon. If I am not mistaken Your Honour, I believe they suggested an increase of three.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: ...(Inaudible)...

MR SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Member.



HONOURABLE MEMBER: That does not mean that the Speaker's powers are being stripped. If you want to pause, you can pause.

MR SPEAKER: Right. I have already called the Leader of the House to speak. After he speaks, that would bring the number of the members of the ruling party to eight, including His Honour. From the opposition, there has been four, and three remains.

MR TSOGWANE: Thank you Mr Speaker. Let me first advise before I make an address. There is no clear answer to what Honourable Dow said. Just as you indicated, those are pet names. When someone seeks that record and stumbles on the word 'Rotwe,' they would know that they were referring to Honourable Nkawana.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ... (Laughter!) ...

MR TSOGWANE: After referring to someone as 'Rotwe,' you should also use their name so that the record can reflect who you meant. It is better that way. No one should guess from the figures who was being referred to.

Mr Speaker, a lot has been said regarding this matter. It is said that repeating the same thing over and over devalues it. We have spoken Honourable Members, we have agreed. All of us Members of Parliament can see that there are risks surrounding this even though we try to do away with a procedure that is promoted by electoral advisory councils like SADC Electoral Advisory Council and others. Those instruments are very clear in their minds, they meant polling stations and not polling districts or the constituency district headquarters. Even though that is the case Honourable Members, we have to know that if and when something goes wrong during elections, we cannot come back here and blame certain instruments. There is no opportunity for corrections, say maybe a case where someone runs away with a ballot box into the dark bushes. Security is very important, and we should also ensure that when we make laws, we are not misled by countries that have advanced further and even have tight security. I can hear that they propose that ballot papers for Members of Parliament be counted where Councillors' ballots are counted, but that is going to increase congestion and time as we know that ballot boxes for Members of Parliament are going to increase interest. We are also going to overwhelm them.

Instead of hurrying to do this process, perhaps we should give ourselves time to prepare so that if there is ever an opportunity to count ballot papers at polling

stations as the Minister mentions, we can indeed do that. We should also know that we have IEC, a commission that manages elections. We should not always think we are more intelligent than them. They can make recommendations and when issues get complicated like this, it is always important for us to meet them half way, sit down with them and take them into confidence. We have a General Assembly, we can invite them over to share with us what they think about this issue. They manage elections, and they know and understand the challenges of managing elections. Sometimes we, politicians raise issues that are influenced by our views and forget those who are assigned the responsibility and that can also be a risk.

When there is an issue like this, they should be afforded an opportunity to make recommendations. Last time we saw registration of elections taking too long simply because there was a legal case. People tried to force a situation where people who are not lawfully allowed to be present during registration are present, and that group of people is called Madibelathopho. Honourable Members, we are not supposed to overlook such issues. They are important because we want peace to prevail in our country, we want to follow procedures and have transparency. If we can be swayed by emotions and differences, we are going to take many things out of order. Through you Mr Speaker, I plead not to debate this issue further because it has been discussed. Since I have time, perhaps I should allow Honourable Members to ask questions if they have any, so as to finish the remaining time.

MR SALESHANDO: Procedure. No Honourable Members, let us have order in the House. One cannot say he is done and waiting for questions. Let us save time, the person who tabled the Bill and is expected to respond cannot ask for point of clarification.

Mr Speaker, we asked to increase his time but now we can see that he does not need the additional 10 minutes. Therefore, I think let us just be productive and call on the next speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Order! Honourable Saleshando has got a pertinent point, but what I understood the Leader of the House to be doing, was just to allow our normal processes whereby somebody from the floor would say clarification, stuff like that. I understood him to be meaning that way because the person who tabled the Bill asked for a point of clarification even before he was done. Mover of the Bill, what is your clarification?



MINISTER FOR STATE PRESIDENT (MR MORWAENG): Clarification. Mr Speaker, it should be clear that this Bill is a Private Members' Bill moved by Honourable Saleshando. I was responding to his Bill. In that manner, I believe I have a right as a Member of Parliament. Secondly, I also have a right to ask the Vice President...

MR SPEAKER: The reason why I allowed you.

MR MORWAENG: Thank you Mr Speaker.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: ... (Inaudible)...

MR MORWAENG: There is a problem that side.

Mr Speaker, I want the Vice President to clarify this issue because as we go for elections, it is important to explain how dangerous it is to modify procedures prior to elections. The reason for this is that, there are preparations that should have been made or things that ought to be availed before ballot papers can be counted there. Vice President, if we were to endorse this Bill few days before elections, is IEC really prepared for this development? Have they made all the necessary preparations or we are just going to come up with the law and expect them to see what to do?

MR TSOGWANE: No, that is why he is seeking clarification. He wants to clarify what you said. He wanted me to clarify it, that is the intent of clarification.

Thank you Minister, that is indeed true and that is why I emphasize that politicians are not the only stakeholders when it comes to managing elections. We have critical stakeholders particularly IEC. They consult ministries such as the Ministry of Defence which is headed by Honourable Mmusi, to see if there will be enough police officers in that kind of a situation when we look at numbers. Procedure has to be followed, lest we go ahead with the process only to be ridiculed for failing to station enough police officers or be accused of trying to rig elections. Since the law was passed that there should be enough police officers, the security should be sufficient. These things do happen...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Clarification.

MR TSOGWANE: I am still clarifying but I will yield for you. I said I give you all my remaining time to ask for clarifications.

It is indeed true Honourable Members, this issue has to be expanded. Significant stakeholders have to be

involved, especially IEC because it is not far from us, it manages elections. They have never raised this issue that much in their reports but they are aware of it. They are aware of it, as they often attend Electoral Commission Forums. We have to pay attention to these things Honourable Members. These are the things that we ought to pay attention to Honourable Members.

MR MMOLOTSI: Under our current system Mr Speaker, police officers are stationed at polling stations or wards. This leaves me wondering why the Vice President says there is need for more police officers because already there is lighting and police officers stationed there. In other words all necessary resources are in place for counting exercise to be carried out, these are same resources used to count Councillors votes. So those resources can be used to count Parliamentary votes. So, what is the problem?

MR TSOGWANE: If you would allow me Mr Speaker, some of the issues raised require the Minister responsible to respond because they are directed to his office, he can explain them better.

MR SPEAKER: I will chase you out Your Honour.

MR TSOGWANE: ... (Laughter!)... Mr Speaker, you are right but the reason has been shared, that is secondary. The main argument is, the system we want to implement deviates from the recommendations by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and African Union. The issue is polling stations. Our argument is, if you bring Parliament votes to where Council votes are counted, you know very well that the interest of Botswana heightens. If people gather at the counting centre, it is not like all of them will fit in the room, they also know that they will not fit so there will be overcrowding within that surrounding. The crowd will even overpower police officers because they are just human beings, they are not robots. He is a human being just like you, so a large group of people can overpower him. Those are actual incidents. We usually witness police officers in developed countries like America being overpowered by people who would enter into buildings despite the large number of police officers and security cameras. There are still ongoing cases regarding past elections of 2019 in America because people entered into buildings. So we do not want to encounter a similar situation. Our argument is that, we should continue with the current electoral process which is the real one to avoid driving to that kind of situation.



MR RAMOGAPI: On a point of clarification Mr Speaker. Thank you sir. In brief His Honour the Vice President, let us quickly address the argument that there is no time to implement this law. Point number one; the first time we requested that this law should be brought was last year, still through Honourable Saleshando and there was still enough time. So perhaps the blame here can be placed upon those who opposed saying we should wait for the Constitution.

Point number two; it is not compelling to implement a law immediately after it is passed. Laws are usually passed and it takes three years to be sanctioned by the President...

MR LEUWE: On a point of procedure Mr Speaker. Thank you Mr Speaker. Good morning Mr Speaker. I am now confused. The comment by Honourable Ramogapi does not relate to the Vice President's debate, it was raised by Honourable Morwaeng. What kind of procedure is that, such that Honourable Morwaeng raised a point but clarification is sought from Honourable Tsogwane? Let us get back on track Mr Speaker. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Order! Hold on Honourable Ramogapi. The problem is, you are a fast talker. Exactly what Honourable Member for Takatokwane is saying, I was just about to say, you cannot have access to the Honourable Minister for Presidential Affairs, he is not holding the floor. It is His Honour the Leader of the House who is on the floor. He is the one you can ask. If you have nothing else, I will call Honourable Saleshando to respond to the Bill.

MR TSOGWANE: Let me comment on this one. Honourable Ramogapi's point is simple Mr Speaker. You allow people to give you a headache. If a person seeks clarification, he is a Member of the House, I was going to ask him to respond. It is not a problem. Honourable Mmolotsi, are you still asking?

MR MMOLOTSI: Yes sir. I want to briefly ask the Vice President why the same system undertaken during General Elections cannot happen at the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) primary elections, where counting is done at the counting centre?

MR SPEAKER: You are very much out of order Honourable Member. Their primary elections have got nothing to do with us. Standing Order 57.1 confine yourself to the debate, please.

MR MMOLOTSI: Ah! So there are no comparisons allowed under your...

MR SPEAKER: No, you know very well that you are out of order Honourable Member for Francistown.

MR MMOLOTSI: No, no, I am not out of order. Listen to me Mr Speaker. Listen to me, allow me to seek clarification from the Vice President, he has yielded for me. Your argument is, the election process we are currently proposing regarding the General Elections for counting to be done at the polling stations is there will be overcrowding and we will fail to control people. So my question is, political parties undertake the same process and one of the parties which does that is your party of BDP. Do you ever experience such challenges of overcrowding during your primary elections which you were talking about earlier? If not, why do we think there will be such at the General Elections?

MR TSOGWANE: If you talk about primary elections, you are talking about some parties who have a choice to not partake on them, then it is an option. In other words you cannot compare two different things, if we talk about General Elections, we are talking about elections which are the life of our country's governance. You cannot compare the two processes simply because some parties did not even hold primary elections. That is what we have been saying. If there is overcrowding and BDP is uncontrollable or someone runs off with the ballot boxes or does something disorderly, it does not put the country at risk. The party is at risk, not the country. We cannot fail to hold General Elections just because some party did not hold primary elections, it directly appointed Hikuama. We are going to ask people of Ngami when they voted for him?

MR SPEAKER: Your time is up sir. Your time is up!

MR MATHOOTHE (SEROWE NORTH): Thank you Mr Speaker. Good morning...

MR SPEAKER: My apologies, I was focusing on Honourable Member for Serowe West. Honourable Member for Serowe West my focus is on you.

MR KEDIKILWE (SEROWE WEST): Let me thank you Mr Speaker and indicate that I support this Motion. The reason being I think if it was to be implemented it would erase the misconceptions and to find ourselves chasing after an election vehicle because we are suspicious that there is some sort of abnormality happening there. Like I usually request, if there is at least one of our representative who will be keeping an eye on the ballot box, because if you place a person to guard that ballot box it can erase those misconceptions.



However if the ballot box is out of sight it creates all these misconceptions, that is why I support the proposal for counting to be done at the polling stations. I do not agree with the argument that if we pass the law right now, it will be too late, because these are not the last elections. The same goes for the argument that we might not be prepared even if we were to pass it because we are not prepared, maybe we could pass it and implement it on a stipulated date. If it can be passed currently because there are reasons that is very close for elections polls to be refurbished...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Correction.

MR KEDIKILWE: ...they are not the last elections, that is what my faith says. There will still be elections. What we will be doing now will be just passing the Bill.

MR SPEAKER: Correction. Honourable Kedikilwe...

MR KEDIKILWE: Sir?

MR SPEAKER: Let us hear his correction.

MR KEDIKILWE: It is not correction, he is saying clarification...

MR SPEAKER: Just a minute, you are very right, Standing Order 53. 1 (2) you cannot ask for clarification, when he does not yield and then you ask for another point.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: ...(Inaudible)...

MR SPEAKER: No, no, no I can hear his voice.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Inaudible)...

MR SPEAKER: No, I love that person a lot, I know his voice. Just take your floor Honourable Member.

MR KEDIKILWE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I believe that there is nothing wrong with passing this Bill because we would be preparing for future as we know that we are a democratic country, elections are held after every five years. We cannot say maybe the elections will be held. I know that most of the times that...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Clarification Uncle.

MR KEDIKILWE: I know that the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) calls us as stakeholders after elections in constituencies and enquire on how the elections were. They are aware of the issue that people are complaining that ballots should be counted

in polling stations because even from the last report that I read they showed that people are saying that. It is not IEC that is objecting but you. IEC has never objected and they know what the public is saying and they understand why it seems like we are imposing speculations on them. They are clean, they are aware that they can administer elections in a clean manner. Those that ruling are the ones that are objecting, and we should not allow ourselves to reach a point where elections could be polluted because there are not run accordingly, because we do not know where the ballot boxes went.

The issue that was mentioned yesterday that a vehicle was moving at a high speed that it could not even stop by the traffic lights or junctions from Kgalagadi. Those people believed that, that vehicle was running with something for it to move at that speed. They knew that history could repeat its self as one of Honourable Members mentioned that, "if my mind serves me well, one box was hidden." That is why I am saying let us amend the law, there is nothing wrong with crafting the law. Saying it should be done next time like we are currently talking about political funding, and someone quoted a clause saying it will not be offered currently but want it to be presented with Certificate of Urgency because it is ready but the funds will not be provided currently. So, it is the same with passing the Bill looking at that we will be leaving this Parliament knowing that the law has been passed which will be used on the next elections and it will be an issue of ...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Correction Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Let us hear the correction Honourable Member. Honourable Minister what is your correction.

MINISTER FOR STATE PRESIDENT (MR MORWAENG): Correction. Let me correct Honourable Member on the Bill presented by Honourable Saleshando that Honourable Saleshando is saying the law should just be passed even if it is not implemented on the next elections and there is nothing wrong. I do not believe that Honourable Saleshando said that. The issue is that when the law is passed it should be implemented. Shortly, what he is saying is not what Honourable Saleshando is saying. Honourable Saleshando is presenting the Bill to be passed but we happen to know that when the Bill is passed it should be executed. Mr Speaker, especially when we are talking about elections, the Parliament cannot pass the Bill, and do something different, which was not agreed in Parliament. I want to correct



Honourable Member on that, to stop saying the law can be passed and not be implemented during elections because that will cause unrest Honourable Member. So, let me remind you that if we pass that Bill, especially for elections, it means it should be implemented. What he is saying is that it can be passed and be ignored to be implemented during the 2029 elections, I do not agree with it. I believe that when you pass the law it should be implemented.

MR KEDIKILWE: Thank you Sir. I understood you, but I am saying this because of what you are saying that you are not ready, you suspect that there is no lighting where the ballot counting is done for Councilors. If you believe that there would be lighting, there are no reason to object that Bill to be passed. If you believe that even during the Councilors there is security, I do not see any reason not to pass the Bill because there will be security. If you know the value of elections, it is upon you to increase those that will be providing that security. It is either you increase police officers or soldiers because there are both yours. It is clear that you are the ones that are objecting, you do not want to agree.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Another correction Mr Speaker.

MR KEDIKILWE: As you always stand Honourable Morwaeng to say "I was saying let us object"...

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Kedikilwe, let us hear another correction. What is your correction Honourable Minister?

MR MORWAENG: Point of correction. Mr Speaker, you can just hear that a Member of Parliament for Opposition is talking, that he would say that we should send soldiers to polling stations, and after we do that they would turn and say soldiers we sent there to intimidate people. Mr Speaker, the electoral procedure concerning sending soldiers to polling stations which the Opposition is currently saying...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Procedure Mr Speaker.

MR MORWAENG: ...which we do not agree with...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Procedure Mr Speaker.

MR MORWAENG: Please explain yourself...

MR SPEAKER: So as a result, Mr Speaker, I am requesting Honourable Kedikilwe to be clear if it is the position of Opposition that they want soldiers in polling

stations and say yes, as Opposition we do not believe that there is an issue of security, send soldiers to... (Inaudible)... there is no problem...

MR SPEAKER: You have made your point on that issue.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Procedure Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: What is your procedure?

MR HIKUAMA: Point of Procedure. Mr Speaker, your brother that you always praise saying that he is your brother, your boss, explained that when I differ with someone it is not a correction. Differing with someone on what they are deliberating is counter argument, that is not correction. You could have explained to the Honourable Member of Molepolole; the Minister of State President that there is nothing that he is correcting. He differs with what Honourable Kedikilwe is saying. You should not be allowing him to continue for such a long time because there is nothing that he is correcting. It will appear as if there was something that he has been correcting, while there was not. He brought a different argument, he has been saying that you are not correct, when he sits down he should not think that he corrected anything.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you sir. Honourable Kedikilwe, I am going to be very rigid.

MR KEDIKILWE: Yes, he is hindering me from debating saying he is correcting but not because he is correcting what the Vice President (VP) said, he is the one who was talking about security touching on police officers and soldiers. Secondly, during my by-elections he brought everything, brought squads wearing helmets and holding sjamboks. I do not understand if this scare was only done in Serowe and not the entire country. You proved to me that they can be sent.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Applause!)...

