

FIFTH DAY

Tuesday 12 February 2013

The Speaker, **Mr Theo Zurenuoc** took the Chair at 10 a.m..

There being no quorum present Mr Speaker stated that he would resume the Chair after the ringing of the bells

Sitting suspended.

The Speaker again took the chair at 10.30 a.m. and invited the Member for Lae, Honourable Loujaya Toni (Minister for Religion, Youth and Community Development) to say prayers:

Sovereign Lord, God of Abraham, Issac and Israel covenant keeping and faithful. Thank you for our Prime Minister and Honourable Speaker and the all lot of us that are here as leaders representing our people.

Father, this morning we ask for your wisdom to grace us as we carry the concerns of the Nation, we also pray that you also bless the ones that are in the gallery listening to us and those that will be translating all that we say to our people in this country. We thank you for this day and help us to serve for the interest of this country and we ask you to bless us to this end.

QUESTIONS

Mr SAM BASIL – Thank you Mr Speaker, I would like to direct my questions to the Prime Minister.

Firstly, the question is a follow up on questions that I asked the Prime Minister during last week Fridays sitting regarding the integrity of Members serving in his cabinet.

I would be more practical this time because I was taught to be theoretical the last time. I would like to remind the Prime Minister that during his maiden speech after his reelection as Prime Minister, he said, *“we are serious about stamping out corruption at*

all levels and all sectors in our community, no entity including persons involved in corrupt practices in both the public and private sectors will be spared”.

Mr Speaker, also last week I asked the supplementary question to the Prime Minister and I got almost a similar response from the Prime Minister, I quote, *“No Member of Parliament, Minister of State, Public Servant or person in this country will be protected should they have done something wrong in the discharge of their duties. So I can assure the Deputy Opposition Leader that we will take decisive actions should evidence is available that implicate certain minister for wrong doings and off course we will do the right thing so I expect the minister to do the right thing also that he step aside and allow us to continue to pass the responsibilities over to other capable members of Parliament”.*

Mr SPEAKER – Ask your question.

Mr SAM BASIL – Mr Speaker now that we are clear of the Prime Ministers no tolerance to corruption. I would like to present the following for his immediate action to compliment all his anti corruption statements so far.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Member, ask your question, you have taken up enough time so please ask the question.

Mr SAM BASIL – Mr Speaker, the Commission of Inquiry into the Investment Corporation Fund of Papua New Guinea in its terms of Reference 4710 (1c) stated clearly that a minister serving under his cabinet who once was the Minister for privatization, Mr Fabian Pok, acted illegally when he gave approval under Section 61 of the *Public Finance Management Act* for K2.5 million advance to Ilimo when he had no powers to do so.

Secondly, he acted illegally when he gave approval for future advances to Ilimo when he had no authority to do so.

02/05

Mr AMKAT MAI – Mr Speaker, I wish to ask the Minister for Mining regarding the operation of the Freda Mine. It has been operating for almost 50 years and the people of East Sepik and Sandaun are ready to see that mine develop. Before the LNG becomes fully operational we want to see this mine build.

(1) Can the Government consider developing Freda Mine?

(2) Can the Government tell this Parliament and the people of Papua New Guinea what is the current status of the Freda Project?

Mr BYRON CHAN – Mr Speaker, I wish to thank the Governor for Sandaun for his very important question because Freda River Project is a very big project. I had a briefing recently with my Department on this project and two weeks ago I had a meeting with the representative from Freda River called Estrata in my office to get the update but I was not satisfied with their update.

In fact, I sent them back because I expect a report to be more and in detail because of the status of this project and the impact of this project in East Sepik and Sandaun as well as for this National Government.

Of course, before this meeting I met with certain leaders of East Sepik and Sandaun concerning this project. In fact, they share their sentiments and support for Freda River Project.

Mr Speaker, I fully support the statement made by the Governor regarding the impact project at this time when the LNG project is going down. We are looking at all the mines and not only Freda River because we are actually looking at other projects that will come into operation when the current LNG project is slows down.

But the emphasis on developing Freda River project is one of our department's main priority and meanwhile the internal feasibility studies amongst the partners like MRA (Mining Resource Authority) to also issue Estrata of possibility of having access to determine our feasibility studies. However, the licenses will be expired within couple of months time and I need to know what development plans they have for Freda River and the people of Sandaun and East Sepik.

Mr Speaker, I have already putting pressures on them and as a Government we need to know where this investment is going. They have made several statements and we are not happy with their statement because it gives uncertainty. We want certainty and support from both the Government and the people of Sandaun and East Sepik especially, the political support for this project.

This Government is supporting this project and I am determined as the Minister for Mining to make sure that they develop this project. If not, I have been given the assurance by the leaders of both East Sepik and Sandaun to determine the future of Estrata mining in the country.

However, at this time the option is before the Court so we will allow them the normal process to take place but I have consulted the Prime Minister and the Government will encourage and support this project. It is very big project which worth about five billion kina.

Mr Speaker, the project is in a very isolated area of Telefomin district, which needs lot of infrastructure costs that will determine the future of this project. The Government is willing to look into areas that will absolve some of these costs to make this project a viable.

Thus honourable Governor, I will furnish a proper progress report to you within next couple of weeks because I know the people of Sandaun would really want to know what is the future of Freda River mine. In regard to that I will instruct my department of that as a priority with others like Wafi, Globol and other mining projects that are on the way.

Supplementary Question

Mr TONY AIMO – Mr Speaker, I wish to ask the Minister if he has an environmental impact report. If he has it, could he furnish that report to me? I have asked Xstrata to furnish this environmental impact report to me because my electorate is ranging from Upper Sepik, Middle Sepik and Lower Sepik will be severely. I requested that they (Xstrata) furnish me this report because we do not want to see the same thing or

same repeat of the Fly River. They have not given it to me but if they had given one to you. Could you give me a copy of that environmental impact report to me?

Mr BYRON CHAN – Mr Speaker, I wish to inform the Member for Ambunti-Drekikir that I have not received any environmental impact report and they have yet to conduct feasibility study and after that they will request for mining license to operate.

Mr Speaker, this environmental impact report will come from the ministry of Environment and Conservation, which will be at the prerogative of the Minister for Environment and Conservation and the Department to determine the viability of that report and the impacts sustainable to the projects that are related to this project.

Mr Speaker, that Environmental Impact report, which will be determine by the Department of Environment and Conservation and if it confident with that report and they give them clearance then they go in for mining operation.

But, the report has not been tabled to my office and I am not sure whether the Minister for Environment and Conservation is aware of the report too. I have not received any report and they have not come up to that state, however, they have brought some reports.

Mr Speaker, the referrals were made by the commission of inquiry stated clearly that should that minister holds public office in the future than he should be referred to the Ombudsman Commission and the police.

Mr Fabian Pok - Point of Order! These things happened some 15 years ago and it's been cleared. Why don't you talk about today's issue instead of wasting your time on past doings?

Mr SPEAKER – I must just remind you honourable Member, under the Standing Order 79 refers to imputation of improper motives of personal reflection on a members is considered highly disorderly.

Mr SAM BASIL – Mr Speaker, he is present in the chamber so he can defend himself.

My question to the Prime Minister is that;

(1) Will you immediately ask the Minister to step aside as he mentioned it in his statement?

(2) Will you refer the Minister as per the recommendations to the police, ombudsman and the register of companies?

Mr PETER O'NEILL – Thank you Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Bulolo and the Deputy Leader of Opposition for his good questions about the matters relating to the Investment Corporation of Papua New Guinea Inquiry some 15 years ago.

Firstly, let me say this that particular report was tabled in this Parliament at that time when it was concluded and this Parliament in its wisdom referred the matter to appropriate agencies including the Ombudsman Commission.

