

# DAILY HANSARD

YOUR VOICE IN PARLIAMENT



## THE THIRD MEETING OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT

WEDNESDAY 31 JULY 2024

### ENGLISH VERSION

HANSARD NO: 214



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**THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
**SPEAKER**  
**The Hon. Phandu T. C. Skelemani PH, MP.**  
**DEPUTY SPEAKER**  
**Hon. P. P. P. Moatlhodi, MP. (Tonota)**

Clerk of the National Assembly	- Ms B. N. Dithapo
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

**CABINET**

His Excellency Dr M. E. K. Masisi, MP.	- President
His Honour S. Tsogwane, MP. (Boteti West)	- Vice President
Hon. K. N. S. Morwaeng, MP. (Molepolole South)	- Minister for State President
Hon. K. T. Mmusi, MP. (Gabane-Mmankgodi)	- Minister of Defence and Security
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
<b>RULING PARTY (Botswana Democratic Party)</b>	
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
<b>OPPOSITION</b>	
<b>(Umbrella for Democratic Change)</b>	
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
<b>(Botswana Patriotic Front)</b>	
Hon. L. Lesedi, MP.	Serowe South
Hon. B. Mathoothe, MP.	Serowe North
Hon. M. Reatile, MP.	Jwaneng-Mabutsane
Hon. O. Kedikilwe, MP.	Serowe West
<b>(Alliance for Progressives)</b>	
Hon. W. B. Mmolotsi, MP.	Francistown South

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**  
**THE THIRD MEETING OF THE FIFTH SESSION**  
**OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT**  
**WEDNESDAY 31<sup>ST</sup> JULY, 2024**

<b><i>CONTENTS</i></b>	<b><i>PAGE (S)</i></b>
<b>QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER.....</b>	<b>1-11</b>
<b>PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL</b>	
Electoral (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (No. 7 of 2024)	
<i>Second Reading</i> .....	12-34



Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2024

THE ASSEMBLY met at 2:00 p.m.

(THE SPEAKER in the Chair)

### PRAYERS

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**MR SPEAKER (MR SKELEMANI):** Order! Order! Honourable Members, good afternoon. Let us start our business of today with questions.

## QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWER

### TRANSPORTATION OF GOODS BY FOREIGN OPERATORS

**MR M. I. MOSWAANE (FRANCISTOWN WEST):** asked the Minister of Transport and Public Works to brief this Honourable House:

- (i) on the legal frameworks and statutes guiding transportation of goods by foreign operators from Botswana to other countries, in particular Zimbabwe;
- (ii) if he is aware that private Zimbabwean transport operators are taking goods from Botswana to Zimbabwe which fuels lack of business opportunities for Batswana;
- (iii) if he is aware that his ministry has directed that the above practise must stop but to date it is still happening despite the fact that the Department of Transport and Road Safety knows about it;
- (vi) on how many foreigners were caught from 2020 to 2023, crossing or conducting businesses at ungazetted point of entry into Botswana; and
- (iv) what are the remedial actions in place to stop the practise and when will it be stopped.

**Later Date.**

### GRADING OF ROADS LEADING TO MASIMO AND SETTLEMENTS

**MR P. K. MOTAOSANE (THAMAGAKUMAKWANE):** asked the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development to state whether:

he is aware that councils refuse to grade roads leading to *masimo* and settlements even though such roads are de-bushed under the Ipelegeng programme;

- (i) such a scenario is not counterproductive to the good initiatives by Government to create access to production centres; and
- (ii) he will consider instructing councils to start grading such roads with immediate effect.

**ASSISTANT MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (MR MODUKANELE):** Thank you Mr Speaker. Thank you Honourable Motaosane for the question. I want to point out that we have never known councils to refuse road maintenance or to grade roads leading to *masimo*. Mr Speaker, thanks to the Ipelegeng programme, various councils across the country continue to de-bush roads leading to *masimo*. We highly encourage this practice. We believe that these production centres or agriculture, are the mainstay of the economy in villages and rural areas. We truly encourage that.

Mr Speaker, last week I gave Honourable Motaosane and the Chairman of the Village Development Committee in Malaka an example. I explained that we had long requested that through Ipelegeng, the road from Leboaneng needed to be de-bushed. This road leads to one of the largest *masimo* on that side which produce a significant amount of produce destined for Palapye. When I inquired about their progress, he indicated that they have prioritised this task and are committed to implementing it.

I would like to highlight that the responsibility of maintaining roads to the production centres lies with the Ministry of Agriculture. We consistently assist them by providing grading machines whenever they request them, allowing them to maintain roads if their budget permits.

Lastly Mr Speaker, I want to emphasise in this Parliament that as the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, we wholeheartedly support this initiative. We are committed to offering our assistance wherever possible. We recognise the importance of ensuring that the roads leading to *masimo*, which produce food, are properly graded. Through the Ipelegeng programme, we encourage them to continue de-bushing these roads when the budget permits. We know the importance of these roads as Government. Thank you Mr Speaker.

**MR MOTAOSANE:** Supplementary. Thank you Mr Speaker. Honourable Minister, thank you. You are too technical. I realise that you want to trick me, but I appreciate your response Honourable Member.





The concern lies in the de-bushing process. I have been emphasising that Ipelegeng, honestly, does an exceptional job on these roads. However, the problem arises after de-bushing, the roads remain ungraded. This issue affects all the roads leading to production areas. You have not explicitly stated whether you will encourage them to do that or not. You are technical in the sense that you discuss agriculture wherever possible. However, it does not provide me with any information to share with voters on whether the council will eventually grade those roads after they have been de-bushed. Minister, please be direct so that your children understand whether they need to grade the roads for easy access as they continue working on them. I appreciate the de-bushing efforts because these days, we travel with ease on those roads, which is a good initiative. I suggest grading them at least once after de-bushing. Now, how can you assist us in ensuring that they get graded Honourable Minister? Thank you.

**MR MODUKANELE:** Thank you Honourable Motaosane. No, I have no intentions of tricking you Honourable Member. The answer is straightforward. As I have indicated, the responsibility of ensuring that the roads going to *masimo* are graded lies with my colleagues. We offer assistance because we are one Government. As councils, we recognise that there are specific areas where our assistance is crucial and where we can readily provide it. Perhaps this is where it appeared unclear. Allow me to clearly state that if the council has graders and the Ministry of Agriculture seeks our help in grading a road after it has been de-bushed through Ipelegeng, we are fully prepared and willing to assist, provided we have all the necessary resources. I wanted to emphasise this point Honourable Member.

**MR MATHOOTHE:** Supplementary. Good afternoon Mr Speaker. I plead with the Minister to be clear whether they only grade those roads when Ministry of Agriculture requests them to do so and that they do not see the need to attend these roads without being requested to do so. Thank you.

**MR MODUKANELE:** Thank you Mr Speaker. I am looking at the bigger picture here but it seems like my colleagues are going to be splitting hairs but that does not take us anywhere. I clearly stated that we are one Government, where there is a need identified by agriculture or any ministry, we are willing and ready to assist.

**MR RAMOGAPI:** Supplementary. Thank you Mr Speaker. Thank you Honourable Minister and thank you for that question Honourable Motaosane.

With utmost respect, are you aware that there is no Government policy that says farm roads can be graded? We have enquired with all government ministries and councils and this has been confirmed. Minister, is what you are saying new? Is it something that Government plans to do, so that we go and relay the message to constituents or maybe you did not understand? Please iron out that issue for us. This issue is as straightforward as it was detailed by Honourable Motaosane, Ministry of Agriculture has never graded any road that leads to Dikabeya, Setatse or any farm areas.

**MR MODUKANELE:** When you do not tell the truth, I will soon tell you that you are not telling the truth. Honourable Ramogapi, the road from Palapye to Leboaneng which was part of your constituency until the recent delimitation, has been graded countless times. Government graded that road countless times when Sekati Mafoko was still a Councillor. You are not telling the truth. As for issues that you are raising about policies, say what you want to say so that we may tell the truth. You represented Leboaneng people until just recently and as I was growing up, Council and Ministry of Agriculture always graded the road that crosses Sesokwe heading towards Leboaneng. What are you talking about? Stop misleading this nation, everybody in this House can attest to this. The same applies to the road that leads to Dikabeya. You are talking about roads that we use.

#### PROCESS OF CHANGE OF LAND USE

**MR K. NKAWANA (SELEBI PHIKWE EAST):** asked the Minister of Lands and Water Affairs whether his ministry does not consider the current process of change of land use and application of land use planning too lengthy and costly, where one has to first request for consent to apply at land board, go to Council Physical Planning offices and back to land board for final application.

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

Mr Speaker, question No. 320 deals with the land tenure system of Botswana. The country has three land tenures which are primarily distinguished by the covenants and restrictions associated with the land rights. The transactions are controlled through the



various legislative instruments. In freehold land, the title holder has ownership rights in perpetuity. In state land, the ownership rights are for a fixed period, while in tribal land, the title holder does not have ownership rights but rather user rights in perpetuity, and this is the fundamental difference, and this is why the land board who are the real owner of the land have to consent. Section 5 of the Tribal Land Act, 2018 on the powers and functions of the land boards provides that the land board has to authorise any change of use of tribal land following the granting of the rights to use the land. The tribal land tenure recognises that the rights and title to land has been vested on the land boards who hold it in trust for the benefit and advantage of the citizens of Botswana. Therefore, at all material times, the land belongs to the land board who must be informed and they must consent for all land transactions except those specifically excepted from the requirement by the Act.

Mr Speaker, in addition to ensuring that land transactions are always within its control of the land board, other factors that land boards consider before issuing a consent for change of land use, include payment of lease rentals, land disputes and other matters which are critical to ensuring that the transactions are smooth.

Mr Speaker, the submission to the District Council is for the Physical Planning Committee to assess the submission for compliance with District Development Plans and other planning instruments and parameters. The District Councils draw their authority from Section 5 of the Town and Country Planning Act of 2013. Following the approval for change of land use, the applicant must submit to the land board for issuance of a new land title reflecting the new land use.

Mr Speaker, the ministry and the Government at large has embarked upon land tenure reforms since independence through policy and legislative changes. The latest being the change from customary land grant to a Deed of Customary Land Grant which offers registered user rights. Tribal Land belongs to Botswana and any reform must reflect the wishes and aspirations of the nation and strike a balance between addressing costs and guarding against loss of proper governance in the land space. I thank you.

**MR NKAWANA:** Supplementary. Thank you Mr Speaker. Thank you Honourable Minister. Perhaps Botswana could have heard what you are saying they should do if you could have responded in Setswana.

Since you often tell us that you are one Government Honourable Minister, if and when I submit an application at one of your departments, lands or whichever, why can you not transfer it to the responsible department instead of the applicant having to run between the two departments? This often takes time as the applicant would be taken from pillar to post by land board, Kgosi and others? Since you are one Government, is it difficult for you to transfer the application to your other departments? Thank you.

**DR MZWINILA:** Thank you Mr Speaker. It is true that we are one Government but our regulations vary per department. The procedures are aligned with expertise and competences of those departments. For example, land boards are mandated with the Tribal Land Act and not Physical Planning or Town and Country Planning Act. Town and Country Planning have their own Act just as Deeds has Deeds Registry. Perhaps coming together in one place cannot work for us since we want certain experts to deal with certain Acts. Thank you Mr Speaker.

#### FREQUENT POWER CUTS IN THE NATA-GWETA CONSTITUENCY

**MR P. MAJAGA (NATA-GWETA):** asked the Minister of Minerals and Energy to state: (i) if he is aware of the frequent power cuts in the Nata-Gweta Constituency;

- (i) if it is mandatory for his ministry to provide electricity for Botswana in the Nata-Gweta Constituency or his ministry is doing them a favour;
- (ii) what action has been taken to assist the Botswana Power Corporation (BPC) in Nata since power cuts occur every year during rainy season;
- (iii) what plans are in place to have a permanent solution for power cuts not to occur in future;
- (iv) if he is aware of the damage caused by power cuts on electrical appliances;
- (v) if he is aware of the impact of power cuts on the businesses in the Nata-Gweta Constituency especially butcheries; and
- (vi) if there is any provision to compensate for business losses caused by power cuts.

**MINISTER OF MINERALS AND ENERGY (MR MOAGI):** Good afternoon Mr Speaker and thank you



for this opportunity. Let me quickly answer it because it was asked in English, it might be difficult to find some equivalent words in Setswana.

- (i) Botswana Power Corporation (BPC) has confirmed that the Nata-Gweta area was affected by three unplanned power interruptions in the period from January 2024 to March 2024. These interruptions were caused by a severe thunderstorm and road traffic accidents. The interruptions experienced were as follows;
  - (a) On 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024, power supply to Sowa Town was interrupted due to a severe thunderstorm and lightning, which caused extensive damage to the bulk supply substation equipment at Botash Mine. Repair works lasted for two days due to the extent of the damage, and power supply was restored on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2024.
  - (b) On 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024, a mine truck hooked onto the 33kV power line supplying Nata and surrounding areas, thereby causing extensive power line damage. Power supply was restored on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024.
  - (c) On 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024, another truck hooked onto an overhead power line causing a power cut, which was cleared the same day.
  - (iv) It is mandatory for BPC to supply adequate, reliable and safe electricity to all customers in the country. The power cuts experienced in the Nata-Gweta Constituency are attributed to events beyond BPC's control. It is the role of my ministry to ensure that BPC carries out its mandate effectively and to support the Corporation accordingly.
- (iii & iv) A number of measures are being implemented to enhance the reliability of supply in the Nata-Gweta Constituency. These include:
  - (a) Carrying out preventative maintenance, which includes tree management and the replacement of rotten poles.
  - (b) Using concrete poles on the Nata-Gweta overhead powerline, which are durable in place of wooden poles.
  - (c) Relocating the high-voltage transmission 132kV substation from the Botash Mine area to avoid equipment pollution and corrosion and to enhance operational efficiency.

- (d) Installing a lightning mast and surge diverters to reduce the probability of direct lightning strikes on power infrastructure.
- (v) The ministry and BPC are aware of the detrimental effects of power cuts on electrical equipment and business operations, including the associated loss of production and revenue. BPC always endeavours to supply reliable power to minimise the adverse effects of power cuts on equipment and business operations.

However, it should be appreciated that certain incidents causing power interruptions, such as adverse weather and third-party damage to power infrastructure, are unavoidable. Therefore, customers are advised to install protective devices to safeguard their equipment against power surges, and businesses are encouraged to install backup power supply systems where feasible to mitigate the risk of power cuts.

- (vi) As already mentioned, the ministry and BPC acknowledge the detrimental impacts of power cuts on electrical appliances. Customers are advised to install surge diverters to safeguard their appliances from uncontrollable power surges.

BPC does not provide compensation to customers for business losses or equipment damage resulting from power failures, except in cases where negligence on the part of BPC is proven.

Customers who believe that BPC is responsible for damage to their equipment due to power cuts are encouraged to file claims with BPC for investigation and determination of liability. It is important to note that BPC will not compensate customers for indirect losses. I thank you Mr Speaker.

#### USE OF CONCRETE POLES

**MR J. L. THIITE (GHANZI NORTH):** asked the Minister of Minerals and Energy if he is aware that whenever there are veld fires in some areas, electricity timber poles are burnt resulting in some villages enduring days without electricity supply; if so:

- (i) when will his ministry consider using concrete poles in veld fire prone areas as a long term solution taking into account their superior fire rating and other factors compared to timber and steel poles; if not, what is the position in this regard; and





- (ii) to elaborate on the Expression of Interest (EOI) 3531/19 concerning the establishment of a manufacturing plant for the production, supply, and delivery of concrete poles and cross arms to BPC.