MR KEDIKILWE: That is why I am saying it is entirely upon you if you want to send security, it is up to you how you increase it, so that you can provide protection at polling stations. You cannot today be saying that the Opposition want soldiers so as to intimidate people. It means you are capable of intimidation, you knew that you want to intimidate, that is why you said that, now I understand your point.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Laughter!)



MR KEDIKILWE: So my point is...

MINISTER FOR STATE PRESIDENT (MR MORWAENG): Point of order Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Member is blaming me for sending security to Serowe to monitor the elections; sir, I am not the Minister of Defence and Security...(Interruptions)... Minister of Defence and Security is here. Regarding...

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Murmurs)...

MR SPEAKER: Order please! I will deal with him, not yourselves.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Okay.

MR MORWAENG: Yes, you can hate me but you cannot blame me for sending soldiers there, it is not true.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Order! Honourable Members, listen. In all fairness to the Honourable Member holding the floor, Honourable Member for Serowe West, I was paying attention earlier when Honourable Member... what I understood him to be saying is that he is talking about collective responsibility, one Government, that it is your responsibility to be answerable to it Honourable Mmusi. You always praise your colleague so Honourable Hikuama mentioned that I am answerable to him, collective responsibility on the speakership. Finish up Honourable Kedikilwe.

MR KEDIKILWE: I thank you. In short and without blaming you Honourable Member, that thing happened, so you are expected to ask your colleague to provide you with security regardless of where you are.

Mr Speaker, we are concerned that is why I agree that ballots should be counted in polling stations. I am still concerned about registration books which disappeared in Nkange; they recorded about 25 people who registered there.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Nkange is next to Zimbabwe.

MR KEDIKILWE: I am still concerned, we are yet to see what they have up their sleeves; you will see a man registering as Margaret but there is no man who goes by the name of Margaret, unless if you are not an indigenous Motswana. For this reason, I am so concerned about those books, sometimes I spend sleepless nights wondering if it is possible for so many books to disappear and you keep silent; there is no one who has informed people about the status of the report.

MR RAKGARE: Procedure Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, they are saying there is no man called Margaret yet he is sitting next to a man called Baratiwa or Moratiwa, I mean... we know that names such as Moratiwa are used to refer to women, so what is the difference Mr Speaker?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Laughter!)...

MR MATHOOTHE: Point of order. Mr Speaker, Honourable Rakgare should just focus on his point and leave me alone. He is not holding the floor so he should leave me alone Mr Speaker.

MR KEDIKILWE: Thank you. My point is to highlight our concerns such as the books that have gone missing. I suspect that they are going to register outsiders who use Setswana names, people who cannot pronounce the word "*makgekgenene*". Indeed we are very concerned about such things.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Laughter!)...

MR KEDIKILWE: I am referring to people who cannot pronounce where they claim to come from when you ask as they will be queuing. For these reasons, I believe it is better for us to count ballots in polling stations instead of transporting boxes at jet speed where it is possible to hit a horse on the way. This thing can cause injuries as people will be driving out of fear. You might also find that you are just afraid of imaginary fear.

So since we all agree, let us address this issue by making sure that we count ballots in polling stations where we will be able to ensure that we do not have Margaret in our midst as we do not know where they come from because our books have disappeared. Clearly, you have planned to do something fishy with those books. So my concern is that, some unimaginable things are ongoing.

Mr Speaker, the same goes for people who vote from other countries, I have never seen their ballot papers literally at any point in time; you simply empty them on the box and tell us they are for people who voted either before they left or outside Botswana, I believe this thing also calls for review. Thereafter, I will know the number of such people since their ballots will be counted at polling stations unlike where you transport boxes at jet speed and condemn us for being late when we arrive. The fact of the matter is, you use state vehicles, BX which can never be charged for over speeding. For these reasons, I agree with Honourable Saleshando that ballots should be counted in polling stations so that our electoral process runs smoothly, where no one will be suspicious of anything. I thank you.



MR SPEAKER: Your time is up.

MR NKAWANA (SELEBI PHIKWE EAST): I thank you Mr Speaker. I am also standing to support the Bill presented by Honourable Saleshando. Mr Speaker, this is because Batswana indicated that they have concerns. The truth is, Batswana sent us to represent them in Parliament so it is indeed important for us to support this Bill since they always longed for ballots to be counted in polling stations. Honourable Saleshando has simplified this issue; Minister indicated that some of our polling stations have poor lighting and that using candles may end up burning our tents. So he suggested that we should at least make use of areas that have resources such as schools, classrooms, halls in our polling district. It is better for us to use areas with better resources instead of polling stations.

Mr Speaker, international organisations argued that counting ballots at polling stations is the only issue that can be followed up, I do not think these are the improvements that we can tell Batswana that we failed to make Mr Speaker. Our concern is, you will find that about 10 state vehicles will transport ballot boxes at jet speed just to mislead you while you use unfit Honda fit... they will run at jet speed or Moscow style such that you discover when you arrive that they changed boxes and put their own seals. One may ask...

MR LUCAS: Clarification. Thank you Mr Speaker. I am not familiar with Moscow style so can you enlighten us about it Honourable Nkawana, perhaps we will get to understand in case members use it during the upcoming elections.

MR NKAWANA: Thank you Mr Speaker. It is just a slang which means they blind you with lightning speed in that process.

Mr Speaker, let me emphasise what the Honourable Member behind me, Honourable Kedikilwe just mentioned that for our voters in the diaspora, their ballot boxes will be added to the ones this side since we are unable to send observers abroad. All you will see is ballots added to local ones and we are told that they are from Germany. Mr Speaker, we are concerned about that because those are election figures that mostly we suspect they increase the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) votes. Mr Speaker, I am also concerned as I have just mentioned that...

MR SPEAKER: Order! Order! Please resume your seat. Honourable Members, as it is now 1 0'clock, we

shall now suspend our deliberations and go for some refreshments which have been prepared for us. As it is our custom to break at one, let us go Honourable Members.

**PROCEEDINGS SUSPENDED AT 1:00 P.M. FOR
APPROXIMATELY 1 HOUR PROCEEDINGS
RESUMED AT 2:00 P.M.**

“EXCHANGE OF SPEAKERSHIP”

MR SPEAKER (MR SKELEMANI): Let us resume our business of today starting with questions. I understand that regarding the question for the Leader of the House, there has been and understanding between the Leader of the House and Honourable Thiite, that question is later dated.

MR THIITE: Correct Mr Speaker.

**LEADER OF THE HOUSE'S QUESTION
TIME**

**THEME: ACQUISITION OF TAUTONA LODGE
BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA**

• Asked the Leader of the House to state:

- (i) the size of the farm;
- (ii) activities taking place at Tautona Lodge since its purchase;
- (iii) in view of Government's aspiration to transform Botswana's economy from a mineral dependent to a knowledge based economy as envisioned by Vision 2036 how is the acquisition of Tautona Lodge going to benefit the people of Ghanzi and the Western region taking into account absence of tertiary institutions in the region;
- (iv) whether National Agricultural Research and Development Institution (NARDI) and Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN) have not considered playing a leading role in unlocking Botswana's potential as a food hub by decentralising and transferring some of their departments to Tautona Lodge farm; taking into account the exponential growth of the cattle industry and the booming horticulture sector in the area;
- (v) in view, of Ghanzi township being landlocked by farms will a portion of the Tautona Lodge farm be apportioned for expansion of the township



to accelerate access to land for residential and commercial plots to create an enabling environment for commerce and industry, as well as to stimulate the local economy;

- (vi) when should the people of Ghanzi expect the Lodge to be fully transformed into an educational institution/research Centre; and
- (vii) when will the residents of Ghanzi be consulted to include them in the development agenda of the farm.

(Mr J. L. Thiite, MP. – Ghanzi North)

Later Date.

MR MOTSAMAI: Procedure Mr Speaker. I am at the constituency and there is a network problem which persisted since morning when I tried to connect virtually. I believe you are aware that there are Honourable Members who are virtually connected especially some of us who are Whips and should be given first priority to comment on different matters. Moreover, we are from remote areas where there are many challenges. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Motsamai. They can see that you are connected on the screen. Thank you very much. Let us proceed Honourable Members.

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER

NUMBER OF WARDS PER ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT

MR D. SALESHANDO (MAUN WEST): asked the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development to state:

- (i) the current number of Wards per Administrative District as well as the number of wards inclusive of the new ward demarcations following the Constituency Delimitation exercise; and
- (ii) if the increases are aligned to population growth in all the districts and where the increases are not based on population increase, to state the factors that were considered for each district and the number of wards demarcated not proportionate to population growth.

ASSISTANT MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (MR MODUKANELE): Thank you Mr Speaker.

Thank you Honourable Saleshando for this question. The answer is fairly long. Allow me to respond in the language it was asked in.

- (i) Mr Speaker, currently there are 490 polling districts (council wards) across the country which were established in 2013. Following the Delimitation Exercise of 2022, the demarcation process was conducted and consequently 119 new polling districts (council wards) were established, bringing the total to 609 as per the Government Notice No. 367 of 2023. Detailed information regarding the number of wards per Administrative District is provided as per Table 1 below. I will give it to Honourable Member.

- (ii) Mr Speaker, it is important to note that the population of Botswana has grown from 2 024 904 in 2011 to 2 359 609 in 2022 and that since the Demarcation Exercise of 2013, the number of Administrative Districts increased from 13 to 28 due to the decentralisation process, while the number of constituencies realised an increase from 57 to 61 after the Delimitation Exercise.

Nonetheless, all the districts registered an increase in the number of polling districts except one, being Selebi Phikwe which did not gain a new ward. This is because it experienced a population decline in 2022 compared to 2011 census figures of which the declined is attributed to the closure of the BCL mine. Although the "Population Quota" is the guiding principle, there are other significant factors considered in the demarcation process. Such other factors include natural community of interest, means of communication, geographical features, population density of Administrative Districts and boundaries of Tribal Territories and Administrative Districts. During the 2023 Demarcation Exercise, the realignment to administrative boundaries and the associated population dynamics affected the establishment of polling districts.

The Demarcation Exercise is conducted by a Demarcation Committee established for each constituency. The committee conducts consultative meetings with the constituents to solicit submissions on how best to divide the constituency into the determined number of polling districts. It identifies polling districts (council wards) by defining the boundaries of each while ensuring that no part of the constituency, whether inhabited or not, remains unallocated to a polling district. In this respect, taking into account the above mentioned factors, the



number of inhabitants of an electoral district (polling district) may be greater or lesser than the established quota.

It is worth noting that the "Population Quota" is the number obtained by dividing the number of inhabitants in each Administrative District by the number of polling districts in that district. The number of each polling district inhabitants should be as nearly close to the quota as practically possible and this varies across Administrative Districts. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SALESHANDO: Supplementary. Mr Speaker, I understand that he will provide a table showing some figures but towards the end of the question, there is one which says, 'to state the factors that were considered for each district and the number of wards demarcated not proportionate to population growth'. He stated the reasons that, it might be due to factors such as community of interest, these have been there all along. So I want you to state the districts where there was great increase which is not proportionate to population growth. If you can, please assist with that information.

MR MODUKANELE: Mr Speaker, maybe I should highlight that in this response we tried to allude to that. I think that this table will show this issues to the Honourable Member which maybe did not necessarily appear as I indicated, that it is not only the population quota which we look at, there are other factors as I mentioned Mr Speaker.

MR SALESHANDO: Further supplementary. Surely Mr Minister, when you observe, you can see which one it is on that table. You make it hard for me to ask supplementaries but for any given example, clarify how a constituency like Boteti West which has not had a population growth which is higher than the population growth of Botswana, whose community of interest has not changed, is still the same people that were at Boteti all this time, how is it possible for them to get an increase of wards from nine, I think it is to 16? You can confirm that. Almost double. How does this happen? What explains that?

MR MODUKANELE: ...(Laughter!)... I do not know why you chose Boteti West from the others, it is not the only one that has grown. Honourable Saleshando, you will agree with me that as I was saying that communication and the roads at Boteti West which are similar to the ones at your constituency, are not in a good state. All these factors we take them into

consideration; the committee will be reviewing at that time, looking at all these things to see what they can do. When a person is at Boteti West for example, there is Ministry of Communication, there are roads etc. These things are taken into consideration, you cannot compare the person to someone in an urban area if I were to give that example. These things are taken into consideration Honourable Saleshando. I believe that you will agree with me that they are considered.

MR MMOLOTSI: Supplementary. Thank you Mr Speaker. Honourable Minister, when we talk about wards, clarify how you arrive at the number when you appoint Specially Elected or nominated Councillors, for Francistown or Boteti West for example? Just so that Batswana can understand which criteria you use, whereby you find that at some constituencies you have allocated a large number and you allocated a small number at some constituencies. In other instances, you find that in a constituency which was won by opposition, you bring a person from Domkrag but when the constituency was won by BDP, you never appoint a person from opposition there.

MR MODUKANELE: Mr Speaker, let me request Honourable Member that if he wants us to talk about the criteria of specially nominated, he should bring a question so we can answer it freely, and give it time that it deserves.

CANCELLATION OF THE 4% LEVY CHARGE

MR M. G. J. MOTSAMAI (GHANZI SOUTH): asked the Minister of Finance if she will consider cancelling the 4% levy charge for farmers as they account for different charges regarding livestock development.

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Motsamai, the Minister is not around.

MR MOTSAMAI: That is what I expected, the question is difficult.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Laughter!)...

MR SPEAKER: ...(Laughter!)...

MR MOTSAMAI: Thank you.

DISPUTE OVER LAND

MR O. REGOENG (MOLEPOLOLE NORTH): asked the Minister of Lands and Water Affairs whether he is aware of the protracted dispute between Kweneng



Land Board and a certain individual over a piece of land designated for a tribal cemetery at Magokotswane in Molepolole; if so:

- (i) to state the number of years the matter has dragged; and
- (ii) how soon the matter will be resolved.

MINISTER OF LANDS AND WATER AFFAIRS (DR MZWILILA): Thank you Mr Speaker.

- (i) Mr Speaker, I am aware of a matter between Kweneng Land Board, Kweneng District Council and a certain individual over a piece of land designated for a cemetery in Magokotswane ward in Molepolole. The case involves access and encroachments which the Kweneng Land Board made a ruling on them and its decision was appealed at the Land Tribunal. The matter was first enrolled with the Land Tribunal on the 18th July 2018. The last hearing of the matter was on 21st February 2023, at which the matter was postponed. Therefore, the case has been before the courts of law for six years.
- (ii) Mr Speaker, I am not in a position to state when the matter will be resolved as the land board awaits advice from the Land Tribunal (which is the court at the level of the Magistrate Court) on the date of the next hearing. Moreover, any of the parties is at liberty to appeal the decision of the Land Tribunal to the high court and even appeal the decision of the high court to the Court of Appeal (CoA). I thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: I think we are done with question, unless if the Minister of Finance suddenly appears. Let us proceed with other business; Second Readings.

ELECTORAL (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023 (NO. 21 OF 2023)

Second Reading

(Resumed Debate)

MR SPEAKER: The debate on this Bill is resuming. When we adjourned for lunch, Honourable Nkawana was on the floor and he is left with six minutes.

MR NKAWANA (SELEBI PHIKWE EAST): Thank you Mr Speaker. When we went for lunch, I was still highlighting that it is difficult during elections,

particularly for us as opposition to win if the situation is still like this, counting of ballots is done at constituency headquarters, and not done at polling districts. Mr Speaker, it is difficult for opposition to come into Office if this situation persists.

I recall this other neighbouring ruler who once outlined how you can lose elections when you are in charge of the elections as the leader. He mentioned that, considering you had taken all the employees, you had instructed them on what should happen. You had luxurious, Moscow-style vehicles being fueled by the Government. How can you carry ballot boxes when you drive a Honda Fit? The person who said that was speaking the truth because that is what they also do. They know that when you come speeding with rubbers, you will not be able to compete with those types of cars, Mr Speaker.

Another concerning matter Mr Speaker, is that voters take their votes seriously and wish to celebrate their participation. In Botswana, our population is not so large that Ward ballots could reach 5,000. It is very possible for everyone who voted to gather and listen as the votes are being counted, celebrating the results throughout the night. They should not have to hear the results from radios. I am also very concerned these days because of the pits in Phikwe. Sometimes, I fear that if someone were to flee with the ballot box, it might be discarded in one of the non-operational mines. This concern is why we request that the boxes be counted where the voting took place. As per Honourable Saleshando's suggestion, if tents are not feasible, we can use a nearby school within the Ward. This approach would reduce the number of police and soldiers usually required, as they would be stationed at the school Mr Speaker.

Others have mentioned the possibility of danger during commute. We know that in all this confusion, there can be many accidents. It was fortunate that the last accident involved an electoral candidate, but tomorrow it could involve the election's vehicle. That car might even catch fire while still carrying the ballot boxes. We should address these situations quickly and avoid transporting items at night to reduce the risk of accidents.