Mr Speaker, now it's not for me to do the Ombudsman Commissions job. Ombudsman Commission can refer this matter if they see that there is enough evidence they can refer this matter to the public prosecutor and public prosecutor can then determine whether there is sufficient evidence for them to set up a leadership tribunal.

Mr Speaker, our rule of law in this country obvious presumes that everyone is innocent until proven guilty. So I can not say that the Minister or Members of Parliament are guilty until a proper process is followed under our laws and the law is very clear. This inquiry has been referred to Ombudsman and it has to deal with and they are independent body they don't report to anyone under our Constitution. That is why it is for them to make those determinations on what the Deputy Leader of Opposition is requesting.

Mr AMKAT MAI – Thank you Mr Speaker, for recognizing the people of West Sepik. I want to direct my question to the Minister for Mining -

03/05

In the discussions with the local Members that there'll be minimum impact on the river system. We are looking at a possible pipeline straight from Telefomin to Aitape and is in the discussions, included also is a road.

These are the things that we are really worried about and the government will be looking at ways to support this project to lessen the impact on the river system.

Mr FRANCIS POTAPE – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I wish to direct my questions to the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General.

Mr Speaker, I believe that the *Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates* has now outlived its purpose. The only provision that is relevant to this day is that the political party with the highest number being invited to form government. Otherwise, the Supreme Court has declared most of it unconstitutional and it is almost useless.

That law was enacted to promote stability and to provide stability and with the extension of the Grace Period from 18 months to 30 months, I think we have stability.

My question is, Mr Speaker, I have seen Members of Parliament going from one party to another, with or without following due process and in breach of that law. Political parties are also trying to merge and some confusion is being created.

Mr Speaker, my question to the Minister is, can he repeal this law in its entirety because stability is now here.

Mr KERENGA KUA – I don't think we will ever achieve stability in any politics in any part of the world. That's the nature of politics itself. It's the instability that creates the politics but that is the nature of the beast.

Mr Speaker, having said that I do want to emphasise that this organic law has a very important role to play even though a very important feature of that law was struck down that does not go to say that this organic law has got no more function and role to play. I think the pieces that are there can be used to regulate our conduct.

All the laws are there. Like every other law that regulates every aspect of our lives, it's up to people to follow it. If they do not follow it that does not mean the law is

defective, the law is there to continue to be a guide. People can choose to follow or not to follow it and if they don't follow it then there is always a procedure prescribed in that law to enforce it.

And I am sure the Registrar of Political Parties has got adequate powers to regulate Members of this Chamber who don't follow procedures in deciding which parties to stick to or to be attached to.

But, in due course I feel that it would be appropriate for us to revisit those parts of the important features of the organic law which has been struck down and to see if we could recast it in a way that it finds acceptability to the Constitution and ultimately to the courts if it were to be brought unstuck. I can say that at the time that those provisions were still in place this country enjoyed quite a lot of stability and we saw a lot of development in the country and our people benefited from it.

So, rather than moving in the direction of having to have the whole of it struck down, I would say our emphasis as leaders is to re-look that part that was struck down. And then to try to recast it and then to try to place it back in there so that it is able to reclaim that lost ground and continue to play that important role that it played before in putting some level of stability in what is by nature a very unstable environment.

Mr DE KEWANO – Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to ask a question to the Minister for Defence.

Before I asked my question let me give a background to it. I understand there Defence Force, initiated and sponsored by Australia and there was a Defence review in 2000 and then there was a recommendation was by the Eminent Persons Group which conducted the review suggesting the downsizing of the Defence Force.

The recommendation called for the reduction of the strength of the force from 4150 to 1900 over three years and rebuilding the force to 2500 in 10 years time. And then there was a retrenchment exercise from 2001 to 2006, the rationale being to build a small and effective force.

My questions are:

(1) Has this happened? That is the Defence Force should be a small and effective force, has it happened?

(2) To get to that question I understand where the Defence Force is currently. I believe all our patrol boats are aging, there is nil air capacity, there were some self-loading rifles which were destroyed have not been replaced, Given these circumstances, for any Defence Force, I believe historically successful world economies have emerged from a backdrop of strong military. The size and capacity of any military must be proportionate to its country's population and its economy, a Defence Force must be able to assist its government in restoring normalcy from natural disasters and internal uprising and at the same time being able to protect its sovereignty and integrity from external aggression. What is the government's long term plan for getting the integrity and equipment and resources it needs for us to have an effective Defence Force that we would all love to have to protect this country?

(3) My third question is on border posts. I understand and believe there are constant incursions into the PNG border. I believe there is only one border post but I think there should be two or more border posts. I believe down at the Western Province, the Bula, I believe there are certain structures coming up. The buffer zone is 500 metres from where the monument is, it should be 500 metres into PNG and 500 metres away from PNG. This should be a no-man's land. When the military goes there they don't bring their weapons into that zone but I believe there is some structure being structured somewhere on the other side of the border by the Indonesians so can the Minister assure the House that we will have consistent border patrols and there will be border posts positioned.

04/05

Mr FABIAN POK – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Member for Mendi and vice Minister for Works for his questions.

I would also like to tell the Member for Bulolo that I do not give rice and tin fish to people who work for me every fortnight.

(Sam Basil interjecting)

Mr FABIAN POK – You are not a moral crusader so just shut up.

Mr SPEAKER – Minister just answer the question.

Mr FABIAN POK – I apologise Mr Speaker, during the Morauta Government the government appropriated K40 million and downsized the Defense Force from 4000 to about 1900 to 2000 till to this day.

Nevertheless, we feel that, with our country's growing economy the government has agreed in cabinet that for the next 10 years the government will fund recruitment for the Defense Force for each year and therefore we will build the force up to about 10,000 man and women.

That is the plan that the government has in mind to address this issue, and I would like to thank the O'Neil-Dion Government for approving K170 million to help upgrade and replace the existing facilities, equipment, uniforms, vehicles, aircrafts and et cetera. I also believe that next year the government will allocate more money so that the Defense Force can purchase more patrol boats.

Therefore, I am very grateful to the O'Neill-Dion Government for acknowledging the issues faced by the Defense Force, which is the pride of this nation. The assistance and support from the government will help build up our Defense Force, and we are already starting this, for next year we will be recruiting two more batches of recruits to boost our numbers.

As for the border posts, and as mentioned by my colleague Minister for Foreign Affairs, we have a good understanding and working relationship with Indonesia and its Government. On their side of their border they have developed many of their areas, but on our side we have not. That does not mean that if there are problems that occur near our borders we need to send our soldiers there and add uncertainty between us and Indonesia.

What we intend to do is look at diplomacy because sometimes when people from across cross over to poach our deer or fish it may not always seem to be what it is. Therefore, Cabinet held discussions as well as the National Security Council and we decided that the Western Province and the Sandaun Province must have a holistic

development plan. These two provinces need to be developed in every aspect because they have been neglected of development over the years.

In the meantime, I believe that the Foreign Affairs Minister is holding talks with his counterpart from Indonesia to address border issues on both sides of the border. If that is not possible at their level then the issue will be brought to the level of the Prime Minister and President.

Also, the Cabinet has also agreed to have more border posts built to address our border issues. These border posts are not just for the Defense Force because all government services will be provided at these border posts.

Therefore, I would like to confirm here that, it is true that our Defense Force was downsized and that some firearms belonging to the Defense Force were dumped into the sea and have not been replaced. This means that our Defense Force is also short on firearms.

The Defense Force is at the moment facing some issues but I thank the government for acknowledging the Defense Force's issues and have tried to address them by appropriating funding.

Furthermore, in regards to what the Leader of Opposition said concerning Murray Barracks is not true. We are trying to relocate the barracks so that the land there at Murray Barracks will be owned by the Defense Force. The land there will be portioned with houses built and these properties will be rented out for over 50 to 100 years. The Defense Force will therefore to come to the government for funding all the time because it will be self sustaining.