**MINISTER OF MINERALS AND ENERGY (MR MOAGI):** Thank you again Mr Speaker.

- (i) BPC has started using concrete poles in its infrastructure to replace the current wooden poles. Due to the high cost of concrete poles, they are installed as a phased project which started in the swampy areas and will continue to other areas to include those that are prone to veld fires.

The installation of concrete poles along critical lines such as the Nata-Gweta 33KV line and Mahalapye to Shoshong line demonstrates the proactive measures being taken by the ministry and BPC to address the challenges posed by veld fires and other issues in certain areas of Botswana.

- (ii) The Corporation decided to cancel Expression of Interest 3531/19 and pursue a different strategy for its implementation. Despite BPC being the primary consumer of concrete poles and cross arms in Botswana, the decision was made to involve the Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC), a Government entity responsible for investment promotion, in driving this initiative. The rationale behind this decision was to provide support to qualifying citizen potential investors by offering funding and mentoring services.

This strategic shift has proven successful, as numerous local companies have expressed interest and are progressing at different stages of construction. This development indicates a promising future for the local production of concrete poles. BPC anticipates that by the end of the year, concrete poles will be manufactured in Botswana. This initiative is expected to stimulate economic growth, create job opportunities and ensure a consistent supply of concrete poles tailored to the specific requirements of Botswana's electricity network which BPC will support in a competitive bidding to any local supplier.

In the lead is a local company which has already set up a manufacturing plant in the Metsimotlhabe and Mogoditshane area and it is undergoing concrete poles certification process with Botswana Bureau of Standards

(BOBS). Thereafter, the company will be better placed to compete as a local supplier to BPC through its tender and procurement process. I thank you Mr Speaker.

**MR NKAWANA:** Supplementary. Thank you Mr Speaker and the Minister wherever he is. If the Minister makes a comparison between production of cement and poles for electricity connection, does he assume that concrete is a non-pollutant as compared to something that is biologically produced? Can you please tell me which one has a negative impact on the environment? Thank you.

**MR MOAGI:** Thank you Speaker. Everything is assessed before it is used. There is nothing that does not have problems, be it a wooden pole or concrete. All these are assessed to identify a better one, looking at the quality or life-span and environmental pollution and funds used on such developments. We ended up concluding that assessments and experiments should be performed and it showed that concrete is better and it would also reduce accidents which are caused by wooden electricity poles that fall and cause fires when the wood is rotten. Those assessment were made for us to end up using concrete poles. Thank you Mr Speaker.

#### **THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN RURAL SCHOOLS**

**MR M. REATILE (JWANENG-MABUTSANE):** asked the Minister of Education and Skills Development to apprise this Honourable House on basic education in the country and to state:

- (i) how the ministry is working to improve the quality of education and learning in rural schools in Thankane, Mahotshwane, Kanaku and Itholoke; and
- (ii) if there are specific programmes aimed at addressing the unique challenges faced by students, teachers and schools in these rural areas to ensure that they have access to a quality education.

**ASSISTANT MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (MS MAKWINJA):** Thank you Mr Speaker, good afternoon. Thank you Honourable Reatile for the question.

- (i) Mr Speaker, the ministry has introduced language policy which is geared towards assisting learners in primary schools with mother tongue. This is aimed at ensuring that learners grasp content and



are able to relate with real life situations easily. It is worth mentioning that my ministry has employed teacher aides who are proficient in the local language to assist teachers during teaching and learning, through the use of the mother tongue.

My ministry also uses Pupil's Academic Empowerment Strategy (PAES) to enhance teaching and learning not only in the mentioned schools, but countrywide. This is why content is made available to learners and thus they can manipulate what they want to learn, which includes questions and answers as well as making learning relevant, concrete and interesting using various learning styles (pedagogies). In a nutshell Mr Speaker, through PAES learners are in control of their learning, something which we are advancing following the introduction of the Outcome Based Education (OBE).

Mr Speaker, my ministry is also strengthening the implementation of breakthrough to Setswana. This improves literacy as learners become more independent and can read as well as write without challenges. Mr Speaker, my ministry is also reviving the remediation and enrichment programme and to date we have seen implementation in about 300 schools, both primary and secondary.

- (i) Mr Speaker, my ministry has specific programmes geared towards ensuring that there is access to quality education by all throughout the country. We have Circles of Support where the entire community and different Government departments play a critical role in ensuring that there are reduced cases of dropouts by supporting learners who might be affected one way or the other. It is also through Circles of Support that we are able to retain learners within our institution, as the entire community will always be in the know of what would be happening to different learners. This is also aimed at providing psychosocial support to both learners and teachers. This programme is aimed at strengthening school community networks, to ensure provision of basic needs and psychological support to orphans and other vulnerable children, so as to enable them to remain in or re-enter the school system to realise their rights. We also have school intervention teams, which are aimed at providing academic support to learners who have been screened and assessed with the view to enhance teaching and learning in our schools. I thank you Mr Speaker.

**MR REATILE:** Supplementary. Thank you Mr Speaker. Thank you Minister for your answer. Regarding the language policy issues, maybe they have not told you Minister because I am not aware of the person who made the order. In Konkwa to be specific, that is where learners could be taught in Sekgalagadi and it was commenced. The teacher who was teaching in Sekgalagadi has been transferred. There is no longer language policy implemented in Konkwa. When you request for a report from the District, it will tell you that implementation of language policy is ongoing in Konkwa. Please give yourself time and go to Konkwa to see what is happening on the ground. Nothing is happening but the report you are given every time is that in Konkwa learners are taught using mother tongue.

Secondly, Minister I want to know how you are going to improve educational performance for settlements I have just mentioned and others if you appoint teachers as temporary teachers then they take two to three months without salaries. How can that teacher produce quality education that you just mentioned? Often, our schools do not perform well because we do not have teachers that have a ministry that is taking care of them to ensure that their welfare comes first. What they receive are lashes about poor academic performance when there is no one that is lashing you for failing to pay teachers. Why are you not paying teachers Minister, because the matter that I am mentioning currently is from Kanaku? I even reported it to your ministry during Teacher's Day celebration that was celebrated at the Big Valley. Even up to now they have not yet been paid. Minister, where do you want people to report? Thank you.

**MS MAKWINJA:** Thank you Mr Speaker. I will visit Konkwa Honourable Member, but I believe that this problem is not only at Konkwa.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** It is not only Konkwa.

**MS MAKWINJA:** We will try to follow it up, to find out what is causing the problem because teachers were trained to implement the language policy. We did what we did but currently there is a challenge and we need to do a follow up and we will do that Honourable. I remember we have been discussing the issue of temporary teachers since this House commenced, and it still currently stands. I am very disappointed that we are still talking about this issue Honourable Member. It is one of the issues that we are discussing on daily basis but we will do a follow up on them Mr Speaker. They contribute a lot to the results that we have right now,



because you cannot have a teacher that is not paid for two to four months and expect them to provide quality education. Thank you.

**MR LEUWE:** Supplementary. Thank you Mr Speaker, good afternoon. Minister, when you responded I heard you praising these Circles of Support that it is of assistance, maybe you should clarify where they are helping because in my constituency, the Circles of Support disappeared long ago in my constituency. The challenge was that you failed to support them to implement Circles of Support. Perhaps you should explain the kind of support you offer so that they can take these dropouts back to school. I thank you.

**MS MAKWINJA:** Thank you Mr Speaker. I take it that I explained yesterday that we come up with policies, programmes and other strategies to support them. You will note that in areas where Circles of Support is utilised, both teachers and the community joined forces to assist learners and it is very effective. The unfortunate thing is that service delivery is a problem in most of our schools. It seems to be a challenge for whatever reason. However, I am aware that primary schools are doing their best. You will find a situation where they use their private cars since they lack vehicles more especially to fetch learners in rural areas. We are dealing with such challenges; you will find them helpless due to shortage of resources. It is the honest truth Mr Speaker and it is very crucial for us to ensure that not only do we come up with these programmes but they are implemented. The unfortunate thing is that they are never implemented in most cases and schools end up performing poorly as a result. I thank you.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** Further supplementary Mr Speaker.

**MR SPEAKER:** I had said it was the last one.

#### MACHANENG DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL OFFICES

**DR K. GOBOTSWANG (SEFHARE-RAMOKGONAMI):** asked the Minister of Agriculture to update this Honourable House on the state of the Machaneng District Agricultural Offices; he should specifically state:

- (i) if he is aware that the offices have been declared environmentally inhabitable for continued use; and
- (ii) whether there are plans to construct new offices indicating timelines.

**ASSISTANT MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (MR MOLEBATSI):** Thank you Mr Speaker. I had agreed with the mover of the question not to present today, nonetheless, I will respond.

- (i) My ministry is aware of the state of Machaneng District Agricultural Offices and the fact that the offices have been declared environmentally unfit for continued use. To this end, plans have been put in place for the provision of decent working conditions to Machaneng Agricultural Staff.
- (ii) Mr Speaker, plans for the construction of Machaneng District Agricultural Offices are being undertaken as I speak, with the prioritisation of Machaneng Offices in the budget for this financial year 2024/2025. A team will be sent to the site sometime in the next months (August and September) in order to establish the suitability for construction of new offices. In the meantime Mr Speaker, my ministry is looking into procuring porta cabins for temporary relief while a more permanent solution is being undertaken. I thank you Mr Speaker.

#### WILDLIFE COMPENSATION RATES

**MR T. B. LUCAS (BOBONONG):** asked the Minister of Environment and Tourism to update this Honourable House on the following:

- (i) review of compensation rates for damages caused by wildlife;
- (ii) review in compensable species and plants/crops;
- (iii) compensation rates for persons killed by wildlife; and
- (iv) estimated time frame for the completion of the compensation review exercise.

**MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM (MR MTHIMKHULU):** Thank you Mr Speaker.

- (i) Mr Speaker, my ministry is in the process of developing a National Human-Wildlife Strategy that will be aimed at dealing with the human-wildlife matter in a holistic manner. The strategy will include the review of the compensation rates. To that end, consultations are ongoing throughout the country to get views from Batswana on sustainable way of dealing with the human-wildlife conflict as compensation alone is not a solution.





- (ii) The development of the strategy is a result of a resolution following the National Pitso on Human-Wildlife Conflict that was hosted by the Government in October, 2023. To this end, my ministry is undertaking the development of the strategy in partnership with a team of experts from the University of Botswana. The consultations are expected to be completed by end of August, 2024.
- (iii) Furthermore Mr Speaker, the Government of Botswana declared 2023/2024 an extreme arable agricultural drought year, through Presidential Directive Cab 15(a)-2023/2024. Among the approved measures is the review of compensation schedule and market rates of properties destroyed by animals. The Affirmation National Strategy to manage human-wildlife conflict will include the review of wildlife species to be compensated for and the rates for crops, livestock and property.
- (iv) Mr Speaker, my ministry has been paying P70, 000 as ex gratia payment for loss of lives due to dangerous animals as defined in the Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act of 1992. Though the human life is incalculable and has no value attached to it, the above ex gratia value will be reviewed. Mr Speaker, the review of wildlife compensation rates for damages caused by wildlife is expected to be completed in the near future. I thank you Mr Speaker.

**MR LUCAS:** Supplementary. The issue of the review of compensation rates for damages caused by wildlife came to Parliament in 2019. Several Honourable Members more especially for North West and Kgalagadi sides complained much about it. Your predecessor told us that the review has been done and they are only left with sourcing funds. Honourable Member, are you aware of this point, they promised us that the review is completed but it is like you are taking us back to the review.

Secondly, since you are new in office, are you aware that when a donkey has been killed by a wild animal, compensation is P70? Are you aware of this since you have been at the Office of the President (OP)? Do you know that the owner get compensated with P157 if their goat is killed by a wild animal? If not, do you not think farmers are poor because wild animals which accumulate wealth for Botswana actually kill their livestock?

Thirdly, you will note that hyena cause the most damage. Hyena, baboon and kudu cause damage at an alarming

rate in Tsetsebjwe. So Minister, are you aware that these wild animals are not part of compensable species? Do you not think it is important to include them as well as speed up the process and stop telling us that the review is nearing completion? That is quite worrying Honourable Minister.

Lastly, if a person has been killed by an elephant or any wild animal, you are saying compensation is P70, 000. I wonder how much an elephant costs. Can we not have a situation where if a person has been killed by an elephant, compensation is calculated based on the value of two, three or four elephants at least because human life is incalculable? Thank you sir.

**MR MTHIMKHULU:** Honourable Lucas asked a lot of questions at once, so I do not know where to begin and end.

On the point that you were once promised that a review has been done by Honourable Kereng who is not here today, if that is what she said, I cannot deny that statement. What you need to understand is that currently consultations are ongoing. Maybe you could have stood up and said, 'Honourable Mthimkhulu, that is not true because there are no ongoing consultations'. Again, we gave you a timeline that we want them to be finalised by August 2024. That is, next month before Parliament adjourns, it would be finalised. That is... (Inaudible)... consultations because they are not there, so you are not telling the truth, there is nothing like that.

On the second one you asked; I believe it is on compensation for donkeys and goats. In the body of my answer, I said these things are being considered for review or improvement. However, you were not satisfied with my response and you rose up and changed how you asked it. It is just that you want to be heard speaking and there is no problem.

**MR LUCAS:** I want to be heard speaking because I am representing people and they need to hear.

**MR MTHIMKHULU:** No, they do not understand you because you are misleading them. When the answer is straight, deal with the answer that is clear and straight.

On the question you asked regarding why the person cannot be compensated with the price of three elephants; no that is not how it is. The answer provided is that Government pays ex gratia. Do you know what ex gratia means? It refers to benevolence, goodwill of the payer. So now you want to compare that 70,000 payment with



the price of an elephant. That is why I am saying you want to be heard speaking but you are not speaking things which are straight forward.

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

**MR MTHIMKHULU:** On the one for hyenas.

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

**MR MTHIMKHULU:** No, he might rise up and object. He knows what I am referring to.

On hyenas Honourable Lucas, we have explained in the body of my answer that we assess how we will compensate people whose property got damaged by wild animals. Why can you not be patient and wait for this review? We are going to bring it back to Parliament and you will assess if it is satisfactory or not. Something is being done. That is what the answer says. Do not be impatient. I gave you the month of August 2024, wait until August 2024 and that is when you can come here and say, 'Honourable Mthimkhulu, you said the study is complete. Where is it?'

Lastly Honourable Lucas, the Government funds that they are talking about are not enough. They are shared among things which are important to the nation. They are different from the funds from Labour which are supposedly squandered by the leader or are you part of that? People who squander funds carelessly think that they are easily available. Thank you Mr Speaker.

**MR LUCAS:** Further supplementary. Mr Speaker, just recently His Honour the Vice President (VP) advised us that we should address Honourable Mthimkhulu mindfully that maybe he is not well.

**LEADER OF THE HOUSE (MR TSOGWANE):** Point of order Mr Speaker. No, that is not what I said Honourable Lucas, do not misquote me. I said since this is a long question, Honourable Mthimkhulu pleaded that the question was long and he needed to write it down. I then said we must consider that if a person is wearing a mask because they are unwell and asks that you bring a written answer since it is long, that should be considered. So, that is all I was saying Honourable Lucas. I did not mean for you to follow those issues.