Mr Speaker, a vote is a very important thing. Some ill-intended people might hijack the ballot boxes while they are being transported. If we had cooperation and understood how important it is to protect Botswana's votes, especially the vote for a Member of Parliament as is what builds a Government, we would ensure that tallying was quickly done in the polling district.



Mr Speaker, I wanted to point out that although some people usually say that Botswana's elections are free, they are not fair. They are not fair in the sense that there is no cooperation. The ruling party never wants to cooperate whenever the opposition candidates raise concerns that their votes were not fair. Mr Speaker, this is a common occurrence that we, who frequently stand for elections, have witnessed. Even you Mr Speaker, having stood for elections multiple times, would recognise this scenario. When the boxes arrive at the tallying centre, security might prohibit even an experienced candidate like yourself from entering. It can happen that two of your members are denied entry. You might find boxes already removed from the truck, leaving you uncertain about which ones are yours, which ones were removed, and where the Moscow style passed. You are left with no choice but to accept the number of boxes present, without being able to confirm if they all belong to you. They suggest that you put the seal on, but these days, criminals even carry house keys. They unlock your house, leaving you to wonder where they got your key. So, what makes you think they would not have your seal? Their intention is to disrupt elections by opening or changing the boxes. This is something we are aware of and witness regularly. We do not need to argue about it all day because we know it is happening. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR MATHOOTHE (SEROWE NORTH): Thank you Mr Speaker. Good afternoon Mr Speaker. Let me also indicate that I agree with the Bill brought before this House by Honourable Saleshando. This is not the first time he has introduced this Bill. I believe that from the first time he brought it, the Government has self-corrected because it is a very good Bill that improves the conduct of elections. The arguments being raised by Members of Parliament from the Domkrag currently differ greatly from those they raised the first time this Bill was introduced. It is clear that they have no intention of improving how elections are conducted. Initially, they argued that MPs could not oversee the entire constituency where the tallying would take place. Now, if you listen, their reasoning has changed.

I believe that they had time to respond in accordance with the request. Minister Morwaeng and his party members rejected this process, arguing that they want the elections to take place in polling stations as recommended by organisations such as SADC. This indicates that they will never change. Whenever they attempt to fix the issue, other polling stations will still

end up in cattle posts. One might wonder, since he wants things done correctly, how will he ensure that cattle posts have adequate lighting and buildings. He offers no convincing solutions or hope. They remain silent, merely following recommendations from various organisations without providing any real answers.

The Bill before us could mark the beginning of significant progress. Currently, tallying occurs within constituency centres. Honourable Saleshando suggests that we should shift towards tallying at the Wards, specifically at polling district centres where Councilors' votes are counted. This Bill proposes initiating that shift, serving as a preliminary step towards our ultimate goal. Honourable Saleshando argues that if tallying were conducted at the same locations where Councilors' votes are counted, it would simplify the process for everyone and save on petrol wasted in transporting ballot boxes. The poor condition of the roads is evident. During the last by-elections for Honourable Kedikilwe, vehicles were seen speeding from Dimajwe, covering over 30 kilometers on gravel roads. If a decision had been made to group all the ballot boxes from cattle posts at the school in Dimajwe for tallying, most Batswana would not suspect any tampering along the way.

I believe that the Domkrag MPs should support this Bill, as it is appropriate. Their issue is that they never want to agree with anything proposed by the opposition. If they had introduced it, they would have passed it without delay.

I believe that when ballot papers are counted at the centres or where ballot papers for Councilors are counted, constituents would be able to go and observe or see the results. When a ballot box is transferred from Majwanwaadipitse and it passes through Tshimoyapula all the way to Serowe, people are denied the opportunity to observe how they voted. They are only going to hear the results on the radio even though the box is from their constituency. I believe this Motion is okay as is. It can help to eliminate doubts and suspicions that are there.

Mr Speaker, Batswana from all corners of Botswana believe that ballot papers for Members of Parliament should be counted at the centers where ballot papers for councilors are tallied because they believe that after verifying ballot papers, everything that was used during elections is passed on to those who rig elections to prepare the identical boxes and ballots and then along the way...



ASSISTANT MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (MS MONNAKGOTLA):

Clarification. Thank you Mr Speaker. The Honourable Member has just said that we never agree with them. How can members of Domkrag agree with them when they do not agree with each other to a point that they can even secretly unseat their president? Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR MATHOOTHE: Mr Speaker, I yielded for her because last time when we debated this Motion, she is the very same person who said she cannot manage to be at the center where ballot papers are counted. I yielded for her so that she can stress what she said during our last debate but today she is saying something different.

Mr Speaker, I emphasised that most people suspect that ballot boxes are switched enroute and by the time they are offloaded, they look exactly like the first box. The belief is that if ballot papers can be counted there, if the numbers can be sent to the center, these suspicions will no longer be there. That is what we are saying and when you listen to reasons advanced by our fellow Honourable Members, they are not saying anything. We suspect that perhaps they want to do that so that they can station police officers and soldiers at constituency centres like they did in Serowe. That is why they are stubbornly saying they cannot implement this law now. We suspect that what we witnessed in Serowe last year was just a trial of what they intend to do in all the centres during the next elections as a way to scare people from voting.

Mr Speaker, this is our solemn view. We notice that there is an ulterior motive for this. I believe if this Bill can pass, every Motswana in Botswana is going to appreciate that Botswana took a step to improve elections and eliminate the thought that there is rigging of elections. When this development is executed, you will no longer hear rigging allegations. Thank you Mr Speaker.

ASSISTANT MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (MR MOLEBATSI):

Thank you Mr Speaker. Maybe I should start by highlighting that what I am going to say does not have anything to do with the statement that the mover of the Motion, Honourable Saleshando says I wrote, the statement that he wishes could be read here. What I am going to say here is my view about how I see this Motion. It does not have anything to do with the statement that I wrote wherever he saw it.

Since I have been listening to all of you here Mr Speaker, I believe that even though members of Domkrag talk about principle, none of us this side is against what Honourable Saleshando is proposing, the proposal that ballot papers should be counted at the polling districts. We wish to have credible elections in our country, elections that other people yearn for. It is important for us to agree upon certain things that concern elections so they can be as clean as possible to avoid rigging accusations. When one wins elections, it is not nice to be accused of rigging elections, but it would be fun for Botswana to say someone won elections fairly, we all had an opportunity but Botswana preferred this one. We agree. One of the things that can please Botswana and ourselves is to count ballot papers there.

Details have been stated that even though we agreed with how SADC assisted us, we had to ask ourselves if when we look at conditions of affairs in Botswana we believe we are prepared to count ballot papers at the polling districts. We know that things happen even at party level, not just Domkrag but at other parties. In 2018 a ballot box was snatched in my constituency... (Interruptions)... Yes, we are aware of this. People fight for elections even in other parties. Even though this does happen in other countries, people fight for outcomes of elections mostly when ballot papers are counted at polling districts. Some people would come to the polling stations and say they have results and others would disagree with those results. By the time the ballots are counted, it would be discovered that they do not tally. Sometimes people declare the President, a president being declared in many elections way before results are compiled or reconciled and that would cause unrests.

All in all, what I am saying is that I believe the mover of this Motion, Honourable Saleshando understands that we are still discussing these issues. We were told that the issue is before the All Party Conference and it will later on come here so that we can review it as Government, and then send it back to you on the 8th of August. Honourable Saleshando, do you perhaps not think that we are hurrying this matter since it is still being discussed? According to my understanding, maybe you should have waited for it to be sent back to you. You and your party are part of the All Party Conference. Perhaps you should have waited for it to be sent back to you, so that we hear Government stand and then later debate it here in Parliament. That will be the first thing. I am not saying what you are proposing here



is not okay, it is actually brilliant but maybe some of us here are compelled not to support you simply because of timing.

MR HIKUAMA: Clarification Mr Speaker. Thank you for giving me this opportunity Honourable Molebatsi. I believe you are right when you say it is being discussed at the All Party Conference, I think that is what Honourable Morwaeng said. It appears that everyone at the All Party Conference supports this proposal. All Party Conference is not a legislative body so even if a law can be agreed upon there, it cannot be implemented before being tabled in Parliament. Do you not think it is the right time because there is no one either a member or party representative who opposes that as the law makers/legislators we should take that responsibility to implement this agreement? Do you not think this is the right time?

MR MOLEBATSI: Thank you Honourable Member. If you listened to me attentively, my major issue is the chronology of events; as members across the aisle you discussed it and brought your proposals, it should be brought to Government. Since this is a Private Member's Bill, it has skipped the procedure; after being submitted to Government, it should be brought back to the All Party conference to get our views. That is when it can be tabled here, that is when he could have brought the Bill following the consultation process we were talking about which I believe is going well. Even if it is passed, are we prepared? Even if it is supported in principle, how prepared are we to implement it in two months to come in October? That is the reason I said Honourable Saleshando was too quick to bring it. All in all, like you said, although it can be discussed here but in principle it is something...

MR TSOGWANE: Point of clarification. Thank you Mr Speaker. I admit that we agree but we are giving you reasons as to why it cannot be implemented, not meaning that it cannot be implemented in future. Although we might support, we are not the only stakeholders of the electoral process. We always talk about the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). We do not hear the All Party caucus mentioning that they consulted it, does this not raise suspicion that they were excluded whereas they know the challenges? There is a Setswana adage, *setlhako se babalela yo o se rweleng*, meaning challenges are better understood by those facing them; they are the ones who are dealing with these challenges. In fact, you know they were blamed following vote rigging allegations. Independent Electoral Commission

was blamed and taken to court. If you now exclude them and do not tell us what their recommendations are, is it appropriate for us to discuss this issue as Parliament alone? That is my question Honourable Member.

MR MOLEBATSI: Thank you Leader of the House. That is exactly my point, I doubt the speed at which Honourable Saleshando is rushing to bring this Bill to Parliament while discussions are ongoing. I agree with you, they should perhaps invite other stakeholders to the All Party conference although I am not sure if they can do so...maybe that is why I am saying Honourable Saleshando...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Correction Mr Speaker.

MR MOLEBATSI: ...could he not consider...

MR HIKUAMA: Point of correction. Let me correct for you Honourable Member; the point that IEC or any stakeholders are excluded is not true. They recommended that counting should be done at the polling station in their stakeholder meetings. This means we are not excluding or leaving them behind, they are way ahead. In fact, we will be implementing their recommendations. Thank you.

MR MOLEBATSI: Thank you Mr Speaker. I have no proof of how true your statement is. All in all, what I am trying to say Honourable Saleshando is, like the VP said, we agree with your proposal; but the timing and involvement of all stakeholders might be the issue we have right now...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Correction.

MR SPEAKER: There is a point of correction raised Honourable Molebatsi. I hope it is not a disagreement.

MR KEORAPETSE: No, it is not a disagreement, it is a correction made by Honourable Hikuama which he is refusing. Page 36 of the IEC national stakeholder evaluation report the Botswana 2019 General Elections, paragraph 2.8 calls us to "legislate for the introduction of counting at polling stations in order to improve the security of ballots." Evidence.

MR MOLEBATSI: Mr Speaker, there is one big mistake made especially by the opposition who assumes that recommendations made by some organisation means it is cast in stone. They might have made those recommendations but the Government also has a say, and as the Government, there is a way we view things.



HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ... (Murmurs)...

MR MOLEBATSI: Listen. We have the responsibility to consider if we are in a situation to implement those recommendations. They recommend and you can implement that recommendation, you can amend it, it does not mean it is cast in stone. At the end of the day, we have a responsibility of running the country. At the end of the day, when there is chaos because of elections, you do not blame IEC, you blame Government. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR MOTSAMAI (GHANZI-SOUTH): Thank you. Good afternoon Honourable Members and good afternoon Mr Speaker. If I was a member of Botswana Democratic Party, I could have quickly passed the Bill brought by Honourable Saleshando so that we move to the next Bill because it is straightforward Mr Speaker. The problem that we have and see is the Government has already taken a decision that they are going to reject anything brought by the opposition and support it in their own time. Even if Batswana see that the Motion can benefit them, Botswana Democratic Party are of the view that something worth supporting is brought by the BDP.

Mr Speaker, the other issue I want to quickly mention and strongly emphasise is the issue which is constantly raised that there are no resources at the constituencies. You are viewing this from a different perspective, in my view, BDP is celebrating the fact that there are no resources at the rural areas. You cannot help but wonder how after 50 years of being in power, people can still celebrate the fact that there is no electricity connection at the schools, there are no roads and other resources at the rural areas Mr Speaker. Who prevented them from implementing such? They were not prevented by anyone, they are responsible because when they are supposed to construct roads, they award tenders to their friends who construct roads of low standards. When they are supposed to connect electricity, their friends offer low standard services, money is wasted and corruption escalates. This results in lack of developments at the constituencies. This is an issue which addresses the concerns they raised Mr Speaker. There are commemorations and celebrations which are sometimes hosted at the constituencies. We are talking about high profile meetings, if the Speaker wants Parliament and the President to visit a certain area and there will be live broadcast, resources are quickly availed. If there is no water, water is sourced. If there are no roads, roads will be cleared. We are talking about

are things the Government is responsible for, including elections. You cannot have a Government, the President

and Ministers if there are no elections. Mr Speaker, the situation in districts should be rectified so that the counting of ballots can be done at polling stations, and not hear excuses that it is dark. Is it not that when it is dark you switch on the light, there are standby generators that are used by different organisations and departments when situations allow.

Mr Speaker, I went to observe elections in Zimbabwe; Zimbabwe and South Africa have decided that ballot counting should be done in polling stations. The final announcement is conducted in centre points while the counting was done in polling stations. There were no disruptions both in South Africa and Zimbabwe because the ballot counting was done in polling stations. We are doing things the old fashioned way that even children can reason better than us here in Parliament. Mr Speaker, currently in Somali they do as they please. There is no central Government in Somali because of poor administration of elections. Anyone can take fishing tax; the other controls fishing while the other takes construction funds and others. What matters is who was fortunate by positioning themselves where.

We want to protect our country and have quality elections after every five years and not only participating on substandard elections. I am asking myself if most of Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) Members are comforted after experiencing something, they were reporting to us about on how the administration was done. They mentioned that elections should be rectified be it primaries or general. Currently some are protesting, complaining about the elections results that they were not ran accordingly because of different reasons. That is what Opposition is saying that Botswana elections should be captivating. Mr Speaker, we need to show that from the past, ballot papers for Councillors were counted from centres. I remember from the Gantsi Constituency you would travel all the way from Metsimantsho, Ncojane, Kole, Makunda and others for counting at land board. That time the land board was used, then moved to Rural Administration Centre (RAC) and others. Then it was later stopped to say ballots papers for Councillors can be counted in districts, and nothing bad happened. That is what Honourable Saleshando is saying that let the counting be done at polling stations, so that when we say Botswana is a democratic country, we mean that we are all considered consultants, there is inclusiveness that is mentioned, let these things be done. BDP should



not object everything, and then when they are outside they say how much they are managing things. They should know that we are here as Opposition, giving guidance on the things that should be done to benefit all Batswana. Thank you.

MR SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Motsamai. Honourable Members, I will now call upon Honourable Saleshando to reply to the debate.

MR SALESHANDO (MAUN WEST): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was happy that maybe I would start where Honourable Molebatsi stopped, but now he is not around. He mentioned that the IEC take is not known, and when the IEC report was read for him, he changed his reason. On the debate that we were dealing with for elections, we are competing with BDP every time in politics but BDP is shifting the goal posts. Those who are saying I am fast regarding the Bill should know that a Motion was presented here in 2012. Honourable Morwaeng had two reasons that he advanced as an objection. Firstly, it was that he wants this law to be reviewed together with the Constitution, which will be a Constitution Review that includes the electoral Bill. We know that it was not true, the Parliament was not told the truth. The second reason was that he said that he can only agree if there was a holistic review, and not only consider one side of the law, as the Government will review both of them. We know that currently he is not using that, the posts have shifted to All Party Conference. I hope Batswana can see that we are dealing with a dishonest Government, a Government of excuses, that does not take things seriously. That is the Government we have presently. Honourable Morwaeng says the issue is the All Party Conference. The Vice President has been emphasising that we do not know the status that IEC will be in, it should be consulted first. IEC has a report that they published 19 years ago, from 2005, showing their workshop with all political parties, and there was no party that disputed, but agreed that the counting should be done at polling stations. 19 years later you are saying that you want to consult with political parties and IEC. This is not honesty, it does not entail a good work ethic, it is cheating done by BDP, which we are experiencing today.

In addition to the reports published by IEC, I who is told that I am rushing, had a meeting with them as Botswana Congress Party (BCP). We wrote to them about using the ink and counting in polling stations and they responded on 25th March 2024. I want to quote something from them, they said “the Commission wishes to clarify that

its entrenched Constitutional mandate is limited to and focused on electoral management. Conversely issues bothering on law making and or amendment of the Electoral Act, to introduce counting of ballots at polling stations and reintroduce indelible ink in electoral process are not within its remit. These are matters that are the preserve of Parliament.” They are saying it is not their decision to make, but the Parliament’s.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Clarification!