That is the idea that I am looking at and I thank the O'Neill-Dion Government for agreeing with me for making Murray Barracks to be owned by the State. This is not a case of land grabbing. The people who are carrying such information to the Opposition are lying.

Mr SPEAKER – Thank you, Honourable Minister, I believe that you have already answered the question and you may resume your seat. It seems that you are digressing from the questions.

Mr FABIAN POK – Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr WILLIAM TONGAMP – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister for Higher Education.

This is in regards to, and according to yesterday's news on the public media, the suspended vice-Chancellor of the University of Technology on his travels in and out of the country.

Recently, the Prime Minister advised the nation that both the vice-Chancellor and the council would be suspended for investigations to proceed.

My questions are:

(1) Can the Minister advise this Parliament and the people regarding this current incident and the status of the investigation?

(2) Are we considering amendment of bills or laws related to higher institutions to not give unnecessary cover to councils of higher institutions?

I was at that institution for the last 10 years and I have experienced that they rundown the institution together with management.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

05/05

Mr DAVID ARORA – Mr speaker, I thank the Governor for Jiwaka for his very important question.

Let me place on record and inform this Parliament that the suspended Vice Chancellor for the University of Technology was not deported out of this country, he was actually out of the country and was not allowed to come back into the country because he did not have the appropriate working visas to come back to the country.

The former University Council terminated his contract as the Vice Chancellor of the University of Technology and as such he was not allowed to come back into the country. So actually he was not deported out from the country.

On the second issue introducing a Bill to deal with the University, currently the Universities are operating under a Higher Education Act of 1994, which is actually out of date. That is the reason why I am working on an amendment Bill which I will bring to

Parliament and I would like to ask the Governor for Jiwaka to support me pass this bill to ensure that this University Councils are not protected meaning that the current Act actually protects them and they think that they control and own the Universities and some of them have been there for the last 30 years as Council Members.

After this Bill has gone through the processes we can get it through Parliament and we can open up the institutions so that they can become accountable to the people of Papua New Guinea.

As I have always maintained the Universities are Government institutions and they are owned by the people of Papua New Guinea, not the Council or the Vice Chancellor.

Yes, to answer that question, we have an amendment bill and is going through the process now and will be presented to Parliament after it has met the requirements.

Supplementary Question

Sir MICHAEL SOMARE – My question to the Minister is how come in the first place the Council admitted that Vice Chancellor? If he has no credibility at all why did the Council accept him as Vice Chancellor at the first place?

It is very important the way we treat the Vice Chancellors or people who come to our University in a manner which is really appropriate.

Mr Speaker, the University Council in Lae, has been playing too much politics.

Mr Speaker, I want the Minister to inform this country and this Parliament on how the selection was done for the Vice Chancellor to come?

He has lot of credibility and he is a scholar and a well learned person and how come we a questioning him about his credibility?

Mr DAVID ARORE – Mr Speaker, I thank the Governor for East sepik for his question.

That is the reason why the Prime Minister announced that the NEC approved a retired Judge to actually head an investigation into your very question as to how and why after we appointed him, we are now questioning his credibility? So after that

investigation is done we will then have an answer for this Parliament to explain how and why we are questioning his credibility.

Mr GARRY JUFFA – My questions are directed to the Minister for Trade and Commerce and I would like to commend him for the great efforts he is doing to review the business activities in our country. I have a series of questions in relations to restricted businesses. Everywhere you go throughout Papua New Guiena, you will find that all the restricted businesses that Papua New Guinea used to engage in, in particular canteens and trade stores is alarming to note that they have been overtaken by foreign interests.

Our people now have been pushed to the corner in the internal sector forced to sell bettlenut, mustard and lime and involving us to sell cheap imported items on the streets or under shelters.

Mr Speaker, while our people are busy fighting with City Rangers, selling cheap imported Chinese items we have become cargo carriers and postman for white man in our land.

The restricted businesses reserved for Papua New Guineans like the trade store, canteens, second hand clothing and even security business all of this have been taken over by white man.

Can the Minister and his Department review, this situation and find out why are we in this problem. So that we can give our ordinary people an opportunity.

We are going on talking about economic development and we are attracting foreign investments but this development is not benefiting the ordinary people of Papua New Guineans. We are becoming cargo boys –

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Governor, ask your wuestion.

Mr GARRY JUFFA – Can the Ministers relax. I am voicing the concerns of our people.

My question is, can the Minister for Trade and Commerce with his department proceed an urgent review of this situation so that we can introduce the restricted business

lease come back and help our ordinary Papua New Guineans who are struggling to start of an income?

Mr RICHARD MARU – I thank the Governor for his question and I want to inform this Parliament that by tomorrow we will be finalizing a list of the Parliamentary Bipartisan Committee that will consist of both the Government and Opposition Members.

06/05

The committee will consist of members from both the Government and the Opposition.

And the committee will be calledBusiness Council and it would have PNG businesses included in its membership.

We'll not only we look at reserve businesses, instead well look at comprehensively reviewing all the businesses in the country.

As I have said in the media, any future investments made in the country must be done through joint ventures not just trade stores.

We'll look at the sector, the percentage as well, when you look at the mining and gas projects the landowners get two percent, government gets 20 percent, now what about the other sectors.

We must now look at the laws to make sure it's mandatory that all interested investors must come through a joint venture arrangement; if they refuse then we don't need them here.

If you look at China, they only allow joint venture arrangements. For some sectors we may allow 20 percent others may exceed that.

Mr Speaker I was recently in New Zealand and they have a policy where all the landowners had a share of 20 percent for major resource projects and they had the right to acquire up to 50 percent.

I think we have to look beyond the reserve list and look at the comprehensive empowerment legislation.

At the same time we must get collective views from our people to create that legislation and present it to Parliament so that we deal with this matter once and for all in a comprehensive way.

After we compile a report on the committee well go through Cabinet and come through Parliament.

We must not only focus on small businesses, its time to look at all the sectors.

If we don't do that Mr. Speaker and the house, we will never take back our birth right and we will be like marginalized citizens.

So my intention is very clear, so please honorable members If I approach you to join the committee you must agree so that we can conduct that review which well present to Cabinet to present to Parliament and that will start this month.

Mr JOE KOIM KOMUN (Anglimp South Wagi)- Thankyou Mr Speaker, for recognizing the people of Anglimp South Wagi.

My question is directed to the Minister for Lands Mr Benny Allan, in fact I have a series of questions.

There are two well known sports and recreational land in the National Capital District which have been transferred to foreign interest.

They are section 136 lot 3 land commonly known as Norman' cricket ground close to vision city, while the other is section 136 lot 18 commonly known as Steamships cricket ground.

I believe these two land belong to all Papua New Guineans because these are recreational area.

We as members of Parliament and Ministers are setting a precedence here in supporting foreign interest in allowing them to obtain most of our recreational land , reserved land and parks.

We represent the seven million people of Papua New Guinea we are representing thr seven million people of Papua New Guinea and I think we must take a strong hold to stop this practice.

Mr SPEAKER- Ask your question

Mr JOE KOIM KOMUN- My series of question are;

- (1) How was sports and recreational land at section 136 lot 3 granted to Naima Investment ltd and later to HDP Architect Ltd P.O.Box 3131 Port Moresby?
- (2) Did Naima Investment Ltd comply with the proper procedures such as their application considered by the National Capital District Planning Board and National Land Board or through short cut deals?
- (3) Why where there no public notices for public comments on the transfer of a recreational land to private hands?
- (4) Why Steamships Ltd application for the renewal of the lease on section 136 lot 18 Waigani, was refused by your department?
- (5) How and why the state lease was granted to Pango Investment Limited instead the land was granted to a foreign company?