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

**MR LUCAS:** There is no problem because we are saying the same thing. Mr Speaker, have you noticed that despite wearing the mask, he is still provocative?

He is provoking and accusing us of squandering Labour Party funds. Mr Speaker, you heard him and you did not admonish him.

Honourable Mthimkhulu, the question that you did not answer is that, do you realise that your tardiness when it comes to reviewing compensation continues to impoverish Batswana whose livestock were killed by wildlife which also contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)? Do you realise that the promise you have been making since the beginning of 2019 until now has cost Batswana income from their livestock that was killed by wildlife? Do you acknowledge that? You have to acknowledge that, it seems you are denying.

Secondly, he is saying we think funds are readily available but that is not true. Honourable Mthimkhulu, there is a statement making the rounds, particularly this year that funds are available and are labelled different names; *mokgokolosa*, *mopumpunyego* and *magokaganyane* (denotes excess funds). Therefore, we want to understand when funds are available and when they are not. When they are supposed to be availed to assist Batswana like those whose livestock has been killed by wildlife, they are not available but when they are supposed to be used somewhere during elections, it is available in excess. Honourable Minister, please focus on these issues seriously and stop playing.

**MR MTHIMKHULU:** Mr Speaker, the way the question is asked shows that it is very irrelevant and embarrassing. I do not know whether the Honourable Member thought thoroughly about the kind of question he is going to ask. That is why I am saying they are squandering Labour funds.

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

**MR MTHIMKHULU:** You should oust the person who is squandering them.

**MR LUCAS:** Point of order. Mr Speaker, this man continues to provoke me but you are not doing anything about it. Right now he is accusing us of squandering Labour funds but I asked a question in relation to compensation for people that incurred damage due to wildlife. Since he knows that he is not telling the truth, why can you not ask him to withdraw that statement that we are squandering Labour funds since it is irrelevant and untrue? I am not sure if this man is fine, are you really fine?

**MR SPEAKER:** Order! Order! Honourable Members, Honourable Mthimkhulu, no, Honourable Minister. You





must answer the supplementary question. As for your funds issues with Honourable Lucas, you can address them outside. Here we do not know anything about it, whether there is money or no money, you are putting us in trouble that we know nothing about. If you can answer his other questions and not talk about money, we will make headway.

**MR MTHIMKHULU:** I will not talk about the money for Labour, but Botswana Congress Party (BCP) members are complaining, they told me. I know some of them, they are my friends. Others are telling us that money is being spent by the BCP management.

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

**MR LUCAS:** Point of order. You just warned Honourable Mthimkhulu against talking about this issue then he repeats it. I do not know whether he heard you or not. One day a breathalyser should be brought here because the way this man is being warned without understanding, maybe he drank something. Please reprimand him for the second time, if he still does not listen you should remove him from this House Mr Speaker.

**MR SPEAKER:** ...(Laughter!)...Where is the other money coming from?

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

**MR SPEAKER:** Honourable Mthimkhulu, we are talking about compensation for damage caused by wild animals only, not donations, we do not know of such.

**MR MTHIMKHULU:** We are slow on this issue Honourable Lucas, review of the compensation of people whose property was damaged by wild animals. We took action; if you look at the answer we gave today, it gave timeframes. This shows that Government was listening to Batswana when they were appealing during the Constitutional Review, that is why we took the initiative to move forward because Batswana point out that the compensation they are given is not sufficient and does not correspond with what they lost. It is underway.

I am repeating myself, wait for end of August Honourable Lucas for consultations can be completed so that we see the recommendations because our parents and friends have also lost their property. We wish the compensation they are given to be better. I believe that I answered your question, I do not know which I have left out.

**MR NKAWANA:** Supplementary. Thank you Mr Speaker. Since we are hearing from the policy that there are animals that you cannot just kill, you can kill them in self-defence or protection of property, what are you doing Honourable Minister so that Batswana can get in a position to protect themselves without destroying the animals? We know that not everyone has access to guns, it means there is something you can do for Batswana so that they can be able to defend themselves and protect their property without destroying the animal or the animal destroying them. Thank you.

**MR MTHIMKHULU:** Honourable Nkawana, we made guidelines that relate to small predators, we realised that small predators are damaging people's property. They are available, in use. The Director of Wildlife, in my ministry, Deputy Permanent Secretary went to the radio stations to educate Batswana about the new guidelines. The new guidelines show that if you see that there is a fox in close proximity to the farm, ranch or farmland where you are keeping your livestock as a Motswana, you have the right to chase it away and or kill it within a 5 kilometres (km) radius of where you are providing water to your livestock, at your farm or farmland.

So we have already taken steps as a Government to address that issue. We do not just wait for the animals to come and kill Batswana's livestock or injure them. Batswana can take proactive steps to do that. We also encourage them to report the animal skins at wildlife, so that they can keep them and make things that they can sell from the animal skins of these predators. So we have addressed it, you must acquaint yourself with the guidelines that I am talking about. You will see that your question was totally unnecessary for today.

**MR KEORAPETSE:** Further supplementary. Honourable Mthimkhulu, thank you for your answers Honourable Minister. When looking at the 2020 statistics that highlight the tourists that came to Botswana, they are 328 500. Maybe I should have commenced my question by indicating that the idea we have long sold to you for many years that when Government established Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (MVA), it wanted to reduce the burden on the fiscals in compensations for people who are involved in motor vehicle accidents, so equally, can there be an initiative akin to MVA to try and reduce the burden on the fiscals so that when there are compensation issues for animals that damaged people's property, Government taps on that existing fund.

So when you take the 328 500 that came to Botswana in 2020, if you maybe collected P100 from each one



of them, you are talking about P32 million plus, that you can use for compensation. Is it an idea that you have considered or you reject it? I know that in the past Ministers that held your portfolio were saying it is something that they are thinking about. So I do not know if it is something you are considering; some kind of a scheme that would reduce the burden on the fiscals.

**MR MTHIMKHULU:** Thank you Honourable Keorapetse. You see, this is the problem with questions being written for you then it is said go and ask like this Honourable Keorapetse.

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

**MR MTHIMKHULU:** Even if something is not in the topic, you are just going to ask because Mr Ndaba wrote the question for you.

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

**LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (MR KEORAPETSE):** Point of order. I think in the House, we are very considerate of Honourable Mthimkhulu. The reason why compensation is low is because it is a burden on the fiscals. So in the past we proposed that can the same idea that led to the set-up of MVA be used to set up a special fund for compensation for damages caused by wildlife, that is all I am asking. I do not know how irrelevant can that be to you when we are talking about compensation that Batswana are having their property damaged but the compensation is too little. Has time not come to collect money from tourists that will compensate Batswana? That is the question I am asking. It cannot be irrelevant, but we understand your situation.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** What is wrong with him?

**MR MTHIMKHULU:** Do not worry. His face is changing, it is getting darker.

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

**MR MTHIMKHULU:** If you were as light-skinned as I am and experienced such a change, it would be advisable to consult a doctor Honourable Kapinga.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** Honourable Mthimkhulu. I am on Acnotin and my dermatologist is Dr Hirschfield.

**MINISTER OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP (MR GARE):** Procedure. Mr Speaker, I do not deny that

we occasionally exchange remarks in the House or engage in various interactions. However, certain comments, especially those related to health should not be encouraged, whether they come from this side or that side. I implore you Mr Speaker, that while we may make remarks about each other, such as calling someone lazy or using other words, we should avoid discussing health matters. It does not sit well with me. Thank you Mr Speaker.

**MR SPEAKER:** I think you are quite right Honourable Minister. We do not think the same, however, in all honesty, who is amused when someone else is not well? Do you think you are wise to bring that up? Perhaps it is wisdom, however, I do not see it that way.

**MR KEORAPETSE:** Mr Speaker, I wanted to make it clear that I am on a skin medication called Acnotin. So, my face will change and you will notice that. I am seeing Dr Hirschfield, for your own information. Let me just disabuse those who would think that I am undergoing something. I am on a skin medication. Thank you.

**MR MTHIMKHULU:** Have you considered that when you mention 'you are protecting me,' it opens the door to discussing health issues in Parliament? Personally, I do not seek protection; I am fine and not dark-skinned. Now, let us address your question Honourable Keorapetse, about establishing a scheme to cover farmers' losses. I align with previous Ministers in recognising that this idea is not something we can simply adopt without careful consideration. We need to examine it closely and assess how it aligns with the Government's available funds for assisting people. Our ongoing consultations will shed light on this matter. When requests arise for substantial amounts like P1 million, we must scrutinise similar proposals to determine their feasibility in Botswana.

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

**MR MTHIMKHULU:** No, I am not serious, you expressed sympathy towards me. I wonder why you are not sympathetic towards members of the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) who misappropriate the public funds. You are the one who told me.

**MR SALESHANDO:** On a point of order. Mr Speaker, when someone conducts themselves the way Honourable Mthimkhulu is acting, saying things they know to be untrue, should we simply sit back and watch while members of the Domkrag show off, laughing? Or should we stand up for ourselves? Is revenge the appropriate



response? I notice that his party seems content with this behaviour and they are not reprimanding him. I wonder what led him down this path of spreading baseless information, accusing us of theft and repeating it incessantly. Should we remain passive observers or would it be acceptable for me to request a moment to address his statements? What kind of House will this Parliament ultimately become?

**MR SPEAKER:** You are right Honourable Saleshando. That is why I expressed wonder of who could be amused by certain things.

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

**MR SPEAKER:** Honourable Minister Mthimkhulu, you hear the complaints of your fellow Honourable Members. Some of the remarks really do not take us anywhere. The time we have taken on a question, to me, you are quite capable of answering. If you were focused and answered, there would be no issue about that. But now, attacking others will only keep us here all night. You should not do that. Honourable Saleshando is right, Honourable Mthimkhulu's attacks will not help us with anything, you will also request for some time to do that. We can engage in those things elsewhere, but not in the context where we were sent to represent the people. That cannot be. So, let us end this thing here. Going forward, let us avoid unproductive exchanges that lead us nowhere and simply result in provocations. As I said, I thought you have answered the question fairly well.

**LEADER OF THE HOUSE (MR TSOGWANE):** On a point of procedure. I thank you for your reprimand Mr Speaker, a testament of why we put you there. Whenever other Honourable Members identify issues, they should raise their concerns with you, and you should reprimand as you did. It will be unprocedural that when someone expresses their personal view, you then accuse all of us this side of laughing. Members on the other side often make statements and share laughter. Each Honourable Member should be accountable for their own statements. We did not come here with other people's minds; everyone has their own. If someone behaves irrationally, what can we do? If someone is upset due to external factors, how should our party respond? Let us address each individual's statements. Thank you.

**MR SPEAKER:** Order! Order! Honourable Members, let us proceed. The time for questions has long passed. Let us go on to the Second Reading.

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

### Second Reading (Resumed Debate)

**MR SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, the debate on this Bill is resuming. When we adjourned the House yesterday, Honourable Morwaeng was on the floor debating and he is left with nine minutes 13 seconds.

**MINISTER FOR STATE PRESIDENT (MR MORWAENG):** Mr Speaker, I have flu, however, I wanted to deal with this matter before I could excuse myself. Thank you for the moment given Mr Speaker. Honourable Saleshando's request...

**MR TSOGWANE:** On a point of procedure. Thank you. I am reminded by Honourable Morwaeng when he says that he has the flu, and he should make sure to ask for leave of absence. Mr Speaker, some Honourable Members have been answering questions remotely, in line with the procedure that allows them to attend virtually from wherever they are.

Perhaps we should be considerate when it comes to voting and see if we cannot suspend the Standing Order that promotes electronic voting so that they can also be able to vote because they are attending Parliament virtually and we count them as part of the quorum. Maybe when that time comes, see how you can enable them to vote because for all intent and purpose, they are part of the House sitting at that moment as they constitute the House and they are counted on the quorum. That is my point Mr Speaker, I thank you.

**MR MORWAENG:** Thank you Mr Speaker. In that manner Honourable Saleshando, your Bill proposes that ballot papers should be counted in district headquarters. Yesterday I highlighted that ballot papers should be counted at polling districts.

The Honourable Member further went on to say Botswana government signed an agreement with Southern African Development Community (SADC) which says ballot papers will be counted in polling stations. He stated that we have signed agreements with other bodies vowing to do so and I did not disagree with him. I agreed with him that indeed government vowed to count ballot papers in polling stations. The government took that oath looking at certain reasons, and when one binds himself or herself, that does not mean he or she will continue to do





so even when circumstances do not permit. I underlined that Honourable Saleshando's Bill differs with SADC principles. SADC principles that we signed for do not agree with what the Honourable Member proposed in his Bill. He tabled a Bill in Parliament which says that counting ballot papers should be done in polling districts, but we signed a SADC contract which says ballot papers should be counted in polling stations, and we are saying as Honourable Saleshando also attested, circumstances do not allow ballot papers to be counted in certain polling stations.

I plead we should not support Honourable Saleshando because Government believes at the right time, which I believe it is during the next elections, ballot papers are going to be counted in polling stations since the preparations include construction of polling stations where counting of ballots is going to take place; all the necessary preparations are made well in time. One cannot stand here and propose that ballot papers should be counted at polling districts one month before elections. We want to do the right thing Mr Speaker, for ballot papers to be counted at the polling stations but we are not ready at the moment. As for counting ballots at the polling districts, we would be the only country in SADC to do that. Honourable Saleshando's recommendation...

**MR SALESHANDO:** Point of correction. I would like to correct the statement where Honourable Morwaeng says government wants ballot papers to be counted at polling stations and that should ballot papers be counted at polling districts, government would have violated the principles and they do not want to do that. The correction is this, ballot papers for councilors are not counted in polling stations, they are counted in polling districts. It is possible for one to opt to count ballot papers in polling districts instead of polling station. He says they would be violating principles or what they have signed for; you are already doing that. So do not mislead Batswana. The correction is that ballot papers for councilors are already counted in polling districts, and we propose that ballot papers for Members of Parliament should also be counted there. There is absolutely nothing wrong with that.

**MR MORWAENG:** That is what we are saying; we do not support your proposal to have those ones counted at the polling districts. SADC principles emphasize that ballot papers for Councilors and Members of Parliament should be counted at polling stations. That

is the principle. We are simply saying no country in the SADC region counts ballot papers at the polling district. SADC talks about polling stations, so we wish to follow procedures at all times.

**MR SALESHANDO:** Further correction. Mr Speaker, he is saying that there is no country in the SADC region that counts ballot papers in polling districts. The correction I want to make is that, that is happening in Botswana as far as ballot papers for councilors are concerned, they are not counted at the polling station as per SADC principles, they are counted in polling districts. That is my correction, but he keeps going back as if it does not happen anywhere even though it happens even in Molepolole.

**MR MORWAENG:** Please protect me so that I finish my debate Mr Speaker. The Honourable Member here has already aired his view so he should afford me an opportunity to do that as well, to air that he just wants to trick Batswana. We are saying that we do not support his proposal that ballot papers for Members of Parliament should be counted in polling districts, and that is his main concern. We do not agree because this amendment has to be prepared for well in time. Yesterday he ridiculed and said since we are saying voting Members of Parliament makes up government just like Presidential elections, eventually we will say they should be transported to Gaborone where Presidential ballots are counted. That is not right, we do not support that Bill.

Yesterday the Honourable Member said that this is adopted by political parties, including the ruling party. Honourable Saleshando, a political party and a country are two different things. You cannot compare what happens at the political parties with what happens in the country because we did not say, we do not welcome this thing, we welcome it and wish that it could be executed but at the moment, we are not ready or prepared for it...