MR SALESHANDO: You over-stretched this point VP, accept that you were not telling the truth.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: I said clarification.

MR SALESHANDO: There is no clarification. You made the point, you have been clarifying and making corrections. So just accept that you did not tell the nation the truth. Your intention was to mislead and confuse the nation. So you cannot ask for clarification after telling the nation that which is not true. I think we have had enough untruths. Let us now focus on the truth.

Honourable Morwaeng mentioned that a polling district and a polling station differ. Our request is such that ballots should be counted in polling districts. Honourable Morwaeng knows the difference because he has always contested when I was still a university student. He is aware that when he was a contestant in Mogoditshane when Mr Mokgweetsi Kgosipula won, Councillors ballots were counted at district headquarters, we had guidelines in place. However, the decision was made to cease counting ballots at district headquarters but at polling headquarters. He knows. Shockingly, he claims today that we will be breaking the law since recommendations never talked about a polling district. He is a hypocrite, shame on you for lack of truthfulness.

MR KEORAPETSE: Elucidation. Are you also aware that this hypocrisy has spread at an alarming rate; they mentioned that people may end up celebrating prematurely if results are announced at polling stations and before they are announced at the centre? On the another hand, they mentioned that they agree with the recommendation made by SADC which states that ballots should be counted at polling stations.

MR SALESHANDO: They do not have a position; they do things haphazardly just so they can mislead the nation. So Honourable Morwaeng knows that what he said is not true, he simply played with vocabulary so that Batswana may conclude that opposition did not think



before tabling this Bill. Just imagine someone like him with such great responsibility who comes to Parliament to try to deceive the nation with his vocabulary. I tell you, the nation of Botswana will surely be deceived if Batswana fail to take action.

Honourable Kapinga and other members advanced sound reasons that we are busy talking about adding credibility to the election process. Mr Speaker, I am reluctant to respond to what Honourable Rakgare said. He started his debate by indicating that he was not there shockingly, he wanted to respond when he found Parliament busy debating this Bill. I take it that his constituents are now aware that he came here to play since he decided to debate when he does not even know the topic. Mr Speaker, it is important for Honourable Members to take their jobs serious. So I am not going to respond further on that.

Honourable Makwinja and Honourable Healy, let me talk to you with caution since I am aware of your situation. Honourable Makwinja is not here and when it comes to the issue of All Party Conference, you are being disingenuous Honourable Members. You are dishonest and you have no conscience because you know very well that it is just an excuse. The truth is, this matter was discussed and agreed to long ago in 2005. In any case, you will note that we do not have enough time to amend laws when we come back from All Party Conference. Both All Party Conference and IEC do not have powers to amend laws. Parliament is the one responsible for amending laws and you are refusing to do that. It is such a shame for men and women your age to operate in that manner in this House. Like I said, yesterday Honourable Healy commented without studying this Bill. He thought we were debating a different one and therefore commented on the wrong law. However, I choose to sympathise with you in any case, that is a true representation of you.

Honourable Segokgo also mentioned that he was not paying attention since he was not in the House. Shockingly, he decided to debate on the wrong Bill claiming that it is not part of our regulations but I read the regulations before presenting in Parliament. This is another concern because Honourable Segokgo is a Senior Cabinet Minister, you would think he would go over the law to get his facts right before he comments. You see, I am not surprised that everything is a mess at Ministry of Communications, Knowledge and Technology, it is because he does not check his facts. He just shoots

and aims later. Shoot first, aim later. Such recklessness from Senior Cabinet Ministers. So Batswana who voted for Honourable Rakgare and Honourable Segokgo yet again during primary elections should be concerned about these irresponsible Ministers.

Mr Speaker, VP mentioned that we need more time. It has been 19 years since this issue was presented before the House.

MR TSOGWANE: Procedure. My procedure is that every Motswana at home is aware that this man refuses to yield for my point of clarification. Therefore, he must leave my comments alone if at all he denies me that chance. I cannot have the right to quote and be misquoted and be denied a chance to clarify. So, he must leave me alone.

MR SPEAKER: That is not the procedure Honourable VP. The procedure is if you think you are being misquoted, you have the right to correction, that right is as good as an order.

MR SALESHANDO: Thank you Mr Speaker. Some tried to indicate that there is no... I think this was Honourable Molale's point of departure. He believes that it is important for one to present proof that they were cheated before they can bring about a solution. Where has that happened before? I must say I respect and pay attention to Honourable Molale because of the positions he has held in Government, Former Permanent Secretary to the President (PSP). So it is shocking for him to say that there is no need for us to amend; that we are mischievous if that is what we want.

I know very well that there is a need for us to improve the situation. It is a pity, it is such a shame that we last reviewed the Electoral Act during President Q. K. J. Masire's time in 1997. He refuses to reduce the voting age which means members like Honourable Molale at the time advised that it would be mischievous, that one should prove that indeed we have a problem if people aged 18 years cannot vote, that is his attitude. The question is if we expect people outside Botswana to vote, when IEC was established, does it mean we were supposed to prove that you might cheat before rectifying the situation.

We have gone through President Mogae, you never found it important for us to review the Electoral Act. We have gone through President Khama, you never found it important. We are now going through more than five



years of the current President, you are not making any effort to review the Electoral Act, no wonder the ruling party's elections are a mess.

Dr Mzwini, Honourable Molebatsi mentioned that people are concerned that you won. I take it that you heard him.

MR RAMOGAPI: Elucidation. That is an excellent debate Honourable Saleshando. Honourable Molale emphasised something about history serving him well but he pointed it out and changed it. There is an important point; history of Botswana indicates that the ballot box disappeared through this rigging. So he does not want to talk about that.

MR SALESHANDO: Maybe in passing I should talk about this one colleagues that standards are not upheld because the situation is bad. For example, if you are told that these are Accounting standards, you do not start questioning if they suspect that you might steal money and they should prove first that you once stole money. Honourable Rakgare, if you are told that this is the standard for a football match, you do not say as Botswana, you find nothing wrong with having the first half of the match continuing for two hours non-stop. We do not comply with international standards which are applied everywhere and you disregard them. Elections have best practices, you cannot go and say, before I apply best practice, I want to see someone who rigged elections. Honourable Rakgare also said everyone knows that everything is fine this side. However, he was not the only one, there are others who echoed the same sentiments.

I want to quote for you what Observer Missions said about our elections. This one is from past elections from African Union (AU) Observer Mission. I am just going to quote part of it with your permission Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Please do.

MR SALESHANDO: The recommendation says, "review the procedure involving the counting of the votes to allow for counting and posting of results at the polling stations to avoid logistical and operational challenges during the transfer of election materials and counting of votes." From there you hear the Minister saying everyone knows that everything here is fine.

MR MANGWEGAPE-HEALY: On a point of clarification. Thank you my brother, thank you my predecessor. Do you realise that what Honourable

Rakgare was saying and what you are quoting are not in line? You are talking about integrity and they are talking about logistics. They are not doubting the integrity of Botswana elections; they are saying it can reduce the movement of ballot boxes for logistical reasons. Thank you.

MR SALESHANDO: Honourable Healy, they do mention integrity that the lack of counting at polling stations compromises the integrity and also the security of the ballots. Maybe let me take a second quotation from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Observer Mission from the last election so that you can appreciate for completeness. With your permission again I will quote Mr Speaker, "The Electoral Act provides for polling station-based voter registration and voting and once polling is closed, for the transportation of ballot boxes to counting centres across the country, the Mission noted that the procedure exposes the ballot boxes to insecurity in the process of movements between polling stations and counting centres. The Mission noted that the Electoral Act does not make provision for the less risky and more credible system whereby ballots are counted at each polling station and provisional results are posted outside polling stations for the benefit of all stakeholders."

I know that even if you were sceptical and you were told the truth, you do not have the capacity to change and say, 'I did not know but now I know'. You close your eyes even if you are told that 'there is the pit, you are all going to fall in there', all of you will be down in the pit with no one asking another how you got there. Unfortunately, that is the state that we are confronted with.

At least if you did what the late Vice President Mr Merafhe did, may his soul rest in peace, and say that the main reason like he used to say is the limelight. 'As the ruling party, we want to be associated with good things, we cannot allow Opposition to be the ones to bring them.' If you could have said that at least, it will be understandable because you will be following the BDP culture. Yesterday I spoke to someone and that person said... I am talking about a former BDP Minister. The person said, they have been listening to this debate and all they can see is unnecessary jealousy.

I want to give an example because earlier I talked about a letter from Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) which talks about indelible ink. It is not part of the Motion but to stress the point that you are dishonest.



When Honourable Tshire had brought a reform of elections which talks about indelible ink, you were seriously opposed to it. Right now Government Gazette of the 26th July has been released and it is called Electoral (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (No.17 of 2024). They were even ashamed to mention that they have featured indelible ink because Opposition has already spoken about it. Right now they wrote, “to introduce the requirement to make a mark on a voter in a manner to be prescribed.” See how you operate. The very same thing that you opposed last year saying we have no idea about governance, now you come running with it and you even fail to give it a name that is recognised internationally in elections.

MR HIKUAMA: Clarification. Thank you Mr Speaker. Honourable Saleshando, that mark, do you not think these people can bring a branding iron which brands Foot and Mouth (FMD) cattle and mark us since it is not clear what it will be?

MR SALESHANDO: The point is this Mr Speaker, indelible ink is used in many countries and parties. In Botswana, it is used by BDP but they opposed it. It used to be there in Botswana but they stopped it just because of embarrassing reasons. The Hansard shows it was discontinued during a time when Ministers thought the ink could transmit HIV/AIDS. They then used their numbers like they use them now and agreed that indelible ink can transmit AIDS and it should be discontinued. So when we say, let us reintroduce indelible ink, you refuse. The following year you come and say, “we introduce the requirement to make a mark on a voter in a manner to be prescribed.”

Mr Speaker, I want to draw towards a conclusion to reiterate this, our elections are not conducted fairly. Others like Honourable Kedikilwe talked about eliminating doubt. Elimination of doubt does not mean you should bring evidence first of what you suspect to have happened. It means prevent doubt. If you refuse to prevent doubt, it means you are intending to do something suspicious. If you are asked to stop speeding with boxes at night in our constituencies in the midst of elephants and buffaloes from Khwai/Mababe...

HIS HONOUR THE VICE PRESIDENT (MR TSOGWANE): On a point of correction. Mr Speaker, our suspicion does not mean we are hiding something. To correct him Mr Speaker, exactly his point, we suspect that there are intentions to disrupt elections where you know that tomorrow when the elections are disrupted,

you will not be held accountable. The security issue comes into play here, that is our suspicion. You intend to disrupt elections because there are many examples that are visible. You once came here saying there was election rigging without any proof, you said you were calling a public court without any evidence. So the type of people you are you introduced Madibelatlhopho without any evidence of wrong doing, you just wanted to include them, it even led to the delay in registration for general elections. So that is our suspicion, not that we suspect that there is something we are hiding. We suspect you, we do not trust you, you want to go and disrupt elections.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: What are you correcting?

MR TSOGWANE: I am correcting you Honourable Hikuama because you are the one who is causing trouble that side.

MR SPEAKER: It is an argument, it is not a correction.

MR SALESHANDO: It is not a correction, 25 years' experience, sometimes does not mean anything, it can be one-year experience, 25 times and that is what we are looking at here today.

Vice President (VP), if you suspect that we want to disrupt elections, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) got into the primary elections for the first time with you as Chairman, see the resulting chaos. If there is an expert in election chaos, it is you.

MR TSOGWANE: Correction. Rule again that it is not correction but an argument. It is not the first time; you are not telling the truth. I was the Chairman in 2019, so you are not telling the truth and you are known for that.

MR SALESHANDO: You were the Chairman in the previous elections, do not be angry that it is not the first time that you caused chaos because there was also chaos in 2018. I am reducing the instances you caused chaos and you are saying no it is not my first time causing this disruption, I long started in 2018. The recent one in 2019 you wanted to show that you are saying your goodbyes. Polling districts are opened at four in the afternoon, at the likes of Shakawe in close proximity to wild animals. Honourable Serame wrote that some elections are held today, and other elections are held tomorrow in the same constituency. Honourable Molebatsi is in possession of affidavits that highlight the chaos that you brought. We are going for elections...



MR MOTSAMAI: Elucidation. Mr Speaker, I want to add to Honourable Saleshando's point that VP; you recall the former Honourable Member Mr Tshekedi reminding you in this Honourable House, he said I could prove that in 2018 you did not win and outline how you came into this Honourable House. You then kept quiet out of fear. So Honourable Saleshando is on point in this issue. VP knows and has been dealing with it for a long time. Thank you.

MR SALESHANDO: VP, if there are chaos during elections, you are the champion.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE (MR TSOGWANE): Procedure. I want us to be assisted on procedure, someone like Honourable Motsamai who is absent from Parliament then utters such like wherever he is, what do we do with him? If we request to correct him, can we still correct him in absentia?

MR SPEAKER: As far as I understand Your Honour, you do not correct a person as such, you correct what they said. Since they are on record, you correct them wherever they are.

MR TSOGWANE: Correction then Mr Speaker, to Honourable Motsamai.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: I am not holding the floor.

MR TSOGWANE: No, he is the one who is speaking.

MR SPEAKER: You freeze the clock, correction VP.

MR TSOGWANE: Correction. Honourable Motsamai, wherever you are if you are well, let me help you here; you are talking about Honourable Tshekedi who was not telling the truth that day. If you were there and did not hear rumors, I answered him here, and I told him to provide the evidence that he helped me. He failed to respond because he was trying to boast as you can see that he has gone and we do not know where he is.

MR SALESHANDO: Mr Speaker, if I may draw towards my conclusion, I want to emphasise the crucial issues that the BDP members are neglecting that the electoral process is important so that everything can be in order for all those involved in elections. As I said, this Motion came here first in 2021, those who are saying I am hasty, it means we should accept that you do not know how to count years. To you one year is one week. You cannot say it was rushed, you have always rejected this Bill and time again you were rejecting it with

different reasons. In the past, you had other reasons, when you are done with those reasons you look for new ones. Different organisations have spoken, BDP Government signed on the standards set by SADC. It also signed on the standards set by SAC Parliamentary Forum that ballot counting should be done at polling districts. When it comes to Parliament, it denies it. BDP agreed with Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) in 2005 that ballot counting should be done at polling districts. In 2005 counting was done at polling stations. 2005, 19 years later, BDP said it still needs time. Fellow Motswana, this party is tired. If BDP is still stuck on the same issue after 19 years, saying it wants to organize itself, there is nothing you can achieve as the ruling party because it is in you that the standards do not mean anything.

Mr Speaker, during my presentation I did concede, I said there are some polling districts that are still not in good condition for counting to be done there. We should agree that no ballot box will leave a ward because we did that for Councilors. No ballot box will leave the wards. The way you are refusing, the way you are changing your reasons like the colours of a chameleon, you should consider the nation. In changing your colours, and changing your reasons, consider the nation. It is suspicious that you are doing this because you have an opportunity in the night, in the dark, when cars are transporting the ballot boxes. You have seen an opportunity somewhere, you intend to use the cover of darkness to benefit you in the election results. If that is not the case, you would be agreeing with us right now that counting should be done at polling districts.

I think that Botswana deserves a better Government than the current one which has no integrity. It needs another Government that can come and save Botswana. Those who will be going to elections, particularly since I cannot use some words that were used because Honourable Morwaeng rejects everything we are trying to do to improve.

Let me conclude by appealing to Molepolole constituents to reject the one who always rejects. Botswana cannot progress with a Minister who is here to always reject when ideas are provided. As you reject him, also reject those who were rejecting this with him, and no one should pretend to be better because we are led by people who have no integrity. You have shown yourselves through this issue, advancing reasons three times as to why you are against this. You were given



evidence three times as to why voting should be done at polling districts. You were told three times that private organisations that came to observe our elections, are concerned about how we run our elections. Three times you refused to defend the interest of the country. I hope Batswana will take their decisions and vote a party like the BCP that is clear on free and fair elections.

Having said that Mr Speaker, I move that the Bill be read a second time.

Question put and **Division called for.**

MR SPEAKER: The clock is ringing.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE (MR TSOGWANE): I just wanted to plead like I once did, and ask that Honourable Motsamai and members on his side also avoid saying “no”. Those not physically present should be afforded the chance to vote Mr Speaker. I thank you. Those who are connected, I mean to say.

MR MOTSAMAI: How do you know I will say “no?”

HONOURABLE MEMBER: It is like that; you and I will say “no.”

...Silence...