There are so many land issues here honourable Minister, now you have to make a bold stand on this one, thankyou.

Mr BENNY ALLAN (Minister for Lands)- Mr. Speaker I would also like to thank the honourable member for asking a very important question, which is serious in nature

Mr Speaker section 136 lot 3, which is known s the Norman' cricket ground which is before Port Moresby Country club, the sports oval on the right hand side.

There are two of them, the one further out is owned by Steamships and the one next to the road is called Norman' cricket ground.

Mr Speaker the process and procedure is very clear any land that is reserved for recreational purposes should not be given out or be advertised for the public to apply.

The Department informed me and I do know that Steamships Ltd decided to give section 136 lot 18 to the state to be used for Pacific Games in 2015.

I don't know how someone violated the process and awarded the title to this company called Naime Investments I will have to go back and find out.

07-05

I will have to go back and find out whether it came through the Lands Board and followed the due process to be granted that title. If it has not then there is an appeal process that whoever aggrieved will than appeal.

I want to inform the people of Papua New Guinea that if anyone appeals I will definitely forfeit the title. I do not know who is involved but these amounts to corruption. The O'Neill – Deon government main pillars is to eradicate corruption. So I will make sure whoever is involved will be exposed and the land will be forfeited back to the State.

Supplementary Question

Mr JOE SUNGI – Mr Speaker I think you should rescind these decision because every time a new Minister takes office, he makes a new decision and the same trend continues. But this is costly. We cannot continue to correct someone's mistakes. I believe this is happening all around the country where the lands department is changing ownership titles and we will continue to reimburse people demands.

Mr BENNY ALLAN – Thank you Member. It is true when decisions are changes we are bound to face up with court challenges. This is costing the State huge amounts of money. I am of the view that if people are not following due processes to obtain their titles, then the transaction has been fraudulent.

There are set regulations and processes so we must follow them. So for those people applying for land titles they must all follow these set regulations and processes. Many times the Lands Department end up in Court. So we should not identify such problem and refrain from them.

**LAND DEVELOPMENT POLICY – KEY PRIORITY ACTIVITIES,
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

Mr JOHN PUNDARI (Kompiam–Ambum – Minister for Environment and Conservation) - I commend the Minister Lands for his statement and for highlighting the challenges currently confronting his Department. He needs the support of the Government as well the Members on the floor of this Parliament. I also commend him for clearly setting out his targets. According to his statement I believe he wants to achieve and deliver in a three year period.

I was once Minister for Lands and as we were talking about the Lagis Program, I think about 12 years ago and today I hear a former Minister for Lands saying that when he went to Australia three years ago he saw that there was a need for it. So he went and signed an agreement with our good friends. I would also like to acknowledge that.

This is something overdue and its got to be done. This program will cost K38 million but it is money worth spending. I think the directional leadership the Minister is taking and his bold standing to ensure that this program is in place under his leadership is a tap in the right direction.

This program will also help us eliminate corruption which will now confronting the Lands Department such as the dual titles.

08/05

Sometimes I am so concerned that somebody could have a title on a property that I own and he could be mortgaging that duplicate title somewhere and could borrow so much money against the property he does not even own. It is a worrying thing that I think as leaders of this country, we need to be sincerely concerned about.

The Minister has to be aggressive about this, you have brought a statement to Parliament and the needed support is there and we need to have this program in place as soon as possible. Your target is three years but if you can bring it on sooner, it is all the better for this country.

The system is also going to help our filing systems. Land titles are important documents because bankers and investors rely on them. We all as interested owners of

those properties have to have the confidence that the copy of the very title that you have is secured in the Lands Department and no one is meddling with it and it gives a sense of security to yourself and to your family's future. I believe I am saying this on behalf of all of us here and the people we represent.

If we identify problems and we know that there are existing problems but do nothing about it, we are doing injustice to the people we represent. So this program is an initiative in the right direction and I believe it will definitely ensure that the filing systems are assisted. I think it will also help with the issues and challenges of the Department it is faced with in collection of rentals. I believe the Minister is now struggling with outstanding rentals due to the Department of Lands.

I need to be corrected but outstanding land rentals owed to the Department of Lands would amount to figures like K50 million or more. Well the Minister has corrected me himself and it is K245 million. This is a lot of money and we got to do the right thing and programs such as this will help ensure effective and efficient collections of those rentals and more so will ensure that there is accountability and transparency in the transactions and dealings in this country.

Mr Speaker, we have just passed a bill on 30 months grace period and we all talk about the reasons why it is needed and here is a Minister who needs that 30 months grace period to being able to deliver on the challenges that he faces. This is just one of the reasons why this Bill was more important to all of us and I am glad that with the stability we will have, the Minister will comfortably be able to provide that leadership to deliver on major objectives and goals you have for the Department. Having said that I dwell in the city and a lot of our people dwell in the city and maybe the Governor for Oro has touched on this but I would like to share on the Floor of Parliament my views about the development of an urban city like Port Moresby which we call it our capital city. If we don't get it right in our capital city, we might as well forget about our cities and towns in the country.

I am saying this in the rapid growth of squatter settlements in the city of Port Moresby. They are growing everywhere and this city is a city being developed in a cowboy kind of approach or attitude. If you look at the 8 Mile settlement, 2 Mile

settlement, 5 Mile settlement or all the other settlements that are creeping up everywhere in the city, let me just talk about 8 Mile settlement as an example.

If you look at the 8 Mile settlement, it is an illegal settlement. Correct me if I am wrong. The reason why I am saying it is an illegal settlement because the settlers there do not have a title to settle on that land. Somebody might have a title of that land but the settlers are settling illegally and they are your people, my people and they are our people. Now, whilst they are settling illegally there, knowingly the National Capital District Commission or the government for that matter intervene and what do we do, we build bitumen road into the settlement. We know that our settlers there need to send their children to school so we build a primary school there. We know that they need health services so we build an aidpost there.

We all know that we've got to do this because they are our voters living there. Am I correct? And because our voters are living there, we become so complacent about doing the right thing. We've been talking about urbanisation and problems and issues concerning urban development but when are we going to get our facts right? I know that the Minister for Housing is doing the right thing going forward trying to accommodate all our public servants, improve rental maintenance on houses that house our public servants and Papua New Guineans.

But if we can build, schools, aidposts and roads into settlements like 8 Mile, I think it is about right that the physical planners must also go into 8 Mile. We've got to properly plan where easements for electricity will come in and where Eda Ranu will put its water supply and sub-blocking this land out and give titles to these Papua New Guineans for God's sake. When are we going to do that? We just want them to illegally settle there and vote for us to go out there and build a nice aidposts, schools and roads but yet we don't do the right thing by our people.

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I think it's about right also that physical planners must also go into eight mile. We got to properly plan for PNG Power to connect electricity and Eda Ranu to connect water supply to all the houses and survey the land so that each block holders can register their portion of the land and get title for it.

But instead we just want them to illegally settle there and vote for us and we build schools, aid post and roads on this unregistered land. We have to take bold leadership direction by telling them that you are settling on the land illegally so I will have it fixed for you. I think it's about time we provide that leadership to thinking about resettling settlers that we do not want settling in certain areas in the city of Port Moresby. The more we procrastinate on things the more expensive it is going to be for us as we go into the future. It's already going to be an expensive exercise when you start thinking about resettling people like in eight mile. It's going to cost us millions of kina and if we have to properly settle them we got to identify another land and provide them with all the necessary services in a proper manner instead of on an ad hoc basis. Once they are settled then improve eight mile for other purposes or plans we might have for it. But in the mean time we are not doing justice for our people especially settlers who are settling in our city. We know that they are illegally settling and on the other hand we trying to do the right thing by bring services to that area and we just forget about making sure that we legalise their settlement there. So these are some challenges most properly the Minister for Lands, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Governor and all the Members of National Capital District to seriously consider looking at the nations capital rather seeing and developing it as a cowboy city. And this sentiment also goes to five mile, two mile and others that I know of. I am not saying that our people do not have to settle there but as a responsible government we have to do the right thing and prevent these unnecessary settlements that are occurring in the city of Port Moresby. It is an enormous task and I believe with collaborative efforts we can find some answers going forward.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of land compensation payment which the Minister mentioned in his statement about a budget of K259 million to where the government services are situated.