**MR TSOGWANE:** Clarification. Looking at the allegations that were made yesterday as well as presentation of the Bill, do you not know it is possible for one to agree with a principle only for circumstances to compel you not to do what was agreed upon? Are you not shocked that some of the countries that were cited as good examples here were powerfully disapproved when the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) went for benchmarking there? Today those countries are praised and said to be doing things than others. Are you not shocked by this?



**MR MORWAENG:** Vice President, I am not shocked because I know them. I know these people, they are my fellow countrymen. Botswana, please understand that we are not against Honourable Saleshando's proposal, it is just that we are not ready or prepared enough. Yesterday Honourable Saleshando explained in this very Parliament that he acknowledges that ballot papers cannot be counted in some areas. Botswana should understand this clearly; SADC stresses that ballot papers should be counted in polling stations and not polling districts and our government wishes to move these things close to the people but this requires preparations. We cannot just change the procedure last minute or a month before elections when people are already familiar with voting, how many polling stations are there and other things, that cannot be right. Honourable Members, please let us not support Honourable Saleshando. The same goes for the issues he raised yesterday regarding our discussions at All Party meeting of which I explained that our discussions are different. They then argued like they did here yesterday that I said a Bill is discussed at Parliament, when we come here I say we should discuss it at All Party. Of course I explained that a law is made in Parliament, we can hold discussions at All Party and make proposals then come and discuss them here to enact the law. We respect discussions, we cannot come and discuss the Bill here while discussions are not complete, mind you I am still discussing it with the IEC, that is why we ended up in this situation. Discussions are ongoing but the Honourable Member chose to bring it nonetheless.

Botswana has held a lot of elections, there were fair and protected that is why there are opposition members of different parties. That is why we have the likes of Honourable Saleshando, Honourable Kapinga my brother from another mother. The likes of Honourable Nkawana, just imagine, Honourable Nkawana in Parliament.

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

**MR MORWAENG:** We have the likes of Honourable Nkawana, a fellow Motswana who was voted by his constituents. He was not ruled out just because he is an opposition member...

**MR NKAJANA:** Point of order Mr Speaker. No Mr Speaker, I plead that they should not provoke me just for today. I... because what Honourable Morwaeng is saying is, "just imagine being with a failure in Parliament."

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

**MR NKAJANA:** Are those acceptable words Mr Speaker? Can you please call him to order Mr Speaker? In fact, he should withdraw those words.

**MR MORWAENG:** No, I did not say that and will never say that Honourable Nkawana.

**MR SPEAKER:** They are putting words in your mouth Mokwena.

**MR MORWAENG:** Yes. Honourable Saleshando is talking about transparency. Yes, I still maintain that we have evidence in this Parliament, just look at the number of opposition members we have. If the system was unfair, these opposition members could not be here. There has been changes in the election system over the years; there were observers and so far there has not been any problems. Opposition members are not the only ones who love this country, we all do. Honourable Members, I implore that we do not support Honourable Saleshando's Bill, may God save and protect you.

**MR SPEAKER:** Before I call upon you Honourable Ambassador Kapinga, I want to address the House. You will recall Honourable Members that when you met at the General Assembly, you took certain positions which were then announced in the House. Some of those positions were that, 15 Honourable Members will comment in each Bill. Every member is supposed to debate for ten minutes except for Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the House; nine Honourable Members from the ruling party and six from the opposition. There has been a request that looking at the Order Paper, there are two Bills, one of which we are currently debating, it will be followed by Honourable Leader of the Opposition's; the Electoral (Amendment) Bill. Furthermore tomorrow we start our discussions at 11:00 a.m. The request is, can we not increase the number of speakers during the course of the debate from 15 to a number which may appear reasonable that is of course if time permits. The only other Bills I know which are going to be before the House are the three Bills brought by Honourable Minister for State President Honourable Morwaeng which will be ready on Monday. So, we have today and tomorrow to deal with all these Bills. That was the basis of the request that, can you not consider increasing the number of Honourable Members debating, instead of nine that side... 9, 10, 11, 12 whatever the number. The first question is, since it seems like the number of Bills are not a lot this week, should we not consider favorably to increase the numbers?





It will depend on the time and the progress, we are not going to go beyond Thursday and Friday on the debates from these Bills because we want to then accommodate the upcoming ones. Whatever the numbers we agree to must not go and spill on to Monday at all, because we will obstruct the ones which are scheduled. That is the first question. Can we deal without that one Honourable Members then we can come to the actual numbers if you agree to the concept of increasing, because it looks like we are going to have a little bit of more time. Honourable Leader of the House.

**LEADER OF THE HOUSE (MR TSOGWANE):** To save time, I can see that we are debating at the same time we propose the numbers because if a member stands and supports the principle, we are now going to start to argue on the number, it is time consuming. I think that yes, there can be an increase but in numbers which are really moderate because this is not the only duty that we have. If we save time, Honourable Members has a lot of duties, they always complain that amongst others, they do not have time to read. Right now, there are some Bills which have been noticed, so they would want to go and read those Bills. It gives them time to read and internalise those Bills. So, whatever time we may save it for the interest or in the interest of the Honourable Members to go and make sure that they inform themselves with Bills which have been notified. That is one thing.

The other thing is that yes, we agree as I said earlier but we should also consider this one because it can demotivate a lot of Members if they only join to contribute, but when it comes to voting, they do not vote. That is another thing.

I was proposing Mr Speaker, at the end, it is my own proposal; we can increase with three on both sides, three taking into account the point I just raised that Honourable Members need that time to try and read those that are noticed. The other thing is that Honourable Members, Minister can bring those which are less controversial on the certificate of urgency. Those which are not serious, even if they have not matured because there is that window of certificate of urgency. I thank you Mr Speaker.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you Vice President. I think that is a good forward-looking proposal, a firm one that the idea of increasing figures is right, according to the Leader of the House. Specifically he thinks three, three on both sides, so that we keep the proportion and we still keep our 10 minutes. Any other view, Honourable Ambassador Kapinga.

**MR KAPINGA (OKAVANGO):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I concur with the idea of increasing the numbers, and I believe that even as the Speaker, you can decide that when you check the time and realise that the number that we have agreed on to debate the Bill has exhausted the time, I take it we can agree as Honourable Members that the time has been exhausted and we can be flexible in that manner. So what I am saying is that, the time we have agreed on should not be too mandatory on you. You should be able to say Honourable Members we have exhausted the time even though all of you did not get a change to debate but we will stop.

**MR SPEAKER:** I think you agree with the VP that, that three, three is okay, but if it becomes necessary that we will do more than that, we should stop. Honourable Minister Lelatisitswe.

**ASSISTANT MINISTER OF HEALTH (MR LELATISITSWE):** Thank you so much Mr speaker. Mr Speaker, if you have increased the number of those that debate, please reduce the time to seven minutes. When you are listening, people end up getting on to issues that do not have content on what is being discussed. When we increase the number to three, let us reduce time to seven minutes.

**MR SPEAKER:** What you are doing Honourable Minister, you are introducing a factor which is going to eat on the time which we thought is available for these Bills, that we reduce the minutes. Honourable Member for Okavango Ambassador Kapinga is saying, do not worry about that, these numbers even though three, three, where it is necessary we stop.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** Let us take Honourable Kapinga's, it is okay.

**MR SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition (LOO).

**MR KEORAPETSE (SELEBI PHIKWE WEST):** I support what is being proposed by His Honour the Vice President. We should take note in light of what... I know you have dealt with Honourable Lelatisitswe, that even on other Bills it shows that even us as Members of Parliament we do not show interest in debating the Bills. There is also that aspect, which will also save us a lot of time.

**MR SPEAKER:** So, as I read Honourable Members, we agreed that we increase the numbers of those who take the floor by three, three on the Bill. Despite that agreement, if it becomes necessary we can still stop



before the three, three increment. That is the decision we have reached, that caused the tension. So, the floor is open.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** Procedure Mr Speaker.

**MR SPEAKER:** Procedure, Honourable Minister for State President.

**MINISTER FOR STATE PRESIDENT (MR MORWAENG):** Point of procedure. Mr Speaker, I did not hear you deciding on Your Honour the Vice President's request that those that have logged in who are outside should be allowed to vote. Thank you.

**MR SPEAKER:** No, he requested that one remember quite early on talking about it and I kept quiet deliberately. As far as I understand the Standing Orders, if the voting is like where you say "division" when someone is in Okavango with a dongle, what will they press when they ordered to press 2, there is nothing that they will press. If it is a collection of voices and they can be heard as Honourable Minister Moagi was heard answering questions, the preponderance can be heard. So, I think we can deal with those Standing Orders. You cannot actually carryout even if you agree, what His Honour was proposing. They have to deal with the specific Standing Order.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** If I may Mr Speaker.

**MR SPEAKER:** Yes, LOO.

**MR KEORAPETSE:** It is workable, because what we are doing now is to have a hybrid sitting. In the past when we were using virtual, when taking preponderance of the voice and there was division we had roll call that everyone says "aye" or whatever, then we count. If the preponderance of the voice is not clear, and a division has been called, those that are here can vote in that manner, that this side we have this much and that side it is this much, and those that have logged on use the roll call that this one said yes, the other said no and they are recorded, and combined. I thought we could do it that way, especially that...

**MR SPEAKER:** You know why I am laughing?

**MR KEORAPETSE:** Sir?

**MR SPEAKER:** Do you know why I am laughing saying "hii, hii!"

**MR KEORAPETSE:** No.

**MR SPEAKER:** It is because you are missing the point.

**MR KEORAPETSE:** Sir?

**MR SPEAKER:** You are missing the point; the fundamental point is, there are rules which dictate how you are going to vote.

**MR KEORAPETSE:** Oh yes.

**MR SPEAKER:** Yes. I do not know that...

**MR KEORAPETSE:** Do you mean that I missed that part?

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

**MR SPEAKER:** Let me tell you VP, the standing Order which I dislike, I dislike that rule which states that, when you get the final voting, we use these things. As I thought what was the basis of that, maybe then we decide that, we will not force anyone who is shy to heard saying "no". So they should just press silently, they will see the results and get the shock of their lives. So, when you go and change that, you have to vote consciously that you want to suspend that Standing Order, so you will now know those who did not want people to know how they voted. It is not just simple, I did not think the rules were changed simply to facilitate these things, it was an idea that let us just vote privately and everyone should do it according to their conscience. As I say, let us deal with that one when we get to it, think about how to deal with that Standing Order. If you want it to be opened of course it is the decision of the House, but think about it before we reach that stage, and decide.

**MR KAPINGA:** Thank you Mr Speaker. I would also like to comment on the Bill brought in by Honourable Saleshando, whose aim is to bring transparency in our electoral process. The purpose of this amendment is to increase credibility, and bring hope to electorates in the running of elections. Mr Speaker, elections belong to voters not the Government, elections belong to Batswana who vote for the Government they want. They do not want any suspicion in the running of election. The Minister who was on the floor, says there is no rigging on elections because we are present in Parliament as Opposition Parties Members. I want to tell you that, even in Zimbabwe there are Opposition Parties Members in Parliament. Your friends from IEC who went to benchmark from them, boasted saying their elections were transparent, while there were condemned by all countries that went to observe those elections.



They were even condemned by SADC, an organisation which we are members of as Southern African countries. Shockingly, your friends praise Botswana for being good at running elections that observers are here to benchmark. Sir, having Honourable Members in this Parliament does not mean you are good at running the elections.

**MR RAMOGAPI:** Elucidation. Thank you Mr Speaker. That is an excellent debate Honourable Kapinga. The major issue here is that, countries across the globe criticise that country for the unfair election process, yet our country celebrated and went there to benchmark. You must emphasise this issue.

**MR KAPINGA:** Yes, you remind me of someone who sent a message to me yesterday saying that the Government of Botswana commend South Africa for running their elections smoothly and also became the first country to commend Zimbabwe and President Mnangagwa for the same, highlighting that it is a sign that indeed Zimbabweans trust him. How can Government of Botswana congratulate him for winning the elections when other countries condemn him for the unfair election process? I wondered the kind of Government we have, but it is clear that you are following the same footsteps of Zimbabwe; you are going to reject all the amendments brought by the opposition which may bring about free and fair elections that Botswana trust and can be commended by other countries. Domkrag should know that Botswana no longer trust them when it comes to running of elections and it seems like you are not aware. You just want to hear your voices telling you that you are doing the right thing while Botswana do not trust your electoral process. I want to tell you that, to build a conducive environment for free and fair elections which can be trusted, you cannot reject the electoral reforms. It is well known all over the world that, Governments that want to be in power ever can be recognised by rejecting the electoral reform. That is one of the hallmarks of a Government who realised that they will lose if they amend the electoral process and that is exactly what you are doing. Botswana no longer trust you, Botswana want the ballots to be counted at polling stations. Let me tell you, this Bill is our effort to give you an opportunity to try something that is easier than counting ballots at polling stations. This thing is similar to an instance where you tell a baby who crawling that, they should run because there is a racing competition for babies, and the baby tells you that they cannot run because they are still at crawling stage. I know you get

my point, that child can take baby steps to reach a certain point but they will not run. So you do not want to take baby steps, you claim that you will wait until you are in a position to run. This is similar to a scenario where a person travels from Nxamasere, 32 kilometres (km) from Shakawe, where you ask them to meet and they tell you that your destination is unreachable. You then tell them that instead of arriving today, you can rest at Xhaoga and proceed to Shakawe tomorrow. Then they tell you that it is impossible that they can only travel when they have sufficient resources to travel straight to Shakawe; my point is, we are trying to break it down for you and make it easier for you. When you refuse and tell us that ballots will be counted at polling districts where Councillors are based, yet this does not happen anywhere in SADC. This is happening in Botswana, ballots for Council candidates are counted in polling districts. So we are saying, the ballots for Parliamentary candidates should be counted at the same place.

**MR KEORAPETSE:** They claim that they are not ready; the question is, what kind of rocket science do they need for this readiness?

**MR KAPINGA:** I do not understand their problem. I am aware that Domkrag is refusing to amend the Electoral Act and they do not have any reason, they are aware that they will lose elections if they can amend it. For this reason, I am convinced that they believe what was once said by one of our late Presidents that, one must never lose elections when they are in charge, that is the kind of psychology I see on the ruling party. They are never going to agree to amend the Electoral Act because they will lose elections. It is clear looking at your actions that your intention is to remain in power at all costs.

Sir, we believe in my constituency that you survive elections by cheating and the cheating you are doing is called vote stuffing. Botswana say they do not know what may happen along the way if boxes are transported from Nxaunxau, 250 km away from Shakawe where ballots for Parliamentary candidates are counted and you refuse to carry your election observers along, and you say they will see how they follow the vehicle carrying the box. We would come up with ideas follow vehicles carrying boxes provided you agree to count ballots at Nxaunxau or Chukumuchu. So it is clear that you are still searching for a loophole through which you can survive by cheating. That is the only reason why you refuse to count ballots even at a lesser standard, polling district. I must tell you that Botswana no longer trust you when it





comes to running the electoral process, you are on your own. Batswana clearly said that during Constitutional Review. You refuse and go on to propose to increase the number of Specially Elected Members to 10 instead of coming up with a regulation that grants us permission to count ballots where Batswana want. I thank you Mr Speaker.