MR SPEAKER: Order! Order! Honourable Members. Security, lock the door. Honourable Members, you heard the Leader of the House raising an issue which he raised before, it is not the first, it is not new. I had hoped myself that we will not have to decide that matter right now at this stage but somebody called for a division. It is as good a time as any, to deal with that request. After the Vice President raised the issue, I reflected on it and went back, not necessarily reading anything from since I was in this House, from 1994, dealing with these Standing Orders, and the purpose why the Constitution allows this House to make the rules which we call the Standing Orders. After doing that, I suggested that since this is a legal issue, as we know, I was pretentious myself to legal issues. I want to avoid using those pretensions of mine. Therefore, I asked Parliamentary Counsel to look at the Standing Orders which this House has made, and help us to be able to tell whether with those Standing Orders it is possible to do what His Honour has asked. Which is simply to allow those Honourable Members who are participating in the proceedings of the House to also vote where a vote is required. I will ask the Counsel to tell us his reflection on the Standing Orders.

LEARNED PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL (ADVOCATE TLHOWE): Thank you Mr Speaker. Upon reflection of the Standing Orders, particularly Standing Order 63.2 which reflects on divisions, allow me to quote Mr Speaker. It states the following, “thereafter, the Speaker shall repeat the question put and the votes of Members present shall be taken. A Member shall vote electronically. In the event of the electronic voting equipment being out of order, the Clerk shall ask each Member separately how he or she wishes to vote and upon his or her name being called give his or her vote by saying, “aye” or “no” or “abstain”.

Mr Speaker, upon reading this Standing Order, it is clear that electronic voting happens when it is not clear on the “ayes” or on the “noes.” Now virtually, I do not know Mr Speaker, but virtually wherever anybody is connected, I do not know if they have an electronic voting machine or equipment where they are. Therefore, upon that reflection, I am sure Mr Speaker, you may come to an amicable conclusion. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Members, you have Standing Orders in any event, right?

LEADER OF THE HOUSE (MR TSOGWANE): Mr Speaker, this is an innocuous issue, we cannot waste time on this matter. I can see there are problems and we do not want to make a decision which probably you will not want to make or rather make us unhappy. By making a decision which we feel is not the right decision. I withdraw my intervention Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Leader of the House, you can be sure that I have never ever been afraid of making a decision, knowing very well that I may actually be wrong. I am always alive to that. That, I may actually be wrong even if I believe that I am right. Therefore, it has never worried me as long as I know correctly in my own conscience that I am being genuine. Others may say that I am wrong, however, that is their opinion and it does not concern me. VP, I was thinking that since we are in the Standing Orders and you have taken your part, you may get through. If others are allowed, they can also move the same Motion, but it should be amended to highlight its significance. Honourable Members, it is not this time now for me to pronounce myself on the issue because His Honour has kindly withdrawn his Motion.

Honourable Members, it is time to go on the Motion which is that the Bill for the Electoral (Amendment) Bill, 2023 by Honourable Saleshando, those who agree



with that, should press “2” which means they are saying “yes” those who do not agree, press “3”, and those who abstain should press “4.” I am activating the equipment Honourable Members.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Murmurs)...

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Ramogapi, I do not know where you get the authority to give others instructions from. Vote Honourable Members.

...Silence...

MR SPEAKER: Let us count and see how your votes go.

...Silence...

MR SPEAKER: VP, this gadget...

MR TSOGWANE: Yes.

MR SPEAKER: It counts me as well when I activate...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Really?

MR SPEAKER: ...That I am part of the voting process but I cannot vote though.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: ...(Inaudible)...

MR SPEAKER: I do not vote, but immediately after I activate the machine it adds me to the total number of people in the House. That is why we took time to count, I told them to physically count heads that are here because it cannot be.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Murmurs)...

MR SPEAKER: I am saying you would not know if I kept quiet, but there is no intention of hiding anything here. So those who agree ...

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Inaudible)...

MR SPEAKER: The Speaker is no longer counted in because...(Inaudible) 37. 17 said “aye”, 19 said “no” and one person abstained.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Murmurs)...

MR SPEAKER: I told you that I did not vote, so, add 17 plus 19 plus 1.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Inaudible)...

MR SPEAKER: I said 37, So, the “noes” have it the “noes” have it.

Question put and **negated**.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Let us repeat.

MR SPEAKER: Why?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Murmurs)...

MR SPEAKER: We are not in Nhabe. Honourable Members, let us proceed.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: ...(Inaudible)...

MR SPEAKER: Yes, check him he abstained.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Laughter!)...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: ...(Inaudible)...

MR SPEAKER: No check on him, I do not vote. Clerk, let us go on to the next Bill.

BILL

ELECTORAL (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024 (NO. 7 OF 2024)

Second Reading

MR SPEAKER: Order! Order! Honourable Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Keorapetse.

MR KEORAPETSE (SELEBI PHIKWE WEST): Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, this stresses the issue that was deliberated; a democratic Government compels the ruling administration to be voted into power by the people, through free, fair, transparent and credible elections.

Mr Speaker, we all know that Botswana never postponed elections ever since her first elections in March 1965. Second elections were held in October 1969, and others followed subsequently. This year we are going for our 13th elections. According to Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) report, we are part of the 72 countries and 55 Parliaments going for elections this year. Mr Speaker, even though Honourable Members suspect we are only proposing changes now, we have done so a couple of times.

Mr Speaker, according to SADC principles and guidelines that Botswana signed, the electoral Act should be reviewed regularly to align electoral laws with changing democratic space to ensure that democracy prevails in the country. In 2019 Mr Speaker, the IEC in Botswana grouped political parties and all electoral



stakeholders at a workshop where recommendations of what should be done were shared. Mr Speaker, please allow me to paraphrase page 35 of the National Stakeholder Evaluation Report of Botswana 2019 general elections. It says that the electoral Act should be reviewed to align electoral laws with changing democratic space.”

Mr Speaker, our proposal is in line with SADC principles and guidelines governing democratic elections, in particular at page 3, objective No. 2 which says, “to promote regular free, fair, transparent and credible elections to institutionalise legitimate authority of representative Government,”

2.15 paragraph says “to promote electoral justice and best practices in the mitigation of election related conflict and principles.” No. 4.15 on “promoting and respecting the values of electoral justice which includes integrity, impartiality, fairness, professionalism, efficiency and regularity of elections.” 4.17 on “guaranteeing an environment of open contest with no undue exclusion and restriction of anyone.” “To hold as well as the right of eligible and qualified citizens to stand as candidates in an election.”

As the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) we also quoted SADC-PF Model Law on Elections at page 16 principle number six on ‘universal adult and equal suffrage and broad participation of voters’, which is also in line with Section 67 of Botswana Constitution which provides for franchise. All in all Mr Speaker, we will keep amending the international agreements we signed, whether it is SADC, AU, SADC- PF to be in line with the modern times and the growing democracy. That is why UDC argues that the current electoral system in Botswana denies people of their right to vote due to trivial grounds.

The first objective of this Bill is Motswana with Omang should be allowed to vote as it has been happening in the current system. In addition to that Motswana should be allowed to use a passport if Omang has expired or lost, as compared to the ongoing voting registration. Batswana were complaining that their Omang has expired, some said their Omang cards are lost and cannot register for elections. Our argument therefore is Motswana should be allowed to register using a passport or drivers licence. Why do we say that? These are identity documents; one was issued in accordance with the Immigration Act, the other one is issued in terms of the Road Traffic Act. So these documents for example a passport has your

photograph just like Omang has, in fact passport photo is not black and white, it is coloured and much clearer than Omang photo.

Secondly, drivers licence has your photo, passport and drivers licence has your Identity Number (ID). Passport and drivers licence has your proper names, these are documents that were issued by Government so why should we deny Batswana the right to vote simply because Omang has expired while his/her citizenship has not? Why should we deny Motswana the right to register for elections and vote simply because his/her Omang is lost but that person has a passport and drivers licence which is valid. That is why we are calling for amendments Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, we are aware that IEC has a clear provision that if you lost your registration card, you can request for a duplicate. However it can happen that some people can only realise that during election day and according to the law those people will not be allowed to vote. So my request, our request is that those Batswana should be allowed to vote, if they are in the voters roll, they are eligible voters. They should be allowed to vote in those elections if they have an Omang or passport or drivers licence. That will ensure that people are not disenfranchised in terms of the principle behind Section 67 of the Constitution...

MR TSOGWANE: Clarification. Thank you Mr Speaker. I wanted to listen carefully because it seems the objective of this Bill is voting. I want to know; since the person who is on the voters’ roll is the one who has registered. Are we saying they should register and vote or are we saying they should vote because they have registered? They did not register using drivers licence or passport, they used Omang to register. We now want to hear clearly if you are proposing that they should use passport or drivers licence to register because that is the only way you can be in the voters roll if you have registered? If we take the half measure to vote, if you do not have an Omang but you have a passport and drivers licence, are we still saying you should register for elections? I want you to clarify that one.

MR KEORAPETSE: Point taken sir. The premise of this argument is the right to franchise, Universal adult suffrage as provided by the Constitution in terms of Section 67. That is why we are saying, if we talk about franchise, we cannot apply it to voting alone, voting starts with the registration. So we are saying registration and voting, if you have an Omang, if you do not have



Omang but you have a valid passport, if you do not have either of the two but have a valid driver's licence, you can be allowed to register and vote. That is what I am saying today.

Mr Speaker, the other amendment is to re-introduce indelible ink. Indelible ink is an ink that is a semi-permanent mark to prevent people from voting multiple times as we already heard some allegations thrown by some people after the ruling party's primary elections. Mr Speaker, this was rejected last time, like Honourable Saleshando said, it was rejected after Honourable Tshere brought a Motion here. It was rejected on grounds that it is a health hazard. One of the countries which produces large quantities of this ink is India and it exports it to over 30 countries. They sell them this ink, which is an electoral ink, the other name is indelible ink, electoral stain or phosphoric ink, which is a semi-permanent ink or dye. It can last a couple of days to prevent a person from voting multiple times. So in order to erase the suspicion, we should re-introduce inedible ink or mark through the Bill that they have gazetted. In India, voting is done by a population...

MINISTER OF LABOUR AND HOME AFFAIRS (MS MOKGETHI): Procedure Mr Speaker. Thank you Mr Speaker. Honourable Keorapetse brought his Motion under the Electoral Act. Is he not aware that the way he wrote or presented his Motion is completely off the mark? Are you not barking up the wrong tree by bringing it under the Electoral Act? The Act which regulates our voting and recognise the ID under the Electoral Act is because the National Registration Act is the one prescribing that the Omang shall be the principal form of identification. So Honourable Keorapetse, you are bringing it under the Electoral Act. Is the Electoral Act not based on what is provided for under the national registration, because the passport and the drivers licence are not currently recognised under our law, even as a secondary form of identification. So in my view, Honourable Keorapetse you brought your Motion under a wrong Act. Thank you Mr Speaker.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Applause!)...

MR KEORAPETSE: I thought Honourable Mokgethi is a lawyer. I do not know what informs you that another Act of Parliament is superior to the other one? What we seek through this amendment is for Electoral Act to be amended such that for the purpose of franchise, the passport and drivers licence issued in terms of the relevant laws, including immigration laws should be

allowed to be a form of identification a person can use during voting. It is nothing new Honourable Mokgethi, some of us were lucky, I was a mission leader at Lesotho elections in 2017, along with Mrs Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba leading Commonwealth, along with Mr Rupiah Banda leading Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA), along with Mr Joaquim Chissano leading African Union (AU) and others like Dr Augustine Mahiga leading SADC Observer Mission. We observed as Basotho used passport, driver's license and Identification Document (ID) as a form of identification to vote.

MS MOKGETHI: Procedure. Honourable Keorapetse Mr Speaker, is completely off the mark. Here we are talking about the sovereignty of a country, every country is subject to its own sovereignty and has the right to make its own laws. Honourable Keorapetse I can see that you are very lost, it is very evident by quoting the law that you are talking about. Our country is a sovereign country and we are here in this Parliament to make laws as a sovereign country. We are not guided by other laws, we are guided by the laws of Botswana; not any other country. Even if it is prescribed under the commonwealth or what, we have to domesticate our laws so that they can be impeccable in Botswana.

MR SPEAKER: Order! Order! Honourable Members, I am not sure, it seems like you agree but you do not understand each other. I thought the purpose of Honourable Keorapetse being in this Bill is exactly because this is the sovereign body in Botswana to make laws. Whatever any other country does, this country through this Parliament is the only authority we can make laws. You agree with each other and I do not know where you differ Honourable Minister, because he came to you saying agree with me because you have powers vested to you by the Constituency, let us allow those that are in possession of this and that to vote. Unless I misunderstand the Bill. I thought the simple part of it is what he is saying. Whether it is right to do so or shall not agree but this is the sovereign body where it should come and be accepted or rejected. So, he did right by coming to you.

MR KEORAPETSE: Honourable Mokgethi, the Supreme Legislature Authority of this country vests in Parliament in terms of Section 86. When you read Clause 2.1, Clauses 2 and 3 amend the Act to substitute for the definition of the term identity card. The term Identification Document (ID) refers to an identity card issued under the National Registration Act, Cap. 01:02. A driving license issued under the Road Traffic Act,



Cap. 69:01 or passport issued under Immigration Act Cap. 25:02. This amendment therefore introduces the use of driving license and a passport for registration and voting, thus a voter who has lost or without a Voter's Registration Card but appears on the Election Roll, shall vote provided he or she has his or her identity card, driver's license or passport. Where is the anomaly there? I do not get it. There is no anomaly there. What I am seeking from you is that this Parliament must legislate to make sure that Batswana are not disenfranchised, or hindered to register for elections and vote because their identity cards (Oman) have expired. Simple!

Mr Speaker, the other amendment is that ballot papers in Botswana should be counted at polling stations. Mr Speaker, we have talked about this one for a very long time, and what is causing it. Mr Speaker, there are elections observers that observed our elections and commended them. The answer will be yes but let us not divert from what they said. The retired Lt. Gen Sibusiso Moyo, who visited the SADC Electoral Observer Mission, in their preliminary statement on the 2019 General Elections in Botswana, said "counting of votes consideration should be given to amending the Electoral Act to make provisions for polling stations-based counting and displaying of results at the polling station." Mr Speaker, giving an example with 2019 General Elections as Honourable Kapinga mentioned that ballots or ballot boxes would leave Nxau, 240 kilometres (km) plus travelling on bad roads to Shakawe, and that is the reason we are saying ballot counting should be done in polling stations. In Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) a helicopter is used with no seats for observers, and taken to the polling district.

The ballot box in Jao Islands, will be taken by a helicopter to Maun then taken into a vehicle (Land Cruiser) to where the counting is conducted. Mr Speaker, that is why we are saying that should stop to give our elections the dignity and honour and eliminate doubt and bring protection on ballot papers. Mr Speaker, this also affect Batswana in the diaspora. We are still saying the same thing that there should be party representatives and the ballot counting should be at the polling station. Mr Speaker, as we know that we have close to 2000 Batswana in South Africa as per the last time I checked, that have registered for elections, let ballots be counted as soon as they finish voting. So that we know how many have voted which party.

I once had a conversation with someone in the past who works at Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), who

told me that they went to conduct voting somewhere, and put them in an envelop and went to the hotel. The next day after spending the whole day with them, got into a flight in the evening to Botswana. That is the reason why they must be counted after voting. Ballots for early voting; for police officers and election officers that will be on duty during elections should also be counted. If not, they must be guarded.

One of the things that was shown to us when I was with Honourable Majaga and Honourable Moswaane in Maseru was boxes for early voting. When you got there, we found a queue of political party representatives guarding those boxes until the day for counting. People were shifting, others did the morning shift while others did the afternoon shift to eliminate doubt from the early voting boxes until the counting day arrives. Mr Speaker, that is eliminating doubt, let us do that to bring peace and tranquillity in Botswana. If the Opposition did not control themselves, there could have been unrests caused by unfairness. Mr Speaker, those are the amendments we are putting before the Parliament that let us vote on ballot boxes that are transparent and translucent. The same transparent boxes we use to vote in Parliament when we vote the Speaker and the Deputy, Specially Elected Members of Parliament and endorsing the Vice President who would have been selected by His Excellency the Vice President. Let us use this example because it is mentioned by organisations that we subscribe to their principles like SADC Principles, a governing democratic elections for guidelines and principles of SADC-PF Modern Law of Elections. They suggest that we use translucent ballot boxes. That is why we have adopted that standard. So Mr Speaker, these are the proposals that opposition presents before Parliament, let us not deny Batswana the opportunity to vote.

MR TSOGWANE: On a point of clarification. You mentioned that counting at the polling districts has been emphasised, so approving his proposal means we will also be approving what we rejected before. So I am wondering how we are going to reverse it.

MR KEORAPETSE: Your Honour the VP, the honest truth is that they differ. Honourable Saleshando requested us to count at the wards where Councillors ballots are counted. So, as the UDC, we are very clear that the standard is such that we should count at the polling stations. This is what this Bill is saying; it is a major difference between what he was asking for and what we are asking for. What we are requesting is what



Honourable Morwaeng indicated that he agrees with, though time is not ripe. So we are saying, time has come. Therefore Mr Speaker, I take it that Honourable Members will emphasise this issue. I thank you.