As leaders of this Parliament we got to be very careful about a wrong precedence that we might be setting, in my own personal opinion, in the days when we first gained independence as a country leading out from there, we must acknowledge and appreciate the fact that the value of the land at that time the government applied to acquiring and possessing and converting it to alien headed land.

All of us leaders got to be very careful if we had to make compensation where the government services are sitting on and if this land alien headed already then I warn all of us not to revisit that. Otherwise, we will be opening a can that might cause us billions of kina.

One good example is, the Governor for Jiwaka has got a new land for a town to develop or office complex to be erected and I think these areas that most properly need to give serious consideration.

Having said that, with the issue of all that corruption that occurred I have to bring on the Floor of Parliament an issue that concerns me as the Member for Kompiam-Ambum, I have lost my DPI base camp and don't know where to put up a new one in my electorate.

Now, agriculture is one important sector that this government recognizes and funds through our DSIP programme and I need my DPI officials to be on the ground to do the right thing for our people going forward. I have lost my DPI base camp with development on it. Some public servants have got a private title to it and I am confused as to how it happened. Now whoever facilitated that might as well come back to Kompiam and give me a land where I can put up my DPI base camp so that my people can be served. Where will I go now and find another land? Who is going to buy the land for me? Government officers, who have been facilitating corruption, have they thought about where my DPI base camp would be if somebody gave my DPI base camp away.

Mr Minister, I am just raising this on the Floor of Parliament because I think its happening in all our districts in our country. We have to watch for this illegal activities and the Lands Minister -

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Mr Speaker, I think we have to watch for all these illegal activities within the Lands and Physical Planning Department. I suggest that the land's Minister will have to provide some leaderships so that these kind of activities must be stopped once and for all.

I am calling the honorable Minister for Lands to thoroughly investigate and may get those responsible to come to my district and provide another land in the district so I can put up new Department of Primary Industry (DPI) base camp. Other wise this was

prudently done, I need my DPI base camp back so I can benefit my people through its establishment.

Mr Speaker, I also wish to point out that in the Lands Department, as everyone knows that there is lot of corruption deals within the department. A classical example is the transfer of lands title or title mortgage. If anything you want to get served within the Department of Lands, there is always money involved under the table so to deliver something favorably to you.

I think this may also apply to other departments as well and not only the Department of Lands and Physical Planning. I suggest that this is a bad practice and this must come to a stop or something has to be done about it.

Mr Speaker, as I speak I might as well allude that the Minister for Public Services might as well check the net pay of some of our public servants in the country. I am totally confused and do not know how they can survive with K50.00 or less K100.00 in their net pay when the payday comes after they borrowed so much money from unregistered money lenders.

Mr Speaker, I believed this is the caused for all these little commissions that we want under the table if they will have to provide you some services over the counter and et cetera.

When the Government is talking about the year of implementation, these is some of the impediments that can frustrate developers, the people in the country and the Government.

These are the things that I believe as Ministers, we need to watch out for and eliminate.

Mr JAMES MARABE (Tari-Pori – Minister for Finance and Acting Minister for Education) – Mr Speaker, before speak I would like to commend the Minister for his courageous stand to handle this very sensitive land issues, particularly in managing the Lands Department.

This department is a very sensitive department and we need a Minister with very strong virtues and I see that the Minister is in the right place. He is doing everything right

under his capability and he needs a total support from all the Members of Parliament to really get the Lands Department moving.

Mr Speaker, let me say that the land is the greatest resource we have in this country. The land will either be hindrance and impediment or land can acerbate development in this country if we get the Lands Department working correctly and honestly, the policy is attune correctly and everyone response positively to the rules and regulations we have in place. So getting the issues of land correctly is very important in this country.

A classical example that occurred in one of my constituent areas is that the people wanted road but same time they want money to compensate them before the road can be constructed. I, however, say that which is important road or the compensation but the very fact is that the road is to service the very people demanding compensation.

Therefore, deliberately ignored those group of people and divert the funding to construct road to another place. This group agreed to pay only for the damages if a coffee tree or a casuarina tree (yar tree) is damaged and this people were not demanding extra like the first group. They want damages equivalent to the trees.

Mr Speaker, the issue at hand now is for us the Members of Parliament to really work with the Minister for Lands to address this issue. We must support him on some of the programs that he is embarking on and ensure that comes to past. We also must support him to make sure that amongst many reforms and changes that we embark for within the Lands Department should get the right attention. Because in my view, this lays the key area where we could unlock to enhance development in this country.

Mr Speaker, we are aware that only 3 per cent of the land is alienated for traditional landowners and only Lands Department can confirm the figure of land that has been used or taken.

Thus, the issue of lands and how Lands Department operates is very important and Minister the Government as recognized your very important job under your leadership to unlock the potential of development in this country to progress.

In regard to the issue of land, it has a potential to make Government of the day to function and to destroy Government or to strengthen the Government to progress.

Mr Speaker, in 2000, we had seen misconception and misunderstanding by the general public through land lease arrangement, which was basically trying to spoil or damage our people. Consequently, our UPNG students decided to address this issue through public protest on the street that ended up with some students being killed. We also have seen too that that government also went down by the voice of the people.

I believe that as the Government we should take this sensitive issue critically and address it at the right forum with correct and clear awareness to the people about the potential of land.

Mr Speaker, in reference to the traditional land is concern, 95 per cent of land that is held by our people is critically the biggest asset they have under their control. So, the land registration program must be re-looked at with correct emphasis, correct drive and if you can correctly register your land to have a title over it is better than money that we all are working for it as a public servant or businessmen/women. If we can transfer this land title, then we can modify.

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We are all working to have as public servants or business people or whatever other things we own.

If you can transfer this land asset of theirs it can be monetized in terms of growing their assets, business and themselves to make them realized that they are in fact people with resources.

So, conversion of customary land we have into tangible assets for our people recognised by the state, banks, and everyone else is a challenge that we face as a nation.

And, let me rally everyone else to support the Minister as he embarks on some of these programmes and one of them is this programme.

And touching on this, Mr Speaker, I also wish to raise an issue. I drive down to Taurama Barrack and along the roadside I see land being taken up by every Tom, Dick and Harry. I see that and I sympathise with our friends, the Motuan and Koitabuans. I speak to them and we are being reminded that they are the ones selling it but let me also

say that they are pushed to the corner to sell. And some of them are doing it because they are attracted by the lure of K10 000, K20 000 and K50 000. It is happening.

Mr Speaker, may I ask the good Minister to look into the possibility of a law that no traditional land in this country must be sold outright. Landowners of that village must have rights to his own land so that when businesses come in he has the right to it. The only exception may be when you sell it to the state for hospitals, school, roads or things of that sort but other than that, no traditional land in this country should be sold outright, whether it be to a business entity, fellow Papua New Guineans who want to come and settle or any others, it must be done on a lease-leaseback basis.

That is something that I want the good Minister to look into because I sympathise with our Papuans from Motu and Koita. I don't know what's happening in Lae or Mt Hagen and other urban centres. In my own area in Tari it is happening because as a result of LNG people are flocking in. And we tell them, please don't sell your land. It is something that the good Minister can look into so that if people want to live on somebody else's land you lease it.

For goodness sake, you have your own land in your villages so why, just because you have money do you want to buy somebody else's land and keep it for good. God did not create you and your after birth was not buried in that land.