**MINISTER OF YOUTH, GENDER, SPORT AND CULTURE (MR RAKGARE):** Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, let me take this time to thank the people of Mogoditshane West. I was accused for so many things including being wealthy and they were posted on social media where my name was tarnished. This is because I usually advice people to avoid corruption as these things belong to Batswana.

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

**MR RAKGARE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Ramogapi is one of the wealthiest people who accumulated so much but no one talks about him.

I must thank my constituents for not paying attention to the accusations that I am very wealthy because, they have never seen that wealth in me. All those things I was said to possess, they knew what the truth is. Mr Speaker, Mogoditshane constituents did not raise a thief. I therefore want to profusely thank them for voting me again. I am going to defeat my opponents again in October. Botswana Congress Party and Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC), prepare yourselves, if not, I am securing landslide victory. I am informing you in advance. Honourable Saleshando, go and tell your candidate. Honourable Keorapetse, go and tell your party President to inform your candidate, the one that we are still investigating where he comes from that we are going to beat him with a huge margin.

Mr Speaker, let me focus on issues presented before us by Honourable Saleshando. I am surprised by a complaint raised which I do not understand if they suspect that Batswana might have voted in a certain way and results come out different or what. Is their complaint based on the issue of boarding polling agents on the vehicle like Honourable Kapinga said or what? What is the problem here really? If the problem is that you suspect that there is elections rigging, we can discuss and help each other to understand that in Botswana there is no elections rigging. We have a lot of Opposition Members in this House. We also had them in 2014, these were Opposition parties which formed a coalition including

BCP. They managed to win 20 constituencies. The likes of Honourable Wynter Mmolotsi were fortunate. The ones they lost, you could see that the figures were not tampered with. If they did not have constant squabbles, they could have secured the figures that could win that constituency. For example Mr Speaker, in 2009 at Tati West, we had BCP and UDC, Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) won. UDC had 3 506 votes, BCP; 1 671 and the total was more than 5 000. Mr Biggie Butale came to Parliament with 4 510 through the BDP ticket. If it were not for their fights, they could have won. No one tampered with their votes, no one took anything from the Member of Parliament's box. I am just citing one example but I can go back. While we were still young in 1999, we saw...

**MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY (MR SEGOKGO):** Clarification. Thank you Honourable Member. Do you not remember that at some point I pointed at a Member that side who told me that there is no elections rigging in Botswana? They were advising their own to drop the cases because there is no rigging in Botswana.

Secondly, before the ballot box is transported to the counting centre, it is sealed. So how is rigging done if there is a seal? Maybe you can clarify those things.

**MR RAKGARE:** Yes sir, my brother who just finished debating from Opposition side, Honourable Kapinga, the main problem is that, he does not understand where he falls, that is why he is wearing a UDC tie. So this talk cannot surprise you.

**MR KAPINGA:** Point of order Mr Speaker.

**MR RAKGARE:** Okay, a blue tie. I take it back Mr Speaker. I wanted to say it is blue like UDC ties, you will pardon me Honourable Kapinga.

Mr Speaker, let me comment on what Honourable Segokgo said. Independent Electoral Commission says every Member of Parliament candidate can put their seal. That is, BDP can put its seal, UDC can put its own seal and the same goes for BCP. That is how that box will arrive there. Moreover, they check how many ballot papers they were given, how many were used and how many are remaining. During voting and before boxes are collected, observers will be there. So how are Botswana elections rigged or the issue is that, you also want to ride on the vehicle? Since you like complaining



as candidates, eventually you are going to ask to board these vehicles to the counting centres.

**MR SALESHANDO:** Elucidation. Minister of Sports, do you really understand what standards are? If we say there are standards for free, fair and credible elections, do you acknowledge that? Even in sports, if we say there are standards, do you think if one individual can just say, 'I heard but I do not see any cheating, therefore I will not use those standards', will that be acceptable?

**MR RAKGARE:** I thought you were talking about elections outcome. That is the one you have been debating. The one on standards is news to me Honourable Saleshando but...

**MR SALESHANDO:** Correction. Maybe you were not here yesterday when I presented and I do not remember seeing you when I was presenting. Throughout my presentation, I talked about Southern African Development Community SADC-Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) and African Union (AU) standards which Botswana subscribe to. They were developed by organisations overseeing Electoral Boards in Southern Africa and Electoral Institute of Southern Africa. I talked about them and not the outcome. So do not say it is your first time to hear standards mentioned. Just apologise that you were absent and now you have found an opportunity to appreciate Mogoditshane constituents, then I will forgive you.

**MR RAKGARE:** I was here Mr Speaker when Parliament convened. I went away when Honourable Saleshando took the floor because I do not understand what he wants. I did not think it was necessary for me to be around and listen to what he was saying because I do not know what he actually wants. Even though you are talking about standards, the issue is Botswana do not vote for their fights as Opposition. When they speak about Botswana, they should also mention that Botswana despise Opposition fights. It is clear that if they were lucky in 2019, the fight between the UDC President and BCP President, who was his Vice President back then, Government could have collapsed in the hands of Duma Gideon Boko and Honourable Saleshando because it is clear given their separation that they are not in good terms. The relation between Honourable Saleshando and Honourable Keorapetse has gone from bad to worse. If these people were voted, we could be in a terrible situation. So the main point is that, let us acknowledge that the elections of Botswana are safe, results always prove how Botswana voted. We should stop looking for unnecessary things.

Lastly Mr Speaker, some Botswana actually like going to counting centres because they say it gives them an opportunity to congregate and observe counting as it refreshes them. If counting can be done at polling districts, it would now mean that a centre where Central Government votes are counted, we are going to go there to confirm...

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** Point of correction Mr Speaker.

**MR RAKGARE:** Are you correcting what Botswana in my constituency are saying? Is that what you want to correct?

**MR MMOLOTSI:** Correction. The correction I want to make is, he should talk about Botswana in his constituency. He did not say Botswana in his constituency but just Botswana because the Botswana that we know are saying they cannot chase after vehicles transporting ballot boxes, which travel at the speed of 200/300 kilometres to constituency headquarters.

**MR SPEAKER:** Ask him, maybe he is talking to Botswana in Francistown, you can never know.

**MR RAKGARE:** He has no knowledge at all and what he is saying about 200km is false. Francistown is small, the corners connect, he deceived people and they voted for him, then he came here through different parties. So he should not be saying what he is saying now.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion thank you, I do not agree with the Motion.

**MR MMOLOTSI (FRANCISTOWN SOUTH):** Thank you Mr Speaker. Let me highlight from the start that I agree with the Motion that was tabled by Honourable Saleshando in this Honourable House that counting of ballots should be done at polling districts. We know that it is something that is done by many countries. Let me also tell Botswana that all the political parties in Botswana, including the BDP do what Honourable Saleshando says should be done that, ballot counting should be done at polling districts. When it comes to general elections, I want Botswana to wonder why BDP refuses for ballots to be counted at polling stations, what are they afraid of? What makes them to want the ballot boxes to be quickly transported to constituency headquarters? This thing Mr Speaker, can make it possible for the boxes to be switched during transportation like maybe when they are being transported from Sepopa to Shakawe. The ballot boxes





containing Batswana's votes will be replaced with other ballot boxes containing cooked votes. That is the reason I suspect the BDP and Honourable Morwaeng are refusing for counting of ballots to be done at polling district so the ballot boxes can travel a long distance so they can switch the ballot boxes during transportation and put ballot boxes with cooked votes. Otherwise there is no other reason Mr Speaker that can make people who follow this process in their primary elections, to refuse it at the general elections. What are you afraid of, what are you hiding?

Batswana say they want to see counting of ballot boxes done at polling districts in close proximity to them. So they can see, and be happy if it went their way. Why do you want the boxes to be transported? Honourable Rakgare was saying his constituents say they love this process of transporting ballot boxes. I am saying Batswana at Francistown wish that after they vote in Block 1 at Zion Christian Church (ZCC), and at Ikageleng counting should be done at these polling districts, so they can know how many votes the candidates got. Afterwards, those votes will be transported to the constituency headquarters with other votes from other wards and then the votes are added to see how many votes the Honourable Member got. This should not confuse us because it is happening in Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe where you are benchmarking and at Lesotho. So tell me Honourable Morwaeng, why are you refusing for ballot counting to be done at polling districts?

You are shocking because one of the things you are refusing is that ink should not be used in general elections but you use it at BDP so people do not vote many times. Why do you have a problem with doing good things? Do you not see that you are hindering democracy in Botswana? Do you not see that what you are doing is not good for Batswana? You cannot give Batswana a reason to say that elections were rigged when things do not go their way. That is what Batswana will say, Batswana will say that we were cheated because after we voted, our ballot boxes were transported elsewhere. This will cause chaos on Botswana and there was an option to just count the ballots at the polling districts.

Someone was saying that seals are inserted, every party is allowed to bring seals. Let me remind him that the seals are not sourced from heaven, you can go and get similar seals where the parties source their seals, and cut those ones and then put these other ones. You own the businesses and the system, so you can do anything

you want with these seals because when people are full of deceit, they can do anything to conceal their deceit. So Mr Speaker, I implore BDP members that when Batswana request something, we should listen to them.

Currently there is an outcry from Batswana about the pensions that you want to give the President, Vice President, their children and parents. There is an outcry out there, you are not listening to Batswana but they voted for you. Batswana say they want ballot to be counted at polling districts you are refusing, you will continue doing what you want. You do not listen to the very people who voted for you.

Currently you hear that in all the social media platforms Batswana are crying saying Honourable Morwaeng is rejecting Honourable Saleshando's Bill, what you are proposing that, you want to make a pension for the Vice President, you want the spouses of the Presidents, their children even those who are adopted to have benefits, Batswana do not want that to happen but you are continuing with that nonetheless. Why are you doing this to Batswana? Batswana voted for you so you could punish them like this?

Mr Speaker, I request Honourable Rakgare and the BDP members to feel sorry for Batswana because when Batswana say these things, they say it with a heavy heart. We saw last time in Kenya how people react when they are upset. You recall the Financial Bill at Kenya, one of the things it introduced was that offices should be created for the spouses of the Presidents and they should have benefits. Kenyans proactively said that thing is not going to happen. The Government eventually withdrew it. Currently President Ruto dissolved Parliament and he is forming a Government of national unity because Kenyans were saying they are tired, let us separate. So I wish that when Batswana say something Honourable Morwaeng, we should listen to them. We should not stand here and boastfully say this is not wrong...

**MR MOATLHODI:** On a point of procedure. From what I heard Mr Speaker, President Ruto did not dissolve Parliament, he dissolved the Cabinet. The Parliament of Kenya is still alive.

**MR SPEAKER:** That is correction.

**MR MMOLOTSI:** Thank you Deputy Speaker, he dissolved Cabinet. The reason he dissolved Cabinet; he did it because Kenyans were tired that Government was not listening to them. The youth stood up and said this Government is stubborn and does not listen to us,



so we should take control. How you are operating now, you see that you are just using your numbers, you are using force so justice does not prevail in this country and in Parliament. Eventually Batswana will grow tired because you are doing exactly what the Government of Kenya was doing, not listening.

Honourable Morwaeng, I am warning you that Christians will pray for you to lose elections. Christians and Batswana will stand up, they will do everything they can to ensure you do not return to Parliament because of all these evil laws perpetuated by you. You are the one who is bringing these bad laws that are giving Batswana sleepless nights.

**MINISTER FOR STATE PRESIDENT (MR MORWAENG):** Procedure. Mr Speaker, I will not comment on anything else that Honourable Mmolotsi has said, except for the accusation that I bring evil laws to Parliament. These words are unacceptable Mr Speaker. He suggested that Christians should pray for me, implying that he cannot do so himself, perhaps because he is an atheist. However, let me assure you Honourable Member, that God is ultimately in charge. His decisions are not influenced by you Honourable Mmolotsi. We are all here due to a combination of other people's choices and God's will. Honourable Mmolotsi, keep dreaming. I will still be here in October, God willing Honourable Members. It is inappropriate for him to suggest that I am introducing evil laws to Parliament. By insinuating this, he casts a negative light on Parliament. I find it puzzling that, it was Honourable Saleshando who initially proposed this law, he now attributes it to me. I humbly request that we treat one another with consideration and uphold the dignity of Parliament. Addressing each other in the manner the Honourable Member has attempted is unacceptable. Let us show mutual respect and refrain from engaging in confrontations. Such behaviour is out of order Mr Speaker, and merits no pride.

**MR SPEAKER:** Order! Order! Honourable Members, sometimes I do not know what language to use to communicate. There are some remarks which are considered not profitable. They do not yield any results at all. They do not emphasise what you are trying to say. The word Honourable Morwaeng finds unacceptable, is the word you used in describing the law he brings or he is to bring. We can question your intent, because Biblically, Honourable Member, you know that the word you used to refer to the Honourable Minister is objective. It is a clear meaning which you cannot

attribute to somebody who is doing their job in terms of the responsibilities he is given. You can disagree with what they have brought, however, that description is unacceptable Honourable Mmolotsi. As I said, I do not want to repeat that word, my reading of the Bible right from Genesis to Revelation, reveals that there is no context where that word can be used to describe a fellow Honourable Member. Let us move away from it Honourable Member.

**MR MMOLOTSI:** No, Mr Speaker, I withdraw the word "evil." When someone is feeling sad and distressed due to the struggles faced by Batswana, it is understandable that mistakes can occur. Mr Speaker, I withdraw the term 'evil.' Honourable Morwaeng, I apologise for implying that you were introducing evil laws. Allow me to rephrase: you are proposing legislation that has caused concern among the nation. Additionally Mr Speaker, I would like to inform the Domkrag members that the requested action is not overly complicated.

What we are simply asking is that you agree that votes be counted in polling districts. Doing that, will eliminate suspicions of fraud from the nation. It may benefit you as you may no longer be labelled as fraudulent. Counting of votes in polling districts is something which is already being practiced in neighbouring countries. Why do you want to give Batswana a reason to suspect cheating during elections? What impact can arise from this? What will happen if we agree with what Honourable Saleshando has said? That is all I ask, that despite anything, we should face the truth and agree that counting should be done in polling districts. Thank you.

**MR MOATLHODI (TONOTA):** Thank you Mr Speaker. May the peace and mercy of God bless His Excellency the President and the people of this country, thank you sir. Mr Speaker, from the very beginning, elections of this country have always been conducted with precision, they have been well structured and orderly. Since their inception, this country's elections have consistently been conducted with extreme care, adhering to the laws that govern them Honourable Ramogapi. Moreover, these elections are approached with reverential fear, including a fear of God who guides us toward the candidate we should elect.

When this country's elections first began Mr Speaker, both Local Government and Central Government, carried everything to the central counting centre. That is, to spacious halls with adequate lighting facilities, but today some of our rural areas are still without



modern spacious halls. Some of our rural areas are still without lighting facilities. Therefore, Mr Speaker, it remains very important to transport our ballots to counting centres with a view to ensure diligence and accountability. Some 58 years ago...

**MR RAMOGAPI:** Clarification. The idea brought by Honourable Saleshando makes sense. It states that the counting of votes should occur at the same place where votes for councilors are counted, specifically in polling districts with adequate lighting. Considering that not all locations may have sufficient lighting, it is essential to ensure that counting takes place where councilors' votes are also tallied.

**MR MOATLHODI:** You have made your point. If the votes for Members of Parliament in Lecheng, Malaka and Moremi were to be tallied in the same place where councillors' votes are counted, then the whole of Malaka would not fit.

Someone who is familiar with this country, will not argue with me.

Some 58 years ago...