MINISTER FOR STATE PRESIDENT (MR MORWAENG): Greetings Mr Speaker. Thank you Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity to tell Batswana nothing but the truth.

With all due respect Mr Speaker, I wish to remind fellow Batswana that we have been debating an electoral process Bill brought by Honourable Saleshando of the BCP which is not represented in Parliament. Thereafter, Honourable Keorapetse presented another Bill from UDC which also deals with the Electoral Act.

Mr Speaker, I wish Batswana could learn something. If Batswana can hand the Government to the opposition, we would have many problems. I mean how can the opposition fail to meet and discuss the kind of Bill they can bring to Parliament but end up presenting various Bills...

MR HIKUAMA: On a point of correction. Mr Speaker, I would like to correct the Minister since he cannot differentiate between the roles of an Honourable Member and of a political party in Parliament. Members of Parliament, be it members of Domkrag or opposition may be voted from various constituencies but they are expected to perform their duties when they get to Parliament. We are expected to represent our people in this House, their interests and opinions. So there is no how you can bring a law and claim that it is going to be presented by Domkrag. Members of Parliament are the ones who present laws in Parliament. I wanted to remind Batswana that laws are presented by Members of Parliament from various constituencies, not members of Domkrag. I believe this information will help Minister Morwaeng and Batswana at large to differentiate between roles of an Honourable Member and the party they represent.

MR MORWAENG: Mr Speaker, Batswana should take note, pay attention and learn something. They must take note of who we are as Honourable Members including members of opposition. Batswana should assess and pay attention to the kind of Bills they present in this House.

We debated Honourable Saleshando's Bill five minutes ago, only for Honourable Keorapetse to bring a similar one in no time. So Batswana should take note...

MR MMOLOTSI: On a point of correction. Mr Speaker, let me correct Honourable Morwaeng since I do not understand why he seems confused when saying opposition brought two similar Bills though he knows that they differ. So I am just correcting the point that they differ. One talks about polling station while another talks about counting ballots at polling district.

MR MORWAENG: Mr Speaker, Batswana should note of the circus that we are dealing with. You can see that Honourable Mmolotsi continues to defend the opposition...

MR MOTSAMAI: On a point of correction. Thank you Mr Speaker. Honourable Member for Ngami tried to correct Honourable Morwaeng that Honourable Members are the ones who come up with Bills, not our political parties. This means we are not supposed to politicise Motions or Bills. The most important point is to focus on what is best for the nation.

Mr Speaker, Minister should refrain from using ridiculing words which may stain our images because I talked to him about the water situation in Molepolole and he addressed people however he did. I went on to appeal to Regoeng about the same situation in Molepolole and he responded however he did; they both indicated that management managed to assist Water Utilities. This clearly showed that they were trying by all means possible to improve the situation. I do not know whether...(Interruptions)... that thing is acceptable.

MR MORWAENG: Thank you Mr Speaker. This is exactly what we deal with. Batswana know that both Honourable Saleshando and Honourable Keorapetse are members of the UDC but they both presented Bills requesting Parliament to review the Electoral Act which is a good thing. Shockingly, they are both members of the UDC but failed to discuss these Bills before coming to the House. Honourable Keorapetse mentioned that as members of UDC and we all know that Honourable Saleshando is also a member of that party in Parliament but now you come with different ideologies on something you claim that you share. Earlier, you as Democratic Change said counting should be done at the polling district. Now, as Leader of the Opposition you are saying counting should be done at polling stations. We are going to see them rising to support this debate. Earlier, you said you wanted counting to be done at polling districts, so now Honourable Member you are saying counting should be done at polling stations. Do you find that okay? The same political formation...



MR TSOGWANE: Clarification. Imagine if we could have passed Honourable Saleshando's Bill which says 'polling districts', what would this man be saying right now? We could be passing two Bills; one saying 'polling districts' and another saying 'polling station'. So as Government, which one would you implement between those two Bills from one party?

MR MORWAENG: Mr Speaker...

MR KEORAPETSE: Correction. Mr Speaker, allow me to correct. The first correction is that I have never debated the previous Bill. Secondly, this Bill is not similar to the previous one; this one has seven sections which differ with Honourable Saleshando's Bill. That is the correction I wanted to make.

MR MORWAENG: Mr Speaker, Batswana have been listening to Opposition members debating. For example, Honourable Wynter Mmolotsi from UDC who spoke earlier says counting should be done at the polling district; UDC members. After debating, they vote that counting should be done at the polling district. Honourable Keorapetse now brings a Bill which says counting should be done at the polling station. I want Batswana to be aware of these things and not think that as Government, we are just opposing for the sake of it. They should realise the caliber of the opposition that we have in this country. From the same political formation, same Parliament, same day, they bring different laws.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Applause!)...

MR MORWAENG: Same hour, same afternoon. However, they are not even embarrassed about that, in fact they see nothing wrong. To them it is just fine to have men from the same party coming up with two Bills before Parliament and ask us to vote in their favour and want us to trust them. Honourable Members, we are talking about a republic here. In response to Honourable Saleshando, I said we are still in talks at the All Party Conference which include our electoral reforms. What embarrassed me is when some Opposition Members objected and disregarded what I said that we are still in consultation because we take these things seriously. In Setswana we say, '*sedibeng go iwa ka tsela*' which means for you to achieve anything, you have to follow the right procedure. . Everything has its own time...

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DR KWAPE): Elucidation. Thank you Mr Speaker. Honourable Morwaeng, is the issue that you are debating not similar to the one where if public servants are still in

consultation with their employer and then we come to Parliament and say we are passing the Bill?

MR MANGWEGAPE-HEALY: Clarification. Thank you Honourable Minister. Earlier, you spoke about two different UDCs, and said can we continue with people who claim to be one but have different ideas. That is why Honourable Saleshando cannot stick around when these things are discussed and that one did not debate on his Bill. Thank you.

MR MORWAENG: Thank you Honourable Members. The main point that I want Batswana to understand is that as Government, it is not like we are opposing unnecessarily like they always say that we use our numbers. No, I want Batswana to know that. I explained before Honourable Saleshando and Honourable Keorapetse and said their parties have sent members to All Party Conference. One of the issues that was discussed is our electoral reforms. They said that there are some reforms that can be currently implemented and others can be done in future. Then they said, 'Morwaeng, take these issues to Government. From there, bring us a report so that we can discuss.' I told them that these issues are under discussion somewhere. Honourable Members responded by saying Parliament is the one tasked with making laws. We are well aware of that but we are saying, we respect the discussions being held by the All Party Conference because we recognise the representatives that we send there.

Mr Speaker, allow me to conclude with one of the examples by which we want Batswana to see the challenge that we have in this Parliament. Opposition Members sometimes bring laws through which they want themselves to appear better. Honourable Member proposed that we should have transparent box. Others I will not address them out of respect for people that we are in consultation with but I believe your representatives have reported to you because they are responsible men and women. The issue of transparent box proposed by Honourable Member is part of our talks. They said, since they realise that procurement of ballot boxes has already been processed for this year's elections, it cannot go through. I am just citing it as an example. Those representatives are responsible men and women. We are still in talks about the proposition by Honourable Member to have transparent box. I must give them the response because they also want the use of transparent box and I also want it but we do not want to make the law and pass it for the sake of it. After we make certain



agreements at the All Party Conference, we want to address the nation. We want to inform them about the agreements that we made as the All Party Conference which we will take to Parliament.

MR HIKUAMA: Clarification Mr Speaker. Thank you Honourable Minister. On the issue of the transparent box, does the law hinder it from being used at the moment?

MR MORWAENG: Listen to me very carefully Honourable Hikuama, we are saying those transparent boxes have been procured, so we are waiting for them to arrive. So it is not something you can change in an election year. It is something that if you really want it as I personally do, if you ask me, that is what I want. That is what we are discussing with my colleagues there that this transparent box is good. Our discussion with others who are not here, we have to realise Mr Speaker that the All Party Conference although others undermine it here, they know that its advantage is that there are some parties in it that are not in Parliament. The so-called small parties that have no representation in Parliament. Those parties are included at the All Party Conference, we consider their ideas. So the ones who are in Parliament should not take advantage that they are in Parliament. Other parties are not here in this debate. The likes of BMD and all other political formations that are included there, are not here.

Mr Speaker, I am trying to say these ideas look good and some are good, but let me warn Batswana that some of it is just politicking and making it look like they are bringing powerful ideas. I wonder why people would refuse when we ask them to wait for the consultation process to be concluded. Why do we not respect this process of consulting other parties? We are there with the likes of Botswana Patriotic Front (BPF), Botswana Labour Party (BLP), Botswana Movement for Democracy (BMD), Republic Party (RP) for Honourable Butale, and Marxist-Leninist (MELS) founded by Mr Joina and others. I respect those, they represent people. I wonder why it is said that I should ignore them, laws are made here. We know that laws are made here, but what is wrong with respecting other parties and their ideas? My request is that, we are still engaged in discussions with other parties.

For example; the issue of documents that should be used as the Honourable Member is saying that he wants the drivers' license and passport to be used, I do not want to disclose some things in this Honourable House. Let

me explain to you Honourable Keorapetse, we are ahead of you, we know the intent. Let me inform you that we know. I will not talk, but we know that the issue that we should not use Omang, if it is not there, a passport or driver's license should be used, we are saying if you can introduce these things just a day before election day, it can lead to chaos in the country. Why are we not looking at such ideas afterwards, for future? So when we talk about them now then we say it should be implemented, the people are furiously saying it should be done.

Some of the information you have sir is that, we know what the process is, we are already ahead. As the officials who deal with Omang were saying, these things should be linked properly, there should be a clear understanding and everyone should be safe. Batswana should know that what we are saying is that we should do things properly. It is not that we are rejecting everything, no that is not the case. We should do things properly and take the right steps.

As you can hear the Honourable Member saying we should just do it, that is the difference between us who are governing the country and the opposition. We are responsible Honourable Member, we cannot just do it. Even if something looks good, it should be reviewed and make all the relevant processes. Batswana should not think that we are just refusing.

When the Honourable Member was here, he emphasised that he is saying counting should be done at polling districts, he says he represents the position of the UDC. As Honourable Morwaeng, I personally believe that should be done. That is also the position of Government, but at the moment we need to prepare. It is not something that can be done this year Honourable Member. We should prepare for it and consult the affected parties like election officials so that they make arrangements for counting to be done at polling stations. Honourable Member, I agree with you, but not now. As for the transparent box, know that I agree with the All Party Conference, but not now. So, let us not agree with Honourable Keorapetse.

MR REATILE (JWANENG MABUTSANE): Let me thank you Mr Speaker. I am also standing to highlight that I support Honourable Keorapetse's Bill; the Honourable Member for Selebi Phikwe West.

Mr Speaker, we understand the Bill as presented by Honourable Keorapetse wants, and we also get it as the relevant Honourable Minister clarifies what can be



achieved and what is not possible. It is crucial that when we comment, we know the position of the ministry.

Mr Speaker, as you have already seen the Government Gazette, if the Bill can be passed by this Parliament; in the elections, we are going to be marking people on the finger after voting. That is the Motion that was tabled in your Honourable House Mr Speaker by Honourable Tshere. The very same Minister Morwaeng rejected it indicating that it is not a Motion that can be taken seriously, it is outdated. You can see that when Honourable Morwaeng's rejects Motions, his points are not substantial. It is just a matter of rejecting the Motions because he has the right to do so, he is using the constitutional right that he has to express his opinion not that anything he says can take Botswana forward. If what Honourable Tshere tabled was important, Honourable Morwaeng could have clarified that we are still on this issue with the IEC and we have already sent instruction to the Attorney General (AG) to draft the very same thing that Honourable Tshere was talking about. So, he is rejecting it because it is shameful, it is not something that can be considered, these are things that the Botswana Democratic Party Government was doing, but it ended up leaving them when they realised that they were outdated. Today he comes before you, the very same Speaker he was telling that this thing cannot work, then he says I thought about it, this legislation can now work.

He is now standing here and telling Botswana publicly that opposition parties are confused, the other one is Honourable Dumelang Saleshando from Maun West, another one is Honourable Dithapelo Keorapetse from Selebi Phikwe West. They are confused but they are from the same party. Mr Speaker, he is talking about two people. Look at the confusion from the same Honourable Morwaeng during the 12th Parliament rejecting the Motion which he is now tabling under Certificate of Urgency, still during the 12th Parliament. He says we should use ink under Certificate of Urgency. If he could have endorsed the proposal in 2022, we could not be here tabling the law to use ink under Certificate of Urgency. He is here saying that people who are sent by constituents are confused. Mr Speaker, Motswana should notice the confusion on Morwaeng.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Elucidation.

MR REATILE: Granted.

MR TSHERE: Point of elucidation. Thank you very much Honourable Speaker. Thank you Honourable

Reatile. I am just trying to accentuate the point that you are raising; I was listening to Honourable Morwaeng when he said Bills that we are presenting are late, that this is the year of elections, we are already late, we present things late. He said that he tabled a Bill to introduce a mark which was published on the 26th of July. Is it really thoughtful of him to say our proposals are late and cannot be endorsed while he also just tabled a Bill recently? Thank you.

MR REATILE: Honourable Tshere, Morwaeng says these things simply because he has a right to debate. He does not raise issues because they are important to Botswana. It is just his way of showing that the Constitution defends him, "to err is human". That is basically what Honourable Morwaeng does. You cannot write home about anything that Honourable Morwaeng presents before this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, the other issue...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Clarification.

MR REATILE: Granted.

MR TSOGWANE: Point of clarification. Honourable Member of Parliament (MP) for Jwaneng-Mabutsane, do you not see that you are comparing two different things? Honourable Morwaeng is very consistent even today. He has been saying that some things require consultations. Do you not see that from what Honourable Tshere said, on that note, on the same principle, perhaps he consulted further and got recommendations that give him an opportunity and the confidence to proceed? What is wrong with changing one's stand after consulting further?

MR REATILE: Thank you His Honour. I do not know the extent to which further consultations went. Who is being consulted further?

HONOURABLE MEMBER: ...(Inaudible)...

MR REATILE: You are talking about All Party. He has never attended the All Party Conference but Tshere was there. Instead of consulting Tshere, he did not consult him to say, "Honourable Member, what informed you to table this Bill? You are a Motswana, give us ideas so we see if we can implement this Bill. After you tabled the Motion and we said things to you, I came to my senses. God shed some light on me.

Mr Speaker, I would like to bring Honourable Keorapetse's attention to the point that makes me



fail to support him freely. I know that you agree with Honourable Morwaeng on the transparent box proposal. I observed His Excellency Tinubu's elections in Gwagwalada, Nigeria, under the leadership of Uhuru Kenyatta from Kenya. When we came back, rebels got in, damaged boxes and ballot papers scattered all over the place. I then told myself that I have been vouching for transparent boxes, but since that day I saw that it cannot work for us. It came to my attention that if it was the metal box that is used here in Botswana, those boys could have left empty handed.

I will fail to support because I saw its outcomes in Nigeria. It almost tarnished elections. Since they have their own approaches, they collected the ballot papers and elections continued and we were left wondering what was going to happen. That is why I am failing to support Honourable Morwaeng. I heard that you support it but I fear it. I saw its outcome. I saw physical advice there. We got there dressed in AU regalia and when we left, those who were frustrated that there were no elections came to us saying, "where is the AU going to? AU! AU! Where are you going?" This then meant that I accepted physical advice on behalf of the continent. I got really scared when I got to the hotel, realising that physical advice in Nigeria could have been a gun or a knife. I then took a decision that I am done with elections, I am no longer going to observe elections.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Laughter!)

MR REATILE: I once observed elections in Liberia and when I came back, I had already passed by the doctor. We were observing...

MR MORWAENG: Point of correction. I want the Honourable Member to explain himself and correct something. Rendering what you are saying, do you agree that indeed not all amendments can be made two months prior to the elections? We have to be really cautious of what you are saying, especially concerning ballot boxes. That was just an example anyway. A ballot box...

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, be careful, you are supposed to be correcting.

MR MORWAENG: Yes sir. The correction that I am making is that he should not only stop there. He should further state that...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: ...(Inaudible)...

...Silence...

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, I have said nothing other than remember, you are standing on correction.

MR MORWAENG: Thank you sir. I believe the Honourable Member heard me, so I plead that he should correct that.

MR REATILE: Thank you Mr Speaker. Honourable Morwaeng basically says I should support him. That is the point he rose on. There is no way I can stand here and support him because he has been saying that there is still time. He tabled a Bill that seeks to make amendments prior to the coming elections, so he cannot say Bills that are tabled by the Honourable Members are late. I did not say the proposal to have transparent ballot boxes is late. What I am simply saying is that even if you can propose to apply it in 2029, I will still not support you. I saw its outcome last time in Nigeria, that is what I am saying. I am not talking about time factor, I am talking about the value of the box. Differentiate these things Honourable Morwaeng. Honourable Members, let us stand and support Honourable Keorapetse. Honourable Morwaeng was just making a conversation. He is not rejecting anything. I thank you.