So, this is an idea that I wish to put forward to the Lands Minister and maybe you should have a caveat in there where people who wish to lease land should also obtain clearance from the Lands Department.

You should not go in and give K5 000 to somebody who will give you the land without consulting his/her clan. He grabs the land and then the resident and the original traditional landowner will fight over that land for the rest of their lives. You must create a wing in your department where if people want to lease land they should obtain clearances from the Lands Department, so we can have a proper recording system within the Lands Department where every lands transaction is recorded, whether it is private or state land. The only safe and secure place to keep those records is the Lands Department so Land Minister, I am tossing this idea over to you.

Another idea I have is on the issue of state land we currently own. This land amounts to three percent but there is no more land right now. Many people are holding onto land titles.

Mr Speaker, they are holding onto those titles and without any improvements they will later sell it for between K5 million and K20 million. They have no shame, is it their land or what?

Mr Speaker, you have to look at that. If you get a title you must submit your plans and get the title and develop the land. If there is no development and they wish to sell it, Minister please put a stop to that and forfeit the land back to the state. If you don't development land before selling it, it must revert to the state.

Why should you get state land after giving false submissions to the Lands Board and after they approved it you will hold onto the land for six months and sell it millions of kina at the expense of some genuine people who also apply for the same portion of land. Their submissions are rejected only because somebody else's false submission goes through only for that person to sell the land later.

Mr Speaker, I am asking you to look at this aspect so that we can tidy it so that the land that the state already has and they lease it to you, you must improve it. If there is no improvement the land should be forfeited back to the state.

I am also asking the Lands Minister to revisit the Physical Planning Act. Currently some places like Boroko and Gordon's should be improved. The Buildings should be better. Do not get a warehouse and convert it to a supermarket in a place where cement and bricks should be stored in.

We know of many big stores here where their structure is so weak as if they are constructing a chicken coup and later within that structure they will put in residences or shops or other businesses.

In revisiting the Physical Planning Act I am appealing to the Minister to try and look at the quality of the buildings in areas such as Boroko and elsewhere. In areas where there is shortage of land whoever has title to that land should look at, instead of one or two storey, they should consider three or four storey so that we can lift the ceilings of some of the buildings within that metropolitan area. We have run out of space to build horizontally so we must consider building vertically.

I am saying this because I have seen people submitting their proposals to build upwards but because of the limitations imposed by the Physical Planning Act they cannot expand. If you can look at the possibility of amending that area and lift it so that other key places may have buildings going up through private investment or through government investments.

Mr Speaker, that is my little contribution. I wish to commend the Minister on his achievement. Minister stand firm, we the government will stand behind you to support your effort in this key department. When you work fully this department can unlock many locks set in this country because of the land issue. This is becoming very sensitive and I commend you and am standing by to support you in your endeavours to get your department to excel.

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Mr KILA HAODA (Central) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me to speak.

Minister for Lands you have a big responsibility and I want to commend you for the standard that you are taking for the people of Papua New Guinea. In your hands is the map of Papua New Guinea and you hold the responsibility of looking after the land of Papua New Guinea and I commend you for what you are doing.

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Finance touched my heart regarding the land of Central Province, which surrounds this city.

Mr Speaker, this is a very sensitive issue as my people are being bullied. My people have been run over regarding this issue. The land issue is very important to all of us. We all do not come from the Western societies for we are Papua New Guineans and therefore, tied to our land.

I would like to support what the Minister had said, if there is a sale of traditional land, then that land must be supervised by the National Government and the Provincial Governments. We have two sets of ‘*motu*’ languages. One is spoken by people from Hanuabada and Vabukori who reside within the city. The other is spoken by people like me who live outside of the city.

The land sale that is going on is by the Motu Koita people who are within the city boundary. We all know the problems that come with a land sale. Take for example, the story of 6 mile where my people suffer on their way to their villages. We must be respected on our own land. We do not go to your provinces and buy land because we are honourable and humble people. If we cannot we will have number seven on our heads.

Therefore, we are going to build around the city on our land so that no more settlement can be built on our land. Honourable Members, we all came from a village and have our own roots. Let us send all these people back to where they belong. These settlements are the root cause of the problems faced here in the city. The settlements are breeding grounds for criminals.

Honourable Minister through the Speaker, there must be a law that any traditional land throughout Papua New Guinea on sale must be supervised by the National Government and Provincial Governments.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr LABI AMAIU – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I would like to commend the Minister for Lands for his good initiatives that he has created to bring stability. The good Minister has opened the eyes of many of us.

Many of us Members here in Parliament today need to check our past. Many of us had the opportunity to make decisive decisions during our terms in Parliament whether it was 5 years ago or 10 years ago in a previous government or the current government. The political support that our people needed was not given by us, yet, we leaders stand here and beat our chests and say, yes, I see the problems that are faced by our people.

The issue regarding land is a very important issue concerning our people. We have seen since our forefathers' days that this issue can even lead to people dying. In my culture up in the highlands we do not die for unnecessary things and issue like money. We practically share everything else except for women and land where people can get killed for them. I believe that many of us here understand what I am talking about as it is a similar aspect throughout the country.

I am thankful for the introduction of civilisation that came to our country those long years ago. I think that modernisation has played a big part in many of the sectors in

our districts and provinces of this country. We have definitely seen a lot of changes for this country.

This initiative that the Minister for Lands is trying to create by putting up an electronic database for all our land throughout our country will bring a way forward to identify people who are actual land owners and those who are developers of land in our cities.

Mr Speaker, at present, many of the debates in Parliament are basically concerning NCD. It is true that I represent a metropolitan electorate and in my electorate you will find that there are more settlements found than any of the other two electorates of NCD.

It is a fact that 8 mile is a vastly populated settlement and one of the biggest growing settlements in the city. Then again, many of you Members here in Parliament have bought land there at 8 mile. This rural to urban drift comes about because our people are searching for a better life in our cities and towns only to find out that it is tough living in the cities.

It is because of the '*wantok system*' that we are facing this situation. When people come from the rural areas and find out that they have a relative in the towns and cities they all go and stay with them. Then eventually we will see settlements popping up.

Our leaders in the past did not plan and anticipate properly that such a thing would occur. Improper planning and preparation has resulted in our people being left out and wanting of basic enmities thus, creating and resulting in things like settlements to occur within the cities and towns.

I am also in agreement with the Governor for Central Province regarding the landowners here, especially, the Motu Koita people.

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It is because of the '*wantok system*' that we are facing this situation. When people come from the rural areas and find out that they have a relative in the towns and cities they all go and stay with them. Then eventually we will see settlements popping up.

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and wanting of basic enmities thus, creating and resulting in things like settlements to occur within the cities and towns.

I am also in agreement with the Governor for Central Province regarding the landowners here, especially, the Motu Koita people.

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There is not a proper body or channel establish for our Motu Koita landowners where we can identify and assist them to look after their interests.

If you go to Taurama, you will see that there are now a lot of settlers who have now come in and taken ownership of the land including private companies who represent foreign investors and it is questionable which proper procedure did they follow to acquire this land. Our landowners need quick money and they quickly jump to an opportunity that is available so they make quick lease agreements for K10 000 or K15 000 a year and I have witnessed a lot of this dealings.

My Electorate shares the same border with Moresby South Electorate and if you look from the Taurama range to Vadavada settlement land is being sold uncontrollably. All the hilltops in my electorate a now either excavated or are barren.

The Member for Kerowagi asked a question regarding that potion of land that goes in from Civil Aviation and ATS road and one of the biggest problem is that foreign companies and other settlers have now acquired the land and they have taken ownership over them. Whether they obtained them through proper process or not is questionable because we told that State lease has expired and now the ownership of those lands have gone back to the landowners and they can do whatever they want.