**MR MMOLOTSI:** Point of correction. Mr Speaker, I thought I should correct the statement where Honourable Moatlhodi says the polling district cannot house or take in everyone. I want to correct that the intention was never to build facilities that can house the whole village. The constituency headquarters can also not house the whole Francistown South population. Honourable Moatlhodi, that one is neither here nor there. I thought I should correct it.

**MR MOATLHODI:** Mr Speaker, I am just citing goo-Malaka and goo-Lecheng; Lecheng la ga Mmamadila, where there are no halls similar to halls found in Francistown Senior Secondary School, Shashe River School, or Lotsane. They are just small classrooms which my classmates and I used, but they have not been extended, I am just citing those villages as examples. Those who know this country, will understand me.

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

**MR MOATLHODI:** I was still explaining that some 58 years ago because the ruling and immortal

BDP has ruled this country for 58 years, and we still pray to the mighty God to accord us 58 more years to govern this country. Some 58 years ago only Batswana aged 21 years and above qualified as voters, but as an

on-going development, the voting age has since been reduced to 18 years. Mr Speaker, in Afrikaans we say "*bietjie bietjie maak meer*." Simply put, little by little as well as slow and surely, we shall eventually go to a point whereby all these queries shall be all attended to at one point or another.

Mr Speaker, it is an open secret that IEC ensures and makes it very accurate that every election year comes with more preparedness and faultless running of the elections. So, may all of us as Batswana remain ...

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** Clarification.

**MR MOATLHODI:** I have no time.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** Clarification.

**MR MOATLHODI:** Sorry my Lord, you can take it.

**HIS HONOUR THE VICE PRESIDENT (MR TSOGWANE):** Point of clarification. Sorry to pressurise you when you do not have enough time Honourable Deputy Speaker.

The Honourable Members have been saying that institutions ought to be independent so perhaps you should explain that we have an independent commission that administers elections, and it has been making changes in the past, even before we think of something, they can bring changes which they see important, right? Do they not have the intelligence to see that this is how things should be like? IEC is also aware of the SADC standards.

**MR MOATLHODI:** Thank you your Honour the Vice President.

That is why I am saying that every time when we go for elections, IEC comes with preparedness and faultless running of the elections as compared to the past elections. I therefore plead with Batswana to remain optimistic as well as positive that soon or later, budgetary constraints, complaints or Motions of this nature shall be an issue of the past.

Finally Mr Speaker, allow me to appeal to all the 1 035 900 Batswana who are registered for the general elections of October 2024 to go vote in large numbers, specifically to go vote for the ruling BDP, at all the 61 constituencies, as well as at all wards of this country because His Excellency the President of this country Dr Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe-a-Setlhomo-a-Masisi-a-Efe-a-Mosielele remains the only President throughout





the African continent who has and continues to perform so excellently and above reproach.

Therefore, it is only befitting that Batswana accord him his second as well as last term. I am appealing to all churches in Botswana to pray for the elections of this country every Sunday. Starting from October 1<sup>st</sup> they should pray for elections every day because there is a Setswana idiom which says, "*phokojwe o o dihetsenyana re a bo re sale re mmone.*" Ministers are tarnished and alleged to be presenting evil laws and this is not all, their hearts are heavy, they are inciting the people of this country, and I pray that God who led us, saved our leaders and protected our country could make people who make all these allegations lose elections and afford victory to Domkrag. I thank you Mr Speaker.

**ASSISTANT MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (MS MAKWINJA):** Thank you Mr Speaker. I thank Honourable Members who exceptionally debated before me.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Morwaeng presented this Bill exceptionally well and he further stated that the issue is going to be discussed at the All Parties Conference on the 8<sup>th</sup> August. I do not know if debating it further when we are waiting for the outcomes of the ongoing consultations benefits us Mr Speaker. If it were according to me Mr Speaker, we could be waiting for 8<sup>th</sup> of August because we will still be here in Parliament by then, so that if there is need to review the Bill, we can do so with detailed information.

We are here debating this matter and time is moving, yet we could be debating other Bills as this one would perhaps be closer on 8<sup>th</sup> August. Mr Speaker, Honourable Rakgare and Honourable Moatlhodi commented on this issue remarkably, that we should perhaps debate it after the 8<sup>th</sup> of August. This is just an idea but I was hoping that we could wait for the 8<sup>th</sup>...

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

**MS MAKWINJA:** The All Parties Conference would have taken place.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** Yes.

**MS MAKWINJA:** Yes, Honourable Morwaeng remarkably highlighted that they are going to meet on the 8<sup>th</sup>, and perhaps they are going to conclude it. We are just here debating but we do not know what the 8<sup>th</sup> of August has in store for us but it seems like in principle all of us in this House, agree. It seems like principle...

**MR TSOGWANE:** Point of clarification. You are debating brilliantly and what you are saying is very logical because initiators of this Bill focused on the fact that negotiations that you are talking about were once held and the Honourable Member is expected to avail feedback from that meeting. They attend meetings and then come back here to table a Motion turning a blind eye to the ongoing negotiations which are to continue on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Is this not some sort of dishonesty? Are we going to sit here and listen to people quoting the meeting and saying different things? Honourable Wynter Mmolotsi argues that the subject has never been debated there. They did not inform us that he was absent on the day. I do not know whether they are afraid of him or what? Thank you.

**MS MAKWINJA:** Mr Speaker, you called me, I am waiting for your permission... Mr Speaker, the mover of the Motion, Honourable Saleshando is not here. So I do not know what we can do because I proposed that we truncate the debate?

**MR SPEAKER:** If you do not know you are debating...

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

**MR SPEAKER:** You have the floor to debate.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** She has nothing more to say Mr Speaker.

**MR SPEAKER:** If she has nothing more to say, she can sit down.

**MS MAKWINJA:** Thank you Mr Speaker. I propose that we truncate the debate on this Motion.

**MR SPEAKER:** The answer Honourable Minister is no.

**MS MAKWINJA:** Thank you Mr Speaker. Let me now continue to debate because...

**HONOURABLE MEMBERS:** ...(Interruptions)...

**MS MAKWINJA:** No, I am continuing, I am debating. I was simply advising and proposing, it is okay if it has been denied, let me debate. Mr Speaker, we are taking elections lightly by the mere fact of proposing that counting can be done at the polling station, where Councillors...

**MR RAMOGAPI:** Procedure Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, can you guide me here; can a member propose to truncate the debate, and thereafter continue debating? Is



that procedural because if you truncate a debate you sit down? You cannot truncate and continue.

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

**MR RAMOGAPI:** Behave, I was consoling you just now.

**MR SPEAKER:** Perhaps you understand him, I do not. I do not know anybody who truncated any debate. I am not aware of anybody who has truncated the debate.

**MS MAKWINJA:** Thank you Mr Speaker. Yes, they are turncoats, they are now causing confusion. Mr Speaker, we take elections lightly, if as the BDP or any other party our system is to count Council and Parliamentary votes in a central point, we are unable to plan that if we propose that votes of all political parties should be counted in that place, what the situation is going to be like in terms of security. I was at Serowe West Mr Speaker and if we can do that in polling station or polling districts in each and every corner of this country, I do not think it will materialise. I doubt, it will be total chaos because they overpowered even the police. So, if we can adopt that yet we currently do not have enough police officers... Mr Speaker, these things have to be planned for, arrangements have to be made to ensure that there are enough police officers. We are currently making efforts to increase police officers so that when we implement these things, everything will be in place, although there might be inadequate security but at least we had planned. We should not just assume that since BDP managed to count those small numbers, then all parties across the country can do the same. That is why I am saying we are taking elections lightly, we do not consider that we have to plan.

Mr Speaker, other than security, political education is a challenge. It is a challenge which if we adopt that system, we should have educated people on the process of having one central polling station to vote for Councillors and Members of Parliament of all parties not only BDP, UDC or BCP. It is a mammoth task, it is not a process which you can just wake up and think you can implement, no. It is a whole change process which the public has to be educated on, polling agents, security and everything so that we can have our usual peaceful elections Mr Speaker.

Like Honourable Morwaeng requested, I also request the same that this is a big change which if we can agree to now, it is going to become difficult to implement in October because there is a lot to be done. Do we have

enough manpower to do that, we have Madibelatlhopho but not enough police officers.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** Madubaditlhopho!

**MS MAKWINJA:** Yes. Mr Speaker, that is why I am standing here to propose that we wait for the eighth, even on that date we should have a plan. We should plan ahead and see if implementation can be possible in October. Thank you Mr Speaker.

**MR TSHERE (MAHALAPYE WEST):** Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I stand to support the Bill brought by Honourable Saleshando, Member of Parliament of Maun East. Mr Speaker, this is the second time the mover of the Motion is presenting it in Parliament, it is the second time I will be supporting it.

**MR MANGWEGAPE-HEALY:** Correction. No sir, Honourable Saleshando is a Member of Parliament for Maun West. Honourable Saleshando, who is not here, the mover of the Motion, is a Member of Parliament for Maun West not Maun East. Thank you.

**MR TSHERE:** Really! Okay, sorry. Thank you for the correction Honourable Healy. Mr Speaker, this will be the second time I will be supporting it. So today I am not going to beat about the bush, I want to answer questions and arguments which were raised here.

Mr Speaker, first, Honourable Morwaeng will say SADC recommends that counting should be done at the polling stations instead of polling districts and he believes that might be possible or not. Let me give an example since people have difficulty in understanding, at Mahalapye, in my constituency...

**HIS HONOUR THE VICE PRESIDENT (MR TSOGWANE):** Correction. You are in trouble today Honourable Tshere. No, Honourable Morwaeng did not say it is possible, he said, we should make efforts to implement the recommendations by SADC but due to the existing factors, it cannot be implemented. That is what he said.

**MR TSHERE:** Mr Speaker, thank you and thank you VP. Minister Morwaeng said, SADC recommends that counting should be done at the polling stations. He then said what we are proposing is not possible. I want to give an example of what we are proposing so that you can easily understand. At my constituency area, Council votes for Madiba ward are counted at Fredrick Primary School. There are nine polling stations in Madiba ward.





So what is being proposed is that all boxes including Fredrick because it is a polling station will be brought there. All eight of them; 2:2, 2:2, 2:2, 2:2 of Parliament and Council will come from all over Madiba to be counted there.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** Correction!

**MR TSHERE:** That is what the Bill says, so I do not understand if the Minister says...

**MR MANGWEGAPE-HEALY:** Correction. Thank you Mr Speaker. I want to correct Member of Parliament for Mahalapye West that the school is called Fredrick Maherero School. Thank you.

**MR TSHERE:** ...(Laughter!) ... do you mean Honourable Healy should give me lessons about Mahalapye. The school that I attended from Standard 1 to 7, it is called Fredrick Maherero Memorial Primary School. It is named after the former Kgosi of Baherero. Do you know that? If the Minister is asking if it is possible to be done in polling stations, and the proposal says let us use Fredrick Maherero Primary School, do you mean it is not a great proposal, I consider it great? If there are 50 polling stations in Mahalapye West including the two from Tewane, obviously if you are saying the counting should be done at the polling station, it would be cumbersome. Honourable Saleshando's proposal is that from the 50 polling stations, let the counting be done at eight rather than where all things are congested in one place. This proposal is okay, I do not understand where you are getting lost.

**MR RAMOGAPI:** Elucidation. Thank you Honourable, please address the issues they like hiding behind, that if counting could be done in polling stations, a classroom can accommodate the entire village. Please clarify that the Electoral Act says, only the counting agent, candidate and their spouse are allowed. Not everyone is allowed into the classroom. Please clarify that to Members of BDP, I wonder why these people do not read. what kind of people are they?

**MR TSHERE:** Thank you Honourable Ramogapi. The counting policy is very easy, it says there should be one meter or 1.2 metres space, that is easy, a classroom can accommodate that. Remember, we will be counting two boxes from the district giving Madiba as an example. The issue of police officers and lighting is just an excuse. Where Honourable Saleshando cited where the counting will be conducted at Maherero Primary

School in Mahalapye, when the counting is done in Madiba, police officers will already be there because the Councillor ballots would be counted already, there will be two police officers already there, and the lighting will be provided as the counting will still be in progress. I do not see it as an issue that can be used as an excuse. It is also important that we know as politicians what can happen during elections as we have seen in Goodhope-Mabule last time that there is nothing you can do to Honourable Dikoloti in Digawana and Mmathethe area. If ballots can be counted in districts, you will see what to do with other wards. As a politician as I am talking about Madiba, I will be able to appreciate as we spoke.

**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DR KWAPE):** Clarification. Thank you, Mr Speaker. I hear that you are saying that it is possible, but I want you to take me through this. Last time you mentioned here in Parliament that you are the Chairman of Madibelatlhopho, and you are saying that there will be two police officers. From the workshops that you conduct looking at your numbers, I know that two police officers would not be enough considering the experience we had in Serowe West, beating people as well as police officers. So, I want you to advise me as the Madibelatlhopho leader, because the proposal is yours; the way you see things and how the situation is, will we manage?

**MR TSHERE:** No, I never said I am the Chairman of Madibelatlhopho. It has its Chairman, he is called Mr Keakopa, the Commander in Chief of Madibelatlhopho is Advocate Duma Boko, the President of the UDC. Take that issue seriously, I am the foot soldier in Mahalapye, I protect votes like everyone. You should also know that Madibelatlhopho is everyone that cares about their votes. When you report that you found a box by the riverbank, you are also protecting votes. So, do not delay me, let me continue. Madibelatlhopho will not be an issue if everything is conducted accordingly. If there is nothing unusual, Madibelatlhopho will not open their mouth. If things were done properly like you mentioned the Serowe experience, when seven cars just came in covered not knowing what was inside, obviously we will complain. We are protecting votes; we do not know what they are bringing that will affect votes. That is why we are mentioning this issue.

To answer your questions; if counting is done the way we are proposing, it will help quicken the release and verification of results. What will come from districts and Fredrick to Madiba Senior Secondary School where



people will be gathered to receive everything from the eight districts not 50 will be received in Madiba. It will be easy to verify results, it will be easy to form UDC Government, and not wait days to be given a chance. It will reduce the chance of having change quarter, Directorate of Intelligence and Security (DIS) operation so to speak, that talks about changing ballot boxes on the way, it is called change quarter if you do not know.

**MR MANGWEGAPE-HEALY:** Procedure. Thank you Mr Speaker. As you hear the holder of the floor trying to impute improper motives on DIS, saying they change ballot boxes. If what he is saying is true because we do not believe that it is true, he should bring evidence or withdraw those words. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you Honourable Healy. Honourable Tshere, where do you get that issue that boxes were changed from Madiba, were you part of DIS, and ran after the box that was changed. Where do you take it from Mahalapye resident?

**MR TSHERE:** Mr Speaker, it is common knowledge because these issues are on newspapers, they are everywhere.

**MR SPEAKER:** You know what?

**MR TSHERE:** Yes Sir.

**MR SPEAKER:** If I could say it is all over Mahalapye that so and so is a thief, what will I be saying? The one thing which is not common is common knowledge, you know that, it is not common at all. The question is, where do you take the issues that there are people running around changing ballot boxes. If you do not know the source, withdraw that because they are not here. If you have evidence, show us where you saw boxes being changed and where you were.

**MR TSHERE:** Mr Speaker, I do not know if you mean I should bring a UDC report that shows boxes being changed.

**MR SPEAKER:** Do not talk about a report. I am saying the objection from Honourable Healy is that, are you saying there are officers that change boxes. He is saying where do you get that from, where is the evidence? That one you have to answer or withdraw.