MR HIKUAMA (NGAMI): Thank you Honourable Speaker. I would like to stand here and support the Bill tabled by Honourable Keorapetse. Before I debate the Motion, I would like to highlight certain things about the role of a Member of Parliament in Parliament and this was triggered by statements made by Honourable Morwaeng. Parliament of Botswana has a challenge of passing progressive laws, a member of Domkrag can just stand here and stubbornly support a proposal only for them to go outside when it is time to vote. Even when they see that something is good, upon hearing the Vice President say he could have rejected the proposal, everyone, even those who supported the proposal flee outside...

MR TSOGWANE: Point of correction. You cannot just debate without being out of order, what is the problem? Learn to debate. You said, "when one hears VP Saying..." but I did not say anything. What did I say? They voted with you, why did you not thank them because they voted with you this time around?

HONOURABLE MEMBER: ...(Laughter!)

MR TSOGWANE: I am correcting you, you are wrong. This is not only for your words, personally, you are wrong.



MR HIKUAMA: Thank you Mr Speaker. That is what I was saying. You usually listened to how we would debate serious issues and bring Motions here and if the VP did not have a chance to debate and can see that other Honourable Members are supporting our Motions, I once proposed that people should be provided with water and they supported it. Since he did not have a chance to debate he stood on a point of order and said, “Mr Speaker, you denied me the opportunity to debate but I just wanted to say I do not support this Motion.” What he was doing was just to send a signal to those who supported the Motion so that they can change and no longer support because he is the eyes of the Botswana Democratic Party, he gives direction on where to go. As Members of Parliament of Botswana, we are sent by Batswana to make laws and represent them but we are then made to reject them even if something is good and should be supported, we reject because my party said so, whereas it is something which can benefit my constituents. So, we should clarify this thing that the duty of a Member of Parliament is not to come here and defend the party although it is driving them into a hellfire or bottomless pit. Even if it is corrupt, they still support it because the party instructed them to. A party should listen and serve people, it should know that the necessary things are clear laws and policies.

Honourable Speaker, we are currently discussing counting of ballot papers at the polling stations, I had hoped that Botswana Democratic Party members will support it without any doubt. The reason being, we were debating a Bill which they indicated that they do not support because they would like counting to be done at the polling stations. This is not hypocritical but rather setting a trap. It is more like a game of chess...

MR TSOGWANE: Correction. If you were listening carefully we did not only stop there, we said we agreed with the principle which is a recommendation of SADC that counting should be done at the polling stations. As we are aware of the situation, even Honourable Saleshando also talked about it that there is a challenge with counting to be done at the polling stations as he knows the geography of Botswana. He knows counting cannot be done at some areas for now. You are a teacher, you should know that this is not the only one, you should give reasons. Those were our reasons, we did support but those are our reasons; not for now.

MR HIKUAMA: Mr Speaker, he is correcting nothing, he wants to debate but he will get the chance.

My point is, this is a trap, there is no confusion. The trap was so that Batswana can realise and clearly see that there is nothing men and women of BDP, the likes of Honourable Gofhamodimo are saying, there is something they are waiting for. At first they opposed the proposal for counting to be done at the district headquarters because SADC recommends that it should be done at the polling stations. Okay, right, we will propose it like that so that we can hear how they are going to oppose it. Honourable Gofhamodimo, this is the time to now support because you said it is the one you agree with as it is in line with the SADC standards and Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Those are the recommendations; for counting to be done at the polling stations. The Bill is here, it is now time, like Honourable Keorapetse said, the time has come for you to show that you are honest and consistent people by supporting this system since you rejected the one we debated prior.

I wanted to conclude on that point and say, there is no hypocrisy, the intention was to plan because we know that we will quickly trap them. You are so predictable, we wanted you to know the type of people you are dealing with; who knows how you think and quickly expose you.

Secondly, I support because there should be proof that the person has voted but my concern is that you are planning to bring another Bill under the Certificate of Emergency to introduce a chip which will be inserted into people because there was no clarification as to whether you are referring to a mark. As the opposition we are clear, we are saying there should be indelible ink not a chip. You might burn people and deter them from voting because of fear. If you say you are going to insert a chip into people to mark that they have voted, these are frightening things. It should be clear, if you want to introduce a mark, let us know what kind of mark you are talking about. We know that you have a history of rejecting the use of ink on claims that it poses health risks. Have you ever made a research that ink is a health hazard, do you agree with us that there is no disease caused by ink or you are going to come up with something else? I have fear already but let me wait to hear the type of chip you will be using on people.

Our point is, it is very very important to improve the integrity and prevent multiple voting by introducing a mark to show that a person has voted. This is a straightforward Motion.

Regarding the transparent box, it is an international standard to ensure that everything that is put in the



box can be seen by everyone there. Observers should see that there is nothing put at the bottom, everything should be transparent.

As for the fear expressed by Honourable Reatile; no, that is common. You now seem like a shop owner who swears never to own a shop because there was burglary at his shop. That is not good reasoning, it is also not a good ground to deter us from having transparent boxes. Transparent box is good so that we ensure the whole process is transparent and everybody is able to see what is happening. These are regulations which attempt to improve the integrity of the elections of the country. I do not believe that as men with such high integrity we can come and gather in Parliament and say we do not want anything which can improve the integrity of our systems/procedures. We have to continually improve our systems to ensure that we remove suspicions among people and give our elections credibility. If people have confidence in the systems and process, it promotes even peace and harmony. However, if you make people have suspicions on the process you are undertaking more especially elections, you are disturbing the peace Honourable Deputy Speaker. Since I know that you love these things, you should support, they are important in the democracy, they can improve our systems...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: You said a good word; integrity, what about my integrity?

MR HIKUAMA: ...(Laughter!)... I associate you with integrity, that is why I say you should stand to support this Bill because it is very important. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR KAPINGA (OKAVANGO): Thank you Mr Speaker. Honourable Members, at times when we talk about these issues we must remind ourselves about the philosophical foundations of issues that we are talking about. We should not be blown away by the wind to say I am this side of this House, I am red or I am a certain colour. We must always remember, what is it that we are trying to build; we want to build a democratic Government. A Government of the people, by the people, for the people. We should remember that we are not doing this for ourselves, we are doing it for the nation of Botswana, the Government of people, by the people for the people. It is not ours, not mine not yours Honourable Moatlhodi, we are doing it for Batswana.

We need to understand that the country cannot be in one place like a child that you will leave in a certain position

and go to the lands and find them in the same place when you come back. If that happens, you should know that there is something wrong with that child. Countries that became independent after us have surpassed us. They are already far and if you want to understand that, there is something called conservatism. There is something called liberalism, progressiveness. If you are not aware of it maybe we need to remind you that you are under the grip of conservatism. You resist transformations. You reject improvement of processes because you believe in what Honourable Moatlhodi usually says that you are controlled by the mindset that says, "if it is not broken, why fix it." That is ultra-conservatism and it will place us in one position, not developing and not going anywhere. Those that came before you think better than you, with developments that aligned to the current times that we are living in, that is your problem.

To educate you again Honourable Moatlhodi, there is what is called paradigm paralysis, it is what you gentlemen and ladies on the other side of the House are suffering from. It is currently hindering you from seeing the new light that could take this country somewhere better, but you are still singing mindset change! mindset change! While you are in one place and still singing mindset change and not moving anywhere.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: You do not speak like a Member of the Seventh Adventist Church.

MR KAPINGA: I speak like a Member of the Seventh Adventist Church. The mindset change that you are singing is only focusing in one direction. When you are told that ballots counting should be done at polling stations, you object and say we are still at the All Party Conference. Let counting be done at polling districts, you object and say the matter is still at All Party Conference. My Professor taught me that there is a gentleman called Rip Van Winkle, who was always asleep and woke up the last minute. You have been in Government for five years and boasting that you are ruling, not calling All Party Conference to discuss national issues and when we are only left with few months, that is when you are running around with wrong morale and say Honourable Members let us discuss, we are building a Government for the people by the people, as Kabo Morwaeng, ahh! ...(Laughter!)...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Clarification.

MR KAPINGA: My brother, it is very late in the day to convince us that you believe in the All Party conference.



You had so many years to call us to All Party Conference and discuss these issues because it is not starting now. We have long been talking about these issues that we want to use the ink, we want ballots to be counted in polling stations and you kept on saying we are still in discussions. Now that there is no time that is when you are saying “Honourable Members let us meet and discuss”. You are only doing that so that you go back to Batswana to say as you can see we are not objecting but time is our enemy. Honourable Morwaeng, discussions at the All Party Conference cannot hinder a Member of Parliament to bring a legislation into this House. What matters is the principle, what matters is the high objectives of reforming our electoral system, that is all that matters.

MR KEORAPETSE: Clarification. As he has brought the Motion about the ink while it is still at the All Party Conference, it is because it does not stop him to come to Parliament with a Motion.

MR KAPINGA: You are doing what Squealer did in Animal Farm, when he was ordered to explain why Napoleon fled when the war got heated and said, “tactics comrades, tactics. Napoleon was not fleeing, but he was retreating to strategise.” Tactics comrade, so that when people ask why you are not executing things then say you have called the All Party Conference, you are still in discussions, that is not an honest procedure. In life, there is Plan A and Plan B. You mentioned that someone brought a Bill about polling districts while the other brought a Bill about polling stations. If Plan A is not working, you try Plan B. You do not use all your efforts in plan A, while you do not have Plan B and C. There is what is called twin track approach. We gave you plan A, you objected and now Honourable Keorapetse is bringing Plan B and you are objecting again saying discussions are still ongoing at the All Party Conference. This thing is exposing you, that you have no genuine intention to change how elections are run because you know that in its current form, there is something that you can benefit. There is something that you are benefitting from the current procedure.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Clarification Honourable.

MR KAPINGA: Yes, please wait.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: It is not like I really understand, I only hear you shouting.

MR KAPINGA: No, I am explaining how you are.

MR MORWAENG: Clarification. Honourable Kapinga, you did not hear me when I explained the issue of counting ballots at polling stations which SADC is also talking about, that we also concur with it. Currently, it is too late to prepare for the elections. You did not hear me saying that.

MR KAPINGA: Mr Speaker, there is nothing late. These people are just refusing. There is no political will on your side and I want to underscore it. It is not your desire, you do not want. This is just an excuse so that when people ask you then say we are not objecting and evidence that we are not disputing is calling the All Party Conference to discuss this issue. The political will is not there because you know how you will benefit. There is something you are benefitting to be administering elections as you are doing currently Mr Speaker. I want to tell you that even the public can see that you are objecting proposals that could take this nation somewhere. You keep preaching “mind-set change,” it is all in vain because you refuse to change. You simply want other people to change but not you. You continually reject Bills requesting you to change your mindset but you are intending to visit Seronga to encourage people to change their mindset. Believe me, I am going to tell them that you are not serious. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR RAMOGAPI (PALAPYE): Thank you Mr Speaker. Let me humbly say, we tabled this Bill which requests Parliament to empower our democracy. This is because countries always encounter riots during elections. Thereafter, some countries lose people but it has never happened to Botswana ever since gaining independence in 1966. Credit should be given to opposition as they always prefer to talk things out whenever they suspect foreplay. This is such a big deal more so that they never cease from voicing their concerns.

Mr Speaker, opposition has always requested Parliament to make IEC independent. Domkrag refused and opted to have supervisor of elections instead. One day, Mr Koma won elections at a higher margin but Tshiamo ballot box disappeared. It is at that point that Mr Koma referenced that incident as proof. Thereafter, IEC was established after we had riots as a result of the disappearance of that box. Before then, chaos rose as some suspected, reported and presented evidence that indeed ballots were stolen. The court also condemned them and ruled to hold bye-elections and that is when Mr Koma won at a higher



margin. So it might be true that indeed Domkrag steal ballots because if there is nothing wrong...

MR TSOGWANE: On a point of clarification. Honourable Member, you know very well that you were busy leading all the plans that you talked about at the time, but you are putting it as if you were not there. So you must correct your debate.

MR RAMOGAPI: Thank you Vice President. It is important for people to embrace mind-set change instead of living in the past. It is better to come to realisation that what you have been doing is wrong.

In a nutshell Mr Speaker, it is important to note that democracy compels us to keep making changes as we move along. SADC has asked us to make such changes, and refusing to change is never going to take us anywhere. Honourable Keorapetse presented a Bill requesting us to allow people to vote using passport or license and it is very important. We should consider our constituents because their complaint is such that sometimes their children steal their registration card if they are against Domkrag or UDC. They do this knowing well that it is the last day and therefore impossible for you to vote when you do not have your registration card or Omang. So this bill requests us to be considerate of constituents who will not be able to vote when their registration card or Omang have disappeared. It is important because they vote for all of us Honourable Members.

Mr Speaker, there was a strong belief that some people claimed to keep Omang or registration cards safe only to find out that it was because they did not want people to vote. However, IEC took action until it was declared as an offence. For example; if it happens that your name is on voters roll and someone steals your registration card or Omang, Honourable Keorapetse requests us to allow such people to vote as all the information required appears on the passport. I am referring to an internationally recognised passport. Shockingly, Domkrag refuses to allow such people to vote.

Transparent box; Honourable Members, this is important in terms of ensuring that there is no one who suspects that some ballots were already in the box before we started voting. This might happen in instances where the agent forgets to show us that the box is actually empty. So everyone will be able to see for themselves if the box is transparent. So you should not reject this request.

Ink; those who have voted should apply it as proof, so you must agree. So any political party that want its

members to vote twice or thrice and cause chaos is the one that can reject such a proposition..

Polling stations; I am pleased that Honourable Morwaeng mentioned when rejecting Honourable Saleshando's Bill that our plan is to attack them. Our request is that ballots should be counted in polling district or polling station. UDC deliberately sent Honourable Saleshando to request us to count ballots at polling district and Honourable Keorapetse later requested polling station so as to test you. This was a trap; either way you get trapped. So you refused and claim they must be counted at polling station, we are requesting the same but you refuse.

MR MORWAENG: On a point of correction. Mr Speaker, I must correct the statement that we refuse to count ballots at polling stations. Mr Speaker, it must be clear that we agree that indeed we signed under SADC and their standards compel us to count ballots at polling stations. We might have agreed but conditions do not permit us just as Honourable Saleshando mentioned that some polling stations lack resources. So our contention is to prepare ourselves well on time. That is what I want to correct that you cannot just say we are refusing and just stop there without mentioning that we cannot agree for now because of some reasons. We agree with the principle but its application must be up to standard. So just because we agree does not mean we also agree to count in poor conditions that Honourable Saleshando talked about. Why are you in a rush, I mean since our next general elections will be held in 2029? That alone gives us enough time to prepare well on time. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MR RAMOGAPI: Oh! There is no correction. In short Honourable Members, it does not mean that if we pass Honourable Keorapetse's Bill in July, it will be implemented then. We are in August, it does not mean that it will be implemented now. After the law is passed, it has to be assented to by His Excellency the President, from there it is gazetted and then a date of operation is set. That is the process some of us who studied law know. So our excuse cannot be that we do not want it made urgently. You make the law with the knowledge of its date of operation. It is not about tomorrow proposing that you want to make this law under a certificate of urgency. The issue that has been constantly raised of All Party Conference, Honourable Members, All Party Conference is just a caucus, it is not mandated by the law. It is a caucus where consultations are held and if one does not support those recommendations, no one can prosecute you...



MR MORWAENG: Correction. No, now it is going too far Mr Speaker, Commissioners of the IEC are from All Party Conference. They are the ones who recommend to the Judicial Service Commission (JSC), are we together? From there an appointment is made, it is not just a talk show Honourable Member. I wanted to explain that All Party Conference is not a talk show as you think.

MR MMOLOTSI: Correction. I want Honourable Morwaeng to explain that since All Party Conference has stopped a long time back, it is only now that it is being resuscitated, all this time, who was doing this process?

MR SPEAKER: No, it is not correction, leave it.

MR RAMOGAPI: Mr Speaker, I firmly state that there is no Act which enacts an All Party Conference, it is just a caucus where talks are held. Botswana, integrity is compromised by issues of elections. If after elections many people lodge petitions at courts, the integrity that Botswana is known for as a shining star of democracy will be compromised because Botswana is opposed to all the standards that you can think of which SADC and AU recommended. Honourable Members, enough is enough. Thank you Mr Speaker. I therefore support Honourable Keorapetse.

MR NKAWANA (SELEBI PHIKWE EAST): Thank you Mr Speaker. I also rise to support Honourable Keorapetse's Bill. I support it because I believe that if this law is enacted, it will improve the integrity of the elections of Botswana. It can improve the status of our country when compared to other democratic states. As we are aware, we are an electoral democracy state. This means where there are no elections, democracy disappears. Where elections are rigged, democracy disappears. What Honourable Keorapetse is proposing is that through this Bill, we should have a set date for elections which we expect HE to set very soon and they must be fair. They should be conducted in such a way that those who are suspicious, particularly us that there is elections rigging, that suspicion must be eliminated. Firstly, to eliminate the element of suspicion, every voter as per our request must have their finger marked with an indelible ink. The surprising thing is that Honourable Members who from way back have been opposing the use of indelible ink said that if your finger is marked with indelible ink, tomorrow you might get serious illnesses. We advanced all reasons to prove that if you drop an ink on the finger you cannot contract any disease. They totally refused.