As the political head of my Electorate I receive so many complaints and I try my best to help my people and I want to bring this to your attention as Lands and Physical Planning Minister to create a pathway to a better working understanding and relationship to address this uncontrollable situation.

The most proper way is to regulate the land in the city and as legislators we should think outside the box and regulate and set up policies for land owners so that we can have a modest city expansion taking into account the interests of all the land owners either here in the capital or all over this country.

I think we have a stagnant process through the Lands and Physical Planning Department alone.

I believe that as the Member of my Electorate anymore land dealings whether they are from a church organization or a wealthy citizen or a foreign company must first and foremost come through my office for screening to identify tangible development and impact to sustain our economic growth at the same time looking after the interest of the landowners by creating job employment and so fourth, they have my full backing and support.

Under the land development title there are certain clauses that states that for sanitation and sewerage, development of land, within a certain period of time there is a certain amount that we need to spend. Yet, these people who acquire these lands never seem to meet those requirements and it is unbelievable that they are issued with titles of that land. Every end of the year their titles are renewed. They draw up some small development proposal and go to the Chinese or the Malaysians, Australians and other foreigners to propose for an opportunity to develop the land. When they are marketing their concept they don't have the money so these foreigners buy that concept of from them for a little amount and go to obtain the land.

Mr Speaker, I would like to appeal to the Minister for Lands to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with me as the Member of Moresby North East and with my people that whichever developer wishing to come and develop land in my electorate under the Urban Development Lease I will fully support these developers because they will bring tangible development for the benefit of my electorate and will consider the interest of my people.

We have lost all our major land in our electorate because of this kind of practice. When a developer has no proper finance and is in the business for a 20 percent cut and acquire land and just under develop the land and then goes ahead and sells the land to a bigger developers for a large sum, my people always loose out and become victims and their land is now owned by foreign investors with huge bank accounts.

Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Minister for Lands for his Statement and I am believing that there will be open doors.

We now have a good working relationship with all the Members of the Nations Capital from Moresby South Moresby North West and our Governor so now we can regulate and protect the interest of our people.

We have for too long given opportunities to the cronies of previous Ministers and their decisions are based on favouratism.

I have been a resident of five mile for the last 16 years and when a Minister goes in I see his officer claiming title and we have been to court for now almost 7 years. I am also a victim of this kind of practice.

As politicians we must support our peoples interest and not suppress our people. Land is a substance where we ride on and it is also security for our people and it is sad that there are no essential services getting to our people because we as leaders are not putting our priorities in order. We are wrongly advised to hid the benefits of our cronies and our people are suppressed.

But that is going to change and I believe under the leadership of the current Prime Minister and his team of Ministers I am bent on working closely with the Government to put an end to this practice.

Mr Speaker, I have set aside funding and I have directed my officers to work on this issue and show my people that their leader is concerned about their interests as well.

Land at 8 mile, 9 mile, Erima, 6 mile and the settlements I am ready to allocate money so that the land owners can get back their security and their land. Enough is enough of giving opportunity to white man and blue man we have suppressed our people for too long.

Mr Minister, I am assuring you that you will have my full working cooperation on this issue.

Mr JUSTIN TKACHENICKO (Moresby South Minister for Sports and 2015 SP Games) – Mr Speaker, I just like to contribute to the Member for Moresby North East on this issue because of the fact that in Moresby South as you know Taurama Valley and as well as 6 mile is becoming totally out of control.

When I get request from these communities and as I put them as new settlements because they have no Physical Planning Board approval and they have nothing and to put water markets and all that, how can I do that when the place is totally unorganized.

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they have no physical planning board approval.

They have nothing to put water market schools, how I can do that when the place is totally unorganized there's no proper drainage, sewerage, no planning at all.

In addition the Motu Koitabu land owners don't know who the land owners are they are always fighting in court.

One person sells the land and another person claims that the land belongs to him and then the purchaser asks for reimbursement of his money and that may eventually lead to fighting so that is a huge problem for us in Taurama valley.

We need a tough legislation in place for traditional land to protect our land owners to ensure that we register all the legitimate land owners because currently everyone from Motu Koitabu especially Taurama and Pari are saying it's all their land.

We need to identify the land owners and register their land so that they can use that and go to the bank or investors and use that as collateral to make money form their families or for their people.

At the moment they are selling it off and it's gone for good and they'll be beggars on their own land.

There has to be laws in place to ensure that proper registration is done so that the investors can be assured that their sitting on the right land.

However, if necessary we have to stop the sale of land by banning the sale of traditional land in that area until the problem is sorted because all these land would be sold for a very cheap price and will be totally unplanned for no physical development plan and the building board has not givn its approval for constyruction of buildings in that area..

When there is a natural disaster such as an earth quake or flood all these buildings will be washed away and lives will be lost.

We also need to support our local land owners the Motu Koitabuans, they told me that they lack support and have difficulty consulting officers at the Lands Office to register their land so whichever mediation we can do to assist our local land owners, Ill back you all the way Minister for Lands.

In the mean time we need to look at stopping the land grab stopping the land selling in Taurama and especially six mile until we know exactly what 's going on. At the moment everybody is doing anything they like they don't care about any law and it may lead to a bigger disaster in the future if tough legislations are not implemented today.

The other issue is about reserve land that was brought up before about parks and gardens and state land being grabbed by foreign investors and others, including Papua New Guineans.

This is state land and is owned by Papua New Guinea and a lot of lands throughout Moresby South, NCD and in our country are being grabbed up by people.

For example in my area Paga Hill a magnificent piece of state land which is a national historical asset.

The land has been taken away by private investors who know how as a result at least 900 people are left destitute because their houses have been all knocked down and their sleeping under canvases.

I have no land, where will I relocate them to?

I got a letter yesterday from the mail stating that a landowner up at Korobosea wants to evict nearly a thousand people from Orokolo, Daru and Kerema just behind Hugos building because that's his land and he sold it to somebody else so they have to move out in the next two weeks.

So where are these people going to go and how do we know he owns the land?

All these questions have to be solved because it's not only a land issue but a humanitarian issue as well with those settlers and squatters living on the land.

These are people not animals so we have to set land aside to resettle them outside if we need to get them out of the city limit.

That is another issue that I would like to discuss with the Minister, to assist you in finding land for my people to ensure they can settle and be treated properly like you and I would want to be.

These are massive issues that will not happen over night but we need to address now to ensure we don't have this humanitarian disaster on our doorstep.

Thankyou

Mr TITUS PHILEMON- Thank you Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to speak on the paper that was presented to join many other leaders of this country.

15-05

Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity to join the leader to speak on the paper that was presented. We are debating on things that are so close to our hearts.

I also want to thank the Minister for Lands and Physical Planning for visiting Alotau beginning of this year to swear in the Lands Board. He also had the advantage to see for himself some of the development progress on-going in Alotau as well.

I just want to put on record Mr Speaker, when the Minister came to swear in the provincial lands board which was appointed by the previous government. I just came in and facilitated it because I believe in continuity. That is one thing that we miss because when we come into Parliament we want to make sudden changes but do not want to continue from where our predecessors left. I believe in transition and continuity.

We are working closely with the Minister. We will be approaching the Minister on some major land development that will be taking place. On the same token I want to thank the Prime Minister and the Government for allocating K2 million for our land mobilization program. That funding will go a long way to assist our people register their land and complete outstanding work.

Mr Speaker, I just want to inform this Parliament that in Milne Bay we have a land mobilization program. We also have a resettlement program. We will be resettling people living on state land because they are human beings and we have to treat them right rather than bulldozing them.

I urge the Minister for take note because we will be addressing this issues later in the future.