**MR TSHERE:** Mr Speaker, if that...

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** Point of procedure before he withdraws.

**MR TSHERE:** Let me deal with the Speaker.

**MR SPEAKER:** Are you answering me?

**MR TSHERE:** Yes. I want to answer you. Mr Speaker, like I am saying, if you want evidence, you can wait then I can bring an affidavit which was deposited in courts, when UDC brought this matter before the courts and it was dismissed at court. I can bring that affidavit that explains this change quarter, in which boxes were changed. Do you want me to do that Mr Speaker?

**MR SPEAKER:** Honourable Tshere, you will not do this for me to think that you do not understand the procedure, you cannot fool me like that. You know I know you understand these things. If someone makes an affidavit and takes it where they take it, what should we do about it, is it something that becomes evidence in this Parliament?

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** It is an affidavit.

**MR SPEAKER:** It is a localised affidavit. Is it evidence? Whether it is sworn or unsworn, those are common allegations in Mahalapye. The question is, where did you get them? As far as I know, they were rejected. I cannot entertain the story that someone once came up with an affidavit; suppose some idiots...

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

**MR SPEAKER:** ...made an affidavit and took an oath and presented it to high court, do you try these things at the courts?

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

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

**MR TSHERE:** I withdraw Mr Speaker, with due respect.

**MR TSOGWANE:** On a point of order. Despite the withdrawal Mr Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. Members should take note of how to respond to various speakers. If someone raises a point, then the Speaker asks about the source, then you tell the Speaker that it is common knowledge; it is wrong because you are insinuating that they do not know about something that everyone knows. That is not right.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** Procedure Mr Speaker.

**MR TSOGWANE:** There is no procedure, you said it is common knowledge.



**MR SPEAKER:** Vice President, if there is one thing which is not common, it is people who talk about common knowledge, it is not there at all. I and Honourable Kapinga know that...(Interruptions)... a particular group knows nothing about common knowledge.

**MR REATILE:** On a point of procedure. Thank you Mr Speaker. You handled this issue diligently Mr Speaker, Honourable Tshere also withdrew it. So you cannot allow VP to waste our time because we did not argue and he is also expected to preserve time for the sake of Parliament business. We know that VP is excited as some of his colleagues' triumph while others lost their primary elections but you should do what is right. Allow the House to proceed with Parliament business. I thank you.

**MR TSHERE:** Thank you Mr Speaker. Let me wrap up by indicating that I support this Bill. Some members said that we brought last minute changes, come on, we brought this Bill before. If you wanted to make changes, you would change it even during the last minute. It can be done so that we start counting ballots at polling stations.

Mr Speaker, some countries have already started counting ballots at polling stations instead of using boxes that we used at Tirelo Setšhaba. They currently use transparent ballot boxes which enable people to see where ballot papers range before they seal them. Unfortunately, Botswana is still using useless dark boxes. They claim that they are sealed at the end; yes, we seal it Mr Speaker, I also seal it. That is why I managed to win a seat in this House. It is indeed important to seal these ballot boxes.

Mr Speaker, my intention is to bring a tracking device for the upcoming elections. We have some suspicious ballot boxes in Mahalapye so I am going to insert tracking device suitable enough for ballot box to trace them. I support the Bill Mr Speaker.

**MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS (MR MOLALE):** I thank you Mr Speaker. Let me also contribute towards the Bill, Honourable Morwaeng started his response by requesting the mover to tell the House about the IEC process and the consultative machinery that we have. This way, we will be able to modify it because we are still in the process of reviewing some of its aspects but he was unsuccessful.

Secondly, Honourable Morwaeng corrected the mover by highlighting that though he wants us to count

ballots at polling districts, Botswana signed several instruments as proof that indeed we agree that ballots should be counted in polling stations. I then noted that there is variance here, the mover wants to draw us back to polling stations whereas we intend to move forward. Honourable Morwaeng highlighted that though we agreed with those ideas, we must start by addressing and providing some things to ensure that all will move smoothly before we can start counting at polling stations.

Thirdly, Honourable Morwaeng indicated that it will be wrong for us to interfere with the current process as it is respected by all our political parties. I agree with him, we should understand that we are moving forward with principles that we all agreed with, we are simply reviewing to implement them. We cannot go back by counting in polling districts but carry on with counting in polling stations.

Moving on Mr Speaker, I suspect something; I am yet to lay my finger on that because if both history and my memory serves me well, members have always requested Parliament to review and we agreed. Thereafter, members requested for other reviews so I suspect that their motive is not to review, instead, they are looking for an excuse to cheat since they claim that we cheated. I believe that is their motive.

Let me tell you, Botswana used voting discs back in the days. We then decided to shift from those discs because they changed colour to red when they came from the envelope. So I am surprised when you claim that we cheated; how can we make them to change colour when it was impossible to patch the hole? It is clear that there is mischief there Honourable Ramogapi.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** You are busy emphasising that the disc was black and had a hole.

**MR MOLALE:** It is because I suspect something. During the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament, a mover, in the form of Honourable Mmolotsi asked us to move to electronic voting and we agreed. Even IEC agreed during a review. Honourable Keorapetse was a member of BCP at the time, before he devised to oust his leader.

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

**MR MOLALE:** I was with Mr Ndaba Gaolathe who now has a single Honourable Member and Mr Baitshale Mooketsane before he saw the light. This side we had Mr Ngaka Ngaka and others, you know them. When we came back from Namibia and we had agreed, we





went to India to appreciate the electronic voting system. When we came back to make the law, there was an uproar that there must be a paper trail. I stood here and made amendments on the floor to incorporate clauses for paper trail. After doing that, it changed...

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

**MR MOLALE:** Drastic change. I remember while we were at Goodhope with His Excellency (HE) the President, Ms Molapo, may her soul rest in peace, she said, 'HE, withdraw this Bill so that we go and win smoothly'. Honourable Kedikilwe, during elections, elections officers have a specified period when they vote. The Presiding Officer took the boxes somewhere. We saw a circus on the Trans-Kalahari Highway and all traffic laws were broken on claims that a vehicle which stole votes was escorted. There were suspicions of mischief. However, there was nothing of that sort because the law was clear that elections officers will vote at a certain time and the votes were set aside so that when counting commences, they can also be taken there. There was a circus in Gantsi. I yield.

**MR MANGWEGAPE-HEALY:** Clarification. Thank you Honourable Molale. There is an issue that is repeatedly raised that 2019 petitions did not reach the stage of judging. Do you remember that the one that you are talking about was withdrawn because the owner saw that he will lose it? Thank you.

**MR MOLALE:** Hey, the situation was bad. I know.

Mr Speaker, in 2019, there was an issue in my constituency where there were claims that I was travelling from Sekhutlane to Mabule and stopped elections observers and instructed them to wait while elections officers and I went to the bush to change boxes. The fact is, I never went to Sekhutlane that day; the fact is no one could agree to that. I know the man I was up against, he would not agree to remain there and rightfully so. History happened, and he was stopped there waiting for the elections vehicle which went into the bush. I was surprised...

**MR RAMOGAPI:** Procedure. Thank you Mr Speaker. The nine minutes elapsed while patiently thinking that maybe Honourable Molale will focus on the Bill before us as presented by Honourable Saleshando. He is talking about history and the time is up. I thought you will advise him that the Standing Order is clear, that we should focus on what is before us. However,

he is just about history. We are saying, there is need to have a polling district. That is the issue. So what you are talking about is a waste of time. I thought you would have made your founding statement and finished but you have continued the onslaught and the time is up. Please get in line.

**MR SPEAKER:** Honourable Ramogapi, I do not understand whom you want to trick. You can try this side, it is futile. Your own arguments on the floor, you were going historical and justified the presentation of this Bill here. You saw things happening or were suspicious and that is what moves you to bring amendments. Honourable Molale is saying, 'no, wait, do not forget that there are events that prove what this Bill is saying that there are tricks and so on, is not true. Why I am saying that? Look at what happened'. That is the argument. So he is on track, it is just that you do not like him.

**MR MOLALE:** Thank you Mr Speaker. Honourable Morwaeng is not refusing but saying let us prepare ourselves. The mischief that I have noticed is Tshire's Madubatlhopho. That is the only mischief and that is why I am saying, I suspect that they are going to interfere with elections but they will never succeed. Are you aware that when counting is done at polling stations, before boxes are opened, tallying is done on how many people voted, then reconciliation and that is when counting is done. If votes from boxes do not tally, it becomes a problem. You know what happened. So now we are all over the place; Honourable Mmolotsi is talking about HE's pension. That is not an issue here. Why can he not talk about political party funding. When now we discuss HE's pension, the very same Honourable Mmolotsi who said people are abused as Honourable Members, when now we say let us amend, he refuses. Oh my word!

**MR SPEAKER:** They heard. I am trying to look at the numbers and try to ...

**MR MANGWEGAPE-HEALY (GABORONE CENTRAL):** Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, when you go through the Bill before us from my predecessor Honourable Dumelang Saleshando, his main point, if you let me quote, he is saying, 'to ensure the integrity of the elections.' So Mr Speaker, when you read what Honourable Saleshando wrote, he talks about identity document, that we can use Omang. There should be other documents that can be used...



**MR SALESHANDO:** Point of order. Mr Speaker, why can we not agree as this House that only those who were listening during presentation or read this Bill be the only ones to comment? If we agree, it would mean that that excludes Honourable Healy because there is nowhere I mentioned identity card at all in the Bill I presented. How will it benefit this House if we allow him to continue yet we can see that he has not read the Bill? Thank you.

**MR SPEAKER:** Honourable Healy, even though we are dealing with principles, we do not make an allegation factual which is not borne by any fact. Since there are two electoral Bills which come one after the other, it is quite possible that you mistook one for the other.

**MR MANGWEGAPE-HEALY:** Thank you for that advice Mr Speaker. Although maybe I can also say only those who have been listening can comment and those who just arrived like Honourable Saleshando should not comment, I choose not to go down that route.

Mr Speaker, like Honourable Members have been debating, we are debating the electoral process and what we can do to ensure that this country boasts competent elections. I think that is what my brother is talking about. Therefore, Mr Speaker, as many Honourable Members were saying that the whole world knows about the integrity of elections in Botswana. It is a benchmark for a good elections process. So when you listen to those who criticize the elections, just like Honourable Morwaeng is saying that these people have a history of shifting goal posts. When they say this must be implemented, they say if it is implemented they will be able to come into Office. After it is implemented, they come with something new. As some were saying that people who live outside the country should vote, when Botswana who live outside Botswana are allowed to vote, they say only a certain age should be allowed to vote.

They keep talking about different things and every time after elections, they say they were cheated, but what they wanted to be done was implemented. So we are talking about people who have a history of allegations that elections are not conducted properly. Currently I am sad, what they are saying about change quarter talking about the staff of the Government of Botswana; Botswana who are voters and have relatives and children who are voters, they are saying those people are election thieves. So I implore that DIS and other security agents must pay attention to these allegations that are made

about them that they aid in the stealing of election votes. They should know that matter so that tomorrow when these people go and ask for votes from them and their relatives, from the security agents and their relatives, they should know that the accusation against their relatives is that they are election vote thieves.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to say much, there were talks about seals that as a candidate you are permitted to put your own seals. You are the one who knows the number of seals, you can see if the seals are the ones you used so there is no tampering with elections. So I heard the Honourable Member from a party with only three Councillors in Botswana, saying people will be able to replicate those seals. How will they know the serial numbers of the seals that are used on that day? You can hear that when people do not have anything substantive to say, they will go to any length to justify why they lost elections.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** Clarification.

**MR MANGWEGAPE-HEALY:** I yield Your Honour.

**MR TSOGWANE:** Point of clarification. Thank you Mr Speaker. You should also emphasise that Honourable Tshire, agreed that he was using those seals. That is why he is here. So let him teach his colleagues what is done when you are suspicious.

**MR MANGWEGAPE-HEALY:** Thank you Your Honour. I think that they understood you, there is no need for me to repeat it.

It is quite simple why these people lose elections even when they make all this noise. I will talk about the 2019 elections the last elections we were in. Honourable Dumelang Saleshando's party, the mover of the Motion who was not present when people were responding to his Motion, he has a conflict with their over lords, being the man who brought them to this Honourable House Mr Advocate Duma Boko. They had a conflict and were fighting for power, after Honourable Dumelang Saleshando was rescued from the mud, he now wanted to take the position of the person who helped him. He wants to...

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

**MR MANGWEGAPE-HEALY:** Yes, as you are reminding me it is similar to the baboon and python issue, that everything should go back to normal.

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** ...(Laughter!)...



**MR MANGWEGAPE-HEALY:** So that is the fundamental, it has nothing to do with election rigging and the integrity of elections. The problems were internal, and that is the fact they have to face and stop giving people the impression that Botswana elections have no integrity, there is a cloud of doubt. Everyone knows. Honourable Saleshando is a seasoned politician who has long been in politics. He knows that he won elections many times, the elections were free and fair, the elections had integrity; he knows. That is why his party was not associating itself with Honourable Keorapetse's issue of people's court.

When the likes of Honourable Keorapetse were saying they are going to show how elections were rigged, the likes of Honourable Saleshando were very clear that they do not associate with that because they know that elections went well. They know that the reason they did not win elections, was maybe on account of the weakness of their leader. That is why they did not win elections. It was maybe on account of the weakness of their leader. That is why the Honourable Member said we cannot win the elections under your leadership, so step aside so I can take over so we can be successful. Right Honourable Member?

So what we have to know is that Batswana have no confidence in the opposition parties by their own doing. They make Batswana not believe in them. I am sure you are familiar with Honourable Saleshando, with what is called musical chess, where a song is played and a chair is placed there for you, then a song is played, "run, run, run, statue." When the song stops you have to sit on the chair, whoever is not seated is out. They are playing political musical chess. When we went to the 2014 elections, the likes of Honourable Saleshando denounced the UDC, they left it, Honourable Mmolotsi was in UDC. When we went to the 2019 elections, Honourable Saleshando was a UDC member they denounced Honourable Mmolotsi, and Honourable Mmolotsi denounced UDC. We are going for the 2024 elections; Honourable Saleshando is here denouncing UDC, Honourable Mmolotsi has joined Umbrella. So they keep going around in circles and doing that to Batswana, which is the reason they keep losing elections. It has nothing to do with the integrity of the elections. Honourable Mmolotsi we were talking about you that you were denouncing Duma Boko, and denouncing UDC, now you have rejoined UDC and you are praising it.

So this is the reason why Batswana do not believe in you. It has nothing to do with the integrity of the elections. You know very well that the elections are free and fair, you know very well that it is the will of the people, they simply do not believe in you. Currently what will make people give up on you again, is that for the first time Honourable Tshere won Mahalapye East Constituency under your party. Then you fire him because he did not believe in your leadership. These are the things that make Batswana give up on you. Honourable Kapinga also highlighted that he does not believe in your leadership, then you removed him from the party. Then he realised that for him to benefit, he had to come back to the party, then he asked for forgiveness and rejoined...

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

**MR SPEAKER:** Thank you Honourable Healy.

**MR MANGWEGAPE-HEALY:** These are the things that make Batswana to not believe in you, nothing to do with integrity of elections. I thank you Mr Speaker.