Right now we were surprised that our fellow colleagues during their elections which were held countrywide used ink. There were some who asked if it is indelible ink or the one used for writing. Our request is that we should use an indelible ink...

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DR KWAPE):

Correction. Thank you Mr Speaker. Honourable Nkawana should debate the Bill that they are repeating yet they are not in agreement as one party and stop talking about temporary and permanent ink at elections he was not part of. I want to confirm that we use an indelible ink. So he should stop playing to the gallery by making false statements. He should just talk about Bills they have brought which are opposed to each other yet they are one, and when others debate, some of them go outside.

MR NKAWANA: Thank you for your correction Minister. It is not surprising because there are reports that during voting, you did not see it because you were abroad. There was nothing wrong with that because you were on official business. I wish that when we debate, maybe you could keep quiet because you are not aware of some of these issues.

One may wonder if those diseases that were said to be transmitted through the ink when used on Batswana, are they affecting other people and not BDP members. Mr Speaker, I want to know if there is a certain disease that can affect a certain group of people and not others. Our request is that since it is clear that there is no BDP member who was infected after being marked with the ink, it means we can now continue and Honourable Members and agree that we use ink.

Mr Speaker, another issue of concern is the one raised by Honourable Keorapetse of Omang. He is proposing that if you lost Omang, you can vote if your name is on the roll...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: What does the law say?

MR NKAWANA: That is the one that we are requesting for. We are saying if it is lost, you can vote using passport or driver's licence.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Clarification.

MR NKAWANA: Concerning Omang, I have been looking at my driver's licence, which we are requesting that it should also be included, it shows my Identity card number. The passport that I use to travel to other



countries, which is acceptable to everyone also has my ID number. I will yield for your clarification.

MR TSOGWANE: Clarification. You took too long that I even forgot what I wanted to ask.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ... (Laughter!) ...

MR TSOGWANE: Proceed...

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ... (Laughter!) ...

MR TSOGWANE: ... I wanted to ask you something. He wasted my time.

MR NKAJANA: Mr Speaker, still on that one, I can also see that he wanted to derail me but I will not give in. Our request is that all these documents that are IDs that are used when you drive, when you go outside the country, when you take money from the bank, they all show your Omang number.

MR HIKUAMA: On a point of elucidation. I did not want to elucidate anything long, I wanted to highlight that what you are saying is that Omang, passport and driver's licence should be identification documents that a person is allowed to use to vote. That one of these documents has been lost or not should not be an issue. This is why His Honour the Vice President stood up. He wanted to ask 'what if it is lost', but even when they are not lost, there is no problem. Everything that is available will show that you are the one who registered for elections, you are allowed to vote. That is what we are saying.

DR KWAPE: On a point of clarification. When we talk about the Omang issue, Honourable Mokgethi said something earlier which I think although some of us did not agree with it, it has some sense. She said there is a law which shows what you can use to identify yourself. So Honourable Member, I request that with your knowledge, when you are stopped by the police, can you take out your Omang and say this is your proof that you have licence? The point Honourable Mokgethi was addressing is that there is a law which is fundamental which should be observed not the one which says you should change it while there is an existing law that governs your identity.

MR NKAJANA: Let me thank you Honourable Minister. You are absent most of the time. Mr Speaker clarified earlier that we are the lawmakers, we are the ones who can amend it to accommodate all these

things. If you were there, the Minister responsible for Immigration and Nationality accepted that we will amend this issue.

Let me highlight that the fundamental point of what you are saying Honourable Member, is that we should have a centre of bio data collection and storage, which will include everything. When you enter an Omang it shows who you are. When you are arrested by the police it should show who you are, where you come from, where you reside, where you were born and by who and so forth. We can do all these things without it hindering us from going for elections.

Mr Speaker, I want to touch on this issue, in the morning we were talking about the number of ballots that it is crucial that we make the counting process much easier because the voters will be in close proximity, they want to hear the results in close proximity, and want to celebrate the results in their constituency or ward knowing that they elected their Parliamentary candidate, or Honourable Councillor. It is not all the results but they know that if counting has been done in that ward, if a person has defeated Honourable Lelatisitswe, he or she will have defeated him in that ward. They have all the reasons to celebrate at that time.

That is what we are saying that to eliminate chances of cheating which is happening now, we are combating it, everything should be done and concluded at the wards, then they are collected and we wait for the results that will be collected by the Returning Officer then he or she reveals the results after adding the numbers. It is concerning that cars transport ballot boxes such long distances as we were saying this morning until now, ballots are transported and manipulated along the way, later on there is a problem, and then we are shocked. Thank you Mr Speaker.

MINISTER OF LABOUR AND HOME AFFAIRS

(MS MOKGETHI): Thank you Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity to also comment on Honourable Keorapetse's Bill to amend the Electoral Act. Let me highlight that it is good for us to want to seek to improve the governance of our country, to enhance laws, particularly to enhance the democratic process and to curb many obstacles that will allow people to be able to vote. It is a good thing. It is good to update the country's laws to be in line with modern times. There is a problem if the way these laws are tabled is not under procedure or they contradict other laws.



Firstly, let me highlight that there is the National Registration Act which is the principal Registration Act that allows for national registration. Under the Act, it did not allow secondary identification documents that Honourable Keorapetse wants to bring before this Honourable House, being the passport and the drivers' licence. Therefore, that secondary form of identification, there is no legislation...

MR TSOGWANE: Clarification Mr Speaker. You are making it easy for him, you are trying to appease him by sating secondary because he is not talking about secondary. What he is trying to push for, he is trying to push for multiple identity cards in the sense that he is equating the drivers' licence to an Omang.

MS MOKGETHI: I hear you Your Honour the Vice President. It is true that they cannot be equal.

MR TSHERE: Procedure. Thank you Mr Speaker and thank you Honourable Minister for yielding. Mr Speaker, I am concerned by an issue that is constantly being repeated which says it is like Honourable Dithapelo Keorapetse tabled a Bill that does not align with some law, that is why he brought it to this Honourable House. I once tabled a Bill and followed the procedure for tabling a Bill. I know that when it leaves here, before it comes here, it goes to the Parliamentary Counsel, it goes to the Attorney General, they process it and it takes a year. It took a year last time when I tabled the Bill pertaining ink, it was back and forth, making sure that there is nothing that can happen here resulting in the Bill you are tabling clashing with other laws. She keeps insisting that is what happened. Does she mean that Attorney General's Chamber just overlooked that issue or who is she trying to blame here because the procedure is that Attorney General's Chamber has to see if all those laws do not clash or differ with existing laws? I think that Honourable Dithapelo Keorapetse did that like I once did. So I do not understand why it is being given as a reason in this Honourable House Mr Speaker. Thank you.

MS MOKGETHI: Thank you. Let me commence by responding to His Honour the Vice President. It is true that the documents are not equal. The national identification is Omang. It is called the primary form of identification under the National Registration Act. Like His Honour is saying, documents like passport and drivers' licence, cannot be equated to Omang because one is a primary form of identification and the other one is a secondary form of identification. That is where the problem lies.

Mr Speaker, I would like to highlight that I am going to table a Bill before this Parliament seeking to amend the National Registration Act; to make passport and drivers' license secondary forms of identification. Omang is still the only primary form of identification. Mr Speaker, the other challenge is that the Constitution of Botswana as the supreme law of this country recognises Omang as the only form of identification used to register for elections and to vote. The Constitution does not allow people to use passports and drivers' license during elections.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Correction Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Correction, Honourable Member for Ngami.

MR HIKUAMA: Point of correction. Yes, let us correct the Minister. It appears the Minister is saying that Omang is there for electoral purposes. I would like to correct her and highlight that Omang is not there for electoral purposes only. When proposing that other documents should be recognised as form of identification during elections, do not say the purpose of Omang is only to be used to vote. Omang has its own purpose and that it is to identify you as a person. Since IEC has been ordered to use Omang, they should also use passport and drivers' license. The purpose of Omang is not only to be used to vote, please understand that. It is a document that has its own purpose and IEC is a different institution which chose to use Omang for identification purposes. Honourable Keorapetse is simply proposing that we should use all these documents to identify someone. I believe that will help you understand.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (MR KEORAPETSE): Point of procedure. I do not think Honourable Mokgethi does shed light on this Parliament, in fact, she is misleading it. Franchise is provided for under Section 67. Please assist Parliament and quote the part that says the Constitution only recognises Omang as a form of identification during elections, show me that part.

Secondly, show me the part that says Parliament cannot prescribe anything else. If you can do that, then you would have defeated me and I would even withdraw the Bill.

MS MOKGETHI: Thank you Mr Speaker. I wanted to say that the National Registration Act is the supreme law to state what is the primary form of identification. Any other form of identification, like a passport and the



drivers' license are secondary forms of identification. Mr Speaker...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: On a point of order Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Point of order. Honourable Minister, hang on. Someone is asking for a point of order.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (MR KEORAPETSE): Point of order. Honourable Mokgethi, you have unequivocally told this Parliament that the Constitution says Batswana can only use the Omang as a form of identity to vote. You tell Parliament this as a lawyer who is also a Minister. Where is that part and after you pinpoint it, you should further quote the part that says Parliament cannot prescribe anything else. It is a very clear question, you are a lawyer, answer this question. Otherwise withdraw, because you are misleading Parliament into thinking that Omang is prescribed by the Constitution, when is actually not the case.

MS MOKGETHI: Mr Speaker, the Electoral Act is the one that provides for use of identity card. The Electoral Act sets out other provisions for a person to qualify to register and to vote for elections. I stand here to debate in relation to...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Further point of order Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, as I tried to indicate earlier in the day is (i) who has the authority to look at the Electoral Act, amend it such that apart from the Omang as an identity card, any other document maybe used. I tried to raise that deliberately in the morning, because I thought if you paid attention to that, then you can show that the law says any attempt to introduce any other form of identity for the purpose of elections would not be permissible with the interpretation of the law due to certain reasons.

Regarding the second point that you raised about the Constitution, I was taken aback myself, that I read the Constitution all these years and I do not understand it. As I said, I may have read the Constitution and totally misunderstood it, it is quite possible. The Honourable mover of the Bill is asking if you are saying only one form of identity can be used, and that no other form of identity is permissible. In which case, the possible arguments whether people agree with it or not, at least what you are saying should be clear. Honourable Minister.

MS MOKGETHI: Thank you Mr Speaker. I want to stress the point that Honourable Keorapetse seeks to introduce an amendment in the electoral law. I am not saying the National Registration Act is superior, I am saying that is the law that provides for different forms of identification. There is only one primary form of identification. Honourable Keorapetse seeks to introduce a secondary form of identification which is not recognisable under our law.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Which law?

MS MOKGETHI: He is seeking to introduce something completely different,

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Correction.

MS MOKGETHI: ...I stand here to highlight that I do not support...

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, someone is asking for correction this side.

MR KEORAPETSE: Point of correction. You are an advocate Honourable Mokgethi, it is permissible. You wanted to mislead Parliament by citing the Constitution and you further went on to say the supreme law of the country says only an Omang can be used during elections. You knew that you were not telling the truth and now when you notice that...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: ...(Inaudible)...

MR KEORAPETSE: Yes, I welcome that correction Honourable Motaosane. Upon noticing that you are not telling Parliament the truth or that you made a mistake, you still do not admit that you made a mistake. You now run to the Act, which is not superior to the Electoral Act.

The correction is that it is permissible under Section 86 of the Constitution of the Republic, that this Parliament can amend the Electoral Act to make it easier for citizens to exercise their franchise right. It is permissible, and you are wrong to say it is not permissible. It is permissible under our laws, that Parliament can amend, which is what we are doing right now.

MR SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, part of the...

MS MOKGETHI: Mr Speaker, in the interest of progress...

MR SPEAKER: Hang on Honourable Minister. Honourable Minister, part of the argument by Leader of



the Opposition is a genuine argument. You may differ, you do not have agree with anybody.

The only issue is whether in fact in terms of the Constitution, there is any prescription about which documents should be held by a voter who wants to vote. That one he is saying he is correcting, that there is no such provision, you can argue but we will see where ... (inaudible)...Minister only from this argument.

MS MOKGETHI: Thank you Mr Speaker. In the interest of progress, I will withdraw that it is provided for under the Constitution. I still emphasise my point that the national identification, the primary one, is the Omang. That is the one I still maintain that the use of passport and Omang has not yet been provided for under the National Registration Act. I still maintain that Honourable Keorapetse's Bill is not good. It is seeking to introduce a form of identification which the National Registration Act does not recognise. Mr Speaker, I explained that I am going to bring a law very soon in this very Parliament, which is introducing the use of passport and drivers' licence as a form of identification, secondary forms of identification in the event that Omang is not there. That is why I oppose Honourable Keorapetse's Bill.

In addition, the IEC is the one which is vested with the conduct of elections. If we bring the law at this time when there is a short time left, IEC has already made preparations on how to conduct elections in October, are we not bringing confusion in our election system? That is my other argument. When will IEC find time to implement all the amendments like introducing transparent ballot boxes which have budgetary implications? If we are going to be introducing a law which IEC will not have a budget to implement, starting with the procuring process, following the procurement laws of procuring transparent ballot boxes, in future IEC will be accused of contravening the law that it refused to implement the use of transparent ballot boxes etc. Like I said, it is good when we are trying to introduce laws which enhances the democracy of our country. We have to do things in a proper manner so as to avoid any chaos in our elections. We should not bring laws when we are now on the eve of elections. IEC has already prepared for elections. Therefore Mr Speaker, I want to strongly indicate that I do not support Honourable Keorapetse's Bill. Thank you Mr Speaker.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Applause!)...

HIS HONOUR THE VICE PRESIDENT (MR TSOGWANE): Honourable Members, the problem is that we are talking to the opposition. If you discuss with the opposition, even if you try to show them the way they still oppose. We are rulers, not the opposition. We oppose what is being discussed today. We are rulers.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Murmurs)...

MR TSOGWANE: Honourable Hikuama, you are a teacher, learn to behave. You are degrading our integrity every day.

Mr Speaker, this issue has been explained and even explained by those responsible for Omang, who have indepth knowledge. The Minister was just on the floor explaining that currently, even if you can ask anybody including an illiterate person or the one staying at the cattlepost, they know that you cannot use a drivers' licence as a form of identification, you use Omang. That is what she said about the identity card.

HONOURABLE MEMBER: Clarification.

MR TSOGWANE: No, there is nothing you can clarify until you reform and listen to understand.

MR HIKUAMA: Clarification. Honourable VP, a form of identification is required in different events, places and situations. You cannot use Omang as a form of identification at the border, you use a passport. That is a form of identification. At traffic, you use a licence as a form of identification. Form of identification is situational. It depends on the situation and event. That is why we are saying...

MR TSOGWANE: Sit down.

MR HIKUAMA: No, you already yielded for me, let me finish. A form of identification is not universal such that one will be required to use Omang only. It depends on the situation and the event.

MR TSOGWANE: No, sit down, you do not know what I am talking about. When we talk about Omang, Identity Document, we are talking of an ID, we are not talking about the drivers' licence. You have been to school, you know you cannot go around carrying a drivers' licence and call it an ID. You cannot call your drivers' licence an ID, you see, you cannot call it.

MR HIKUAMA: Correction. VP is confused, he is now misleading the nation. You can identify yourself using passport or licence, it depends on where you are



identifying yourself. You cannot tell people that you cannot use passport as a form of identification. You can use passport depending on where you are. You cannot use ID to identify yourself as the owner of the cattle branded A417, there is a form of identification you use for that, not ID. ID is not a universal form of identification.

MR TSOGWANE: Sit down, you have nothing to say. Right now, if I can ask you to give me your ID, do you have an ID; you cannot bring...

HONOURABLE MEMBER: ...(Inaudible)...

MR TSOGWANE: I am asking you about a document. Can you not understand? I am talking of an object called ID. A document called ID. It is different from ...(interruptions)...

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Murmurs)...

MR TSOGWANE: What you are doing here...

MR SPEAKER: Order! Honourable Members. Order! It is now 6 o'clock. You will discuss those issues some other time. It is now 6 o'clock. Honourable Members, may I call upon His Honour the Leader of the House to move a Motion of adjournment.

MOTION

ADJOURNMENT

LEADER OF THE HOUSE (MR TSOGWANE): Mr Speaker, you know during this time of the day it is extremely difficult to reason with a person like Honourable Hikuama.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: ...(Laughter!)...

MR TSOGWANE: Let me request that we adjourn so that we go and rest, this person is giving us headache. Thank you Mr Speaker.

Question put and **agreed to.**

The Assembly accordingly adjourned at 6:01 p.m. until Friday 2nd August, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.



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