**MR REATILE (JWANENG-MABUTSANE):** Let me thank you Mr Speaker. Let me also comment on Honourable Saleshando's Bill, the Honourable Member for Maun West. I am standing to show my support Mr Speaker. I support it because when he sat down, the Honourable Minister of the relevant Ministry Honourable Morwaeng, stood up and highlighted that the committee he is chairing of All Parties Conference, should be given time because they are meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup>. It will not be wrong Mr Speaker, to give them time. So where we are Mr Speaker, we are in the last meeting of the 12<sup>th</sup> Parliament. Since we are in the last meeting Mr Speaker, Honourable Morwaeng has not Gazetted the Electoral Act. There are procedures to follow before tabling Bills in this House Mr Speaker. We are not expecting any Bill as he did not notice anything on the Government Gazette, so he cannot tell us that the meeting to be held on the 8<sup>th</sup> can make any changes here. Even if they can reach an agreement on the 8<sup>th</sup>, there is a process that has to be followed to table a Bill here. If you have not yet instructed the drafting body or Attorney General (AG), when are they going to start drafting amendments that you want? You first start noticing those amendments on Government Gazette. You can clearly see that Honourable Morwaeng is very new in governance. He does not know what is happening.

That is why he should have kept his eyes on the Bill to see what is good for Batswana. If he rejects it, he should





do so without talking about a meeting that is to be held on the 8<sup>th</sup> August. Honourable Morwaeng, I want you to know that there is a procedure that is followed when tabling Bills here. This Electoral Amendment Bill cannot violate this procedure. Those who draft Bills do not know anything. No one asked them to draft a law that is to be under certificate. Only a law that passed through them can be under certificate. If they have not been given any instruction, and an All Parties Conference is still to be held, Jesus!

**MINISTER FOR STATE PRESIDENT (MR MORWAENG):** Correction Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Reatile needs to be called to order. I would like to correct Honourable Reatile since he says people who draft laws do not know anything. Mr Speaker, discussions are held at the All-Party Conference and after that we go on to confer the issue with Government and then the proper procedure is followed to make a law. Honourable Reatile you are not one to tell me that I do not know how a law is made because I said we have an All Party Conference because I have actually tabled Bills here. Through consultations, we agreed to discuss the issue, present it before Government and then come back to give feedback. After I give them feedback about the law making process, then that is when we will discuss it. If leaders of these two parties in Parliament are indeed saying this, then I believe Batswana are listening to them back at home. Members of their parties are listening and can hear that leaders of the two parties do not take those discussions serious. Thank you Mr Speaker.

**MR REATILE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Morwaeng should have not asked for a point of correction, he should have risen and asked for a point of debate, and just debate. I was going to yield for him. He did not correct anything.

I have just stated the procedure to be followed when making a law. I even told him that he has to know that there is a procedure that takes place even with Bills that he often presents. This Parliament adjourns *sine die* on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August, so he cannot say that the meeting is on the 8<sup>th</sup> and that from there he gives AG instructions. He still has to notice the Bill after giving AG instructions. The law says, it should be noticed for 30 days on the Government Gazette and then that is when it can be discussed here. We do not have that 30 days.

Mr Speaker, the Honourable Members are rejecting this Bill or they do not want ballot papers to be counted

at polling districts because they are quite experienced when it comes to hiding ballot boxes. Members of Domkrag are the same people who hid the Tshiamo ballot box here in Gaborone where vehicles do not run at high speed transporting boxes. They hid that box until there was a re-run. Things become easy for them when boxes are transported across deserts Mr Speaker. If they can rig elections in Gaborone, what more can they do in Jwaneng-Mabutsane? What more can they do in Okavango and Ngami?

**MR KEORAPETSE:** Clarification. What can you expect when they rig their own primary elections? They are the ones who say there is double voting and that they went for elections without voters' rolls. They are the ones who say names of people who were supposed to vote for them did not appear in the voters roll and that elections were delayed with more than 12 hours. If they cheat, what do you expect them to do to members of the opposition?

**MR REATILE:** Honourable Leader of the Opposition, that is a disheartening issue. Some Councillors ended up withdrawing from the race because voters roll drafts had names of their family members and wives but these people were removed from the final voters' rolls. They then said, "ah! You will meet your match, take your things and proceed, our journey ends here." They have a talent or art of rigging elections. They eliminate you when they do not want you Mr Speaker and they do so using their fabricated procedure. We have to notice this double voting. There is double voting Mr Speaker, yet they use the very same ink that they rejected at IEC. They use it during their elections yet they still double vote. The situation is worse where this ink is not used.

Mr Speaker, that is why I say if fellow Honourable Members could support the Bill proposed by Honourable Dumelang, it could clear them from allegations that they are very very good at rigging elections. They were going to be clean if the amendment could go through. I do not know why they are holding on to something that tarnishes their names. If they can agree to get out of the hole that portrays them as people who rig elections, birds in the sky would praise them. That is why the President highlighted that there shall be no protests after the BDP primary elections but they are now many.

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

**MR REATILE:** The President pleaded that there should be no appeals but now appeals...



**MR TSOGWANE:** Point of correction. What can you expect when you hear Jesus's opponent praising him, the same enemy who is quoted in the bible, what can you expect? I would like to correct the Honourable Member and ask him to say what he wants to say and leave out the Domkrag process. It is not the topic on the table here. The President never said there will be no appeals, and we do have a period for appeals. We observe our rules, they are there. Appeals are made within seven days, and that is the process that we are following today. If you have nothing to say, leave out Domkrag procedures. Anyway, you are remembering home, you want to come back home and that is why you say this. Honourable Reatile, just come back and stop tainting our procedures.

**MR REATILE:** I do know that some people are going to undergo vetting and there is no re-run. We know that you have decided that some...

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

**MR REATILE:** No, you have been talking about BCP, Botswana Patriotic Front (BPF), Alliance for Progressives (AP) and UDC. So they are the ones which can be talked about. You were in this House yet you did not advise. But when we talk about BDP, we should not dare mention it otherwise we are writing a Bible or it becomes Satan who is writing a Bible. I do not know if Satan can write a Bible.

That is the point I want to drive to that if we went to the AU and SADC and conceded that counting will be done at the polling stations, then attended the IEC stakeholders' meeting where we reached a consensus that counting will be done at the polling stations, when we then come to this House with the proposal to implement, we speak in tongues as if we are possessed by the Zion Holy Spirit! Really, Honourable Members! Speaking in tongues is interpretable but interpreters cannot interpret yours. You are speaking in tongues regarding things you clearly agreed on. You can be possessed by the spirit but do not get possessed by the one we are unable to interpret because I have the ability to interpret if one is possessed by the spirit and understand if one is speaking in tongues. No one can interpret what you are saying.

Your Honour the VP, this is the opportunity to advise Honourable Morwaeng to withdraw what he said that there is a meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup>, a move which will have put the Botswana Democratic Party in a good light. We want to discuss your Bill for Pension through which you

seek to make yourself richer even after you die. That is the one we want in Parliament. We should just pass this one. We are eagerly waiting for the Pension Bill, stop delaying us. We want you to include it in tomorrow's Order Paper His Honour. This Bill is important so that Batswana should know that you want to make yourself rich, you do not care about the poverty faced by people at Toromoja, Boteti West which is your constituency area and Batswana in general. This Bill has to be presented quickly so that we can discuss it.

Thank you Mr Speaker. The time is too short!

**MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY (MR SEGOKGO):** Thank you Mr Speaker. There could not have been a lot of arguments if the Bill was timely presented after the discussion Honourable Morwaeng was talking about. I was informed by one member of the opposition that there is no unfairness in the elections of the country, so the objective of bringing this Bill is not because of unfairness. The rumours we heard is that the objective is to attempt to plant a seed of doubt which Honourable Molale also talked about. It is not an issue of doubt but rather to plant that seed so that after elections there will be complaints that there was unfairness. I believe that is the main objective of bringing this Bill Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, allegations thrown that ballot boxes are changed is not true because there are papers placed inside the boxes when they are transported to the counting centre so this is actually a weak allegation. In fact Honourable Tshire even realised and said he acted according to the law regulation which permits a candidate to put a seal. Some candidates put their own seals to ensure that when the ballot box arrives at the counting centers it is not tampered with. Therefore, this allegation does not hold water.

Mr Speaker, there is an argument raised that we made a commitment to follow the SADC recommendations for counting to be done at the polling stations. What we are currently doing which the Act seeks is to at least implement one of the guidelines for counting to be done at the polling districts.

Mr Speaker, I will be corrected if somehow I did not read one paper. I believe there are guidelines and principles of SADC elections and the model law. Mr Speaker, I do not believe the guidelines and principles state that if counting is not done at the polling station then it



means elections are not fair. There are guidelines, there are principles Mr Speaker. You can conduct elections without implementing all the guidelines but still have free and fair elections. It does not mean that if you employ a different system, then elections will not be free and fair, it does not mean the current system we are applying is not free and fair Mr Speaker.

Recommendation of where counting should be carried out is in the model laws. I am not a law expert Mr Speaker but my understanding is that model law does not dictate that you should implement all the clauses in the law. I think the word model means you choose/copy what you think can be possible to implement.

Mr Speaker, I think other members have already indicated that most of the Honourable Members have confidence in our electoral system as the country...

**MR SALESHANDO:** On a point of correction Mr Speaker. Honourable Segokgo, guidelines are the ones which state that counting should be done at polling stations. There is no model law of SADC to administer elections. I have done some research and I have never come across it. I have not come across it, if it is there, but since you are quoting it, I would just say present it. The correction really is this, the guidelines are the ones stating such. You are saying they do not but rather the model law of elections is the one stating such. I am not aware of the model law, but the correction at least is that that is what the guidelines say.

**MR KEORAPETSE:** On a further point of correction. The SADC Principles and Guidelines governing democratic elections are the ones which recommends that counting should be done at the polling stations. In addition to that, there is the SADC PF Model Law on Election, which is saying the same thing. It is an addition on the importance recognized by the region that there is a need for counting to be done at the polling stations. Thank you.

**MR SEGOKGO:** Thank you Mr Speaker. If you listen to Honourable Keorapetse, he is already refuting what Honourable Saleshando said. Honourable Saleshando indicates that there is no model law but I have seen it Mr Speaker. I therefore repeat that I saw one clause in the guidelines which talks about the counting exercise and recommends that SADC Election Observers should be allowed during the election period. If you have read any which has the same recommendations, we will present them. I will present the one I read which is the

model law not the guidelines. Therefore, I still accept your advice and correction Honourable Member. I still maintain that...

**MR SALESHANDO:** Procedure Mr Speaker. Earlier on I suggested that only those who were there when I presented the Motion should comment. Because when I presented the Motion, I quoted guidelines and the clause number. You cannot stand in Parliament and say you do not believe, whereas I quoted word for word. We are not being fair to Batswana, if after missing the debate you pave your own way which is different from what was said simply because the instruction is that you should reject.

**MR SEGOKGO:** Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, it is true that I was absent when Honourable Saleshando was presenting his Bill, so if he has quoted, we will advise each other as I have mentioned. I have explained that if there is any documentation, they should present it to me. I have read the guidelines and I am interpreting them as I read them. I am also happy that Honourable Keorapetse is confirming what was disputed by Honourable Saleshando in the model law. Mr Speaker, my point is that the actual guidelines themselves do not say if you do not execute that guideline the elections are not administered freely and fairly. Secondly it does not mean that there is rigging, because this is the argument that I hear advanced that if we do not implement that, it means there is rigging. Mr Speaker, I dispute that. That is what I want to...

**MR KEORAPETSE:** Clarification. You are an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) expert, when we say ensure that there should be security of a system, like the system for BDP elections, does that necessarily mean there were concerns? Are the safeguards are put in place only, and only if there is cheating? That is the question I am asking. I mean if you were to follow your logic, is that what you are saying?

**MR SEGOKGO:** No, you are not following my logic, completely. I never said that. I am saying the arguments that you have been advancing are the ones saying that, if we do not include that, there will be rigging. So, I dispute that Sir, my logic is not part of it. You are not following my logic, I take it that it is very clear Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, my believe is that as Honourable Morwaeng has mentioned that after the discussions and consultations are done regarding the request that is before us, amendments directed to the administration of elections will be brought in. I still have faith hence





rejecting this Bill, because I desire that when we craft a Bill, it should be a Bill that encompasses all procedures. I now believe from the information that I got that there is no rigging during Botswana elections. Mr Speaker, that is the information I got, and I have mentioned it here a lot. I conclude that, let the discussions mentioned by Honourable Morwaeng come to an end and have a complete amendment on the administration of elections. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**HIS HONOUR THE VICE PRESIDENT (MR TSOGWANE):** Thank you Mr Speaker. I miscounted them, I thought they were finished that side. Mr Speaker, if you are new in Parliament and listen to the debate from all those that are opposing, you see that they differ in so many things. Opposers I mean Opposition Members, us rulers that do not agree with Honourable Saleshando's Motion, we are consistent. This makes us repeat things a lot, the way Honourable Morwaeng started his debate he mentioned most of the things that we believe in. All Honourable Members say the same thing, but the argument comes from opposing that they end up opposing each other among themselves.

The first argument is mentioning what transpired at the All-Party Caucus. They are opposing that side, Honourable Mmolotsi is opposing that side, that nothing was mentioned on that agenda but only the party funding. When Honourable Saleshando stands as Honourable Segokgo mentioned they differ on some things. Honourable Tshere also took the floor but disagreed and only emphasised rigging. We are saying that this Motion is emphasising that there is rigging but Honourable Keorapetse and others say it does not emphasis rigging, but suspects it. We do not understand why we are spending time here because they are opposing each other. So, what they are saying is not the truth. Botswana are aware that all the changes that we have been making were made through the All-Party Caucus; including that children that are 18 should vote, that all citizens outside the country should vote. Those are the things that we implement through the All-Party Caucus, which we believe in, which Honourable Morwaeng is from which could have grouped all the proposals. What stopped them? Why did they agree with the issue of All-Party Funding in one accord, which we should suspect something, they agree but suspecting at the same time. Honourable Members let us not plant rigging on people's minds, there is no rigging, even last

time it could not be proved. Some parties that were working together during elections...

**HONOURABLE MEMBER:** Clarification!

**MR TSOGWANE:** My time is up, can you kindly request that my time be extended, I and Leader of the Opposition are allocated little time. Correct that; request for time then I will yield for you.

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

**MR TSOGWANE:** I was saying we believe there is no rigging Honourable Members.

**MR SPEAKER:** Your Honour, we are going to give you 20 minutes. Do not worry about that.

**MR TSOGWANE:** Twenty minutes, okay, yes clarification.

**MR MMOLOTSI:** The clarification that I want Your Honour the Vice President is for you to explain that, because this is done in other countries, why do we seem to be scared to count at polling stations, while doing it at political party level?

**MR TSOGWANE:** No, I would not repeat the issue of other countries, that argument was raised and was settled that we are not other countries. What is shocking is that last time you were very angry when you heard that IEC has gone to benchmark in Zimbabwe, today you are praising it saying we should copy what Zimbabwe is doing because you are saying that you believe...

**MR SPEAKER:** Order! Vice President, time is up... (Inaudible)...adjusted, you will have your 15 minutes tomorrow, we have used five of the 20, you have 15.

Honourable Members, it is now six o'clock, may I call upon the Leader of the House to move a Motion of adjournment.

## MOTION

## ADJOURNMENT

**LEADER OF THE HOUSE (MR TSOGWANE):** Mr Speaker, as we have concluded the time of today's sitting, I move that this House do now adjourn.

Question put and **agreed to.**

The Assembly accordingly adjourned at 6:01 p.m. until Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2024 at 11:00 a.m.



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