Mr Speaker if somebody did not develop his land within certain period of time, I think it should be forfeited back to the State. This must be effective because it is

depriving development progress. We want to redevelop Samarai Island. You all know that well be Alotau became popular it was Samarai island. Samarai Island was the name before Port Moresby, Lae and even before Rabaul. Samarai was the commercial harbour of Papua New Guinea. It was known as the pearl of the pacific but has been forgotten now.

The previous Somare government recognized Samarai as the world heritage island and we thank him for that. Being declared as the world heritage island without fund does not make sense because it cannot be developed.

Our biggest problem now is that most of the land is now owned by people who do not leave on Samarai Island. This people are either living overseas or in Port Moresby so we want to move in as a Government to rebuild the island again but they these people living overseas own the land so we cannot do anything. Can the Minister and the Government forfeit this land back to the Provincial Government. If the Provincial Government take ownership of the land we can than work together and begin our program of restoration.

We have allocated half a million in our provincial budget this year and I know that the O'Neill – Deon Government will assist us because Milne Bay has been identified as a tourism development pilot project province. It is one of the central ports that we want to develop as well.

Mr Speaker, in relation to my grievance debate last Friday on Woodlark Island land issue, my colleague has been questioning for the last two terms when he won the seat from me. I was also raising the same concerns. Can we resolve this matter during this Parliament's term? Can we be known as the Parliament that returned the Woodlark land back to its people? Can the Prime Minister be remembered as the Prime Minister who returned the Woodlark land back to its people? Can the Lands Minister be known as the Minister who returned the Woodlark land back to its people?

The Woodlark people are crying for their land. If the land has been taken away from the landowners in Papua New Guinea through some unscrupulous means give the land back to them. I know they will be the most happiest people.

16/05

Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Woodlark people, I wouldn't like you to hear me or hear the Member for Samarai-Murua or any Member from Milne Bay Province asking for their land to be returned back to the Woodlark people during your term in Parliament.

I appeal to the Minister for Mining and even the Minister for Environment and Conservation that if there are any proposals for Woodlark Island by any company, they must take it into consideration first that the issue of Woodlark must not be the mines or any project for that matter but the issue is that the land must go back to them. After that all the good things can happen. This is my concern and I give a challenge to this Parliament, Speaker, Prime Minister, Minister for Lands and even to the Cabinet.

The other thing that I want to talk about it in this debate is on the reserved land. As many leaders have aired their concerned not only here in Port Moresby but also in other provincial capitals, we are very concerned that a lot of the reserved land are being given away. Even some of us Governors do not know what is happening there because people are going and making deals at our backs and we are caught by surprise. Some of the lands sold are prime land and we have plans to develop them because they are at locations meant for public functions. One cannot just come up and build a fish factory or something that will not suit the location because it will become like an eyesore to the public.

I believe every towns and cities in this country have their plans but what if somebody from nowhere suddenly decides to develop this land and we are all shocked. This happens because they come through other source. This is one of the areas that I am addressing because it had happened in the past in some of our provinces.

Mr Speaker, let me put on record my deepest sympathy to the people of Papua New Guinea in our history identities. I am sad to inform you and the Members of this Parliament that our House of Assembly is no longer there. The House of Assembly that once brought us our independence to this nation. I know that there are many reasons why the developments are taking place but if you go to Australia and other countries, you will see that they respect their museums and historical places. Today or in the future if foreigners come and ask where your old House of Assembly is, what will we say? This is something that we must take it into account.

Whenever we are making decisions, we should not bury our identities. What will we be identified with and who are we going to be identified with? When making decisions in the future, we must remember that our history and how we came into independence and our first House of Assembly are no longer there. I don't know where we are going to build it again but whether you build it in another location or not is not really important to me but the location where it earlier happened is the most important. That is why I respect this and I want to remind us that in the future where there is reserved land for special activities, we must protect them because they will also be history for us.

The other thing is that we are also not very careful in approving our city and town plans. I don't live in Port Moresby but for those of you who reside here will know that the roads are getting small but despite that, the car dealers are still importing more cars. Will the roads cater for more cars or are we going to build freeways on top of each other. Even though we are a developing country, we are already trying to imitate cities like Los Angeles. Are we trying to become like Star Wars?

Mr Speaker, because of negligence and wrong decisions, our roads are so small and yet we have so many cars and we find it very difficult to be on time because of the heavy traffic. How do our planners plan? These are some of the things that I want to bring to our attention.

Mr Speaker, lastly but not the least, concerning the Boroko Market, I want to join my fellow Governor for Central for the concerns for his people. This concern has been raised on many occasions and by many people. We are not deaf and we hear those concerns and even see it ourselves and I want to challenge the Governor for NCD. Who was the market built for? I think it is not serving its purpose. At one point of time, I was told that that market was built specially for the Central people and the local Motu Koitabuans to sell their goods but today, it does not serve its purpose.

We are a united nation so let's protect one and other instead of trying to look down on somebody. Let us not be aggressive against one and other. We have come a long way and as Papua New Guineans, we are one country, one people and this is how we should remain.

Mr Speaker, on that note, I want to say that the Boroko Market must be re-opened to serve its purpose where the people of Central Province and Motu Koitabu must be given the chance to sell their items.

Mr PETER O'NEILL (Ialibu-Pangia – Prime Minister) – Thank you Mr Speaker, I also want to join my Members of Parliament to say a few words on this very important issue on land in our country.

17/05

I want to contribute and say a few remarks on important issue of land in our country.

Mr Speaker, land is a sensitive issue and we all know that in many parts of the world and even in our own country, fights and wars have broken out because of land. It's a commodity and is very valuable to many societies and it is no different in our country, Mr Speaker that it is most important resource for our people as we continue to live as a community and as a nation.

Mr Speaker, I want to elaborate further on what the Governor for Milne Bay has mentioned. There is no other place in the country where the entire land in a particular community has been taken away from that without any single land being available for the traditional land owners and that is Woodlark. And I conquered with his statement that the original traditional land owners of Woodlark have no land whatsoever on that Island. The entire land has been taken over by the state. I conquer with him and Minister whilst we have other issues on hand I think it is a very important issue. There is a growing population on the Island and it needs to cater for that population and traditional landowners needs to be looked after and we need to look at the possibility of surrounding some of the land portions back to the traditional landowners of Woodlark.

Whilst we talk about landownership we all know that 97 per cent of the land is owned by traditional ownership and about 3 per cent is owned by the state. So far the state is being put under extreme pressure by our own people for that 3 per cent alone. So many compensation claims are put in all around the country and not in one particular area only. Some of the figures that are claimed for a ridiculous, even the entire life time of

working that particular land can not make up for the amount compensation that they are asking for and I wonder where did they got this sort of ideas from. We must always use our common sense in this sort of issues. It's about time I ask the lands department should seriously look at regulating and bringing very strong laws that we can enforce. One good example, is the Highlands Highway, we are not going to tolerate people living along the highway to claim for compensation. The NEC would approve and engage the law enforcement agency to be present at site when the work on Highlands Highway begins and for sure we are going to upset a few communities but what about the entire country who are going to use this road to improve their own living standards in the country.

If you look at the Highlands Highway now, it was never planned properly at the first place. When the LNG project started it was estimated that every year big trucks would carry about 500 loads of cargoes up to the project site. But instead the number has increased up to 600 loads and it's really cause a major damage to the road. So now we have to rebuild the entire road network because 80-90 per cent of the road is very bad and we are just doing regular maintenance to keep on going. Added to that we have compensation claim coming in and now the problem faced by the nation is huge. Now, I think this Parliament needs to take some decisive decisions that land is a sensitive issue. But the stability and security of our country is also important and so I urge the Minister for Lands to consider some of the land management administration that some of our neighboring countries have. One good example is Fiji; they have a customary registration system which we adopt from them. They call it the Native Titled Lease and for the State Lease they call it the Crown Lease and then a Free Hold Lease which they regulate to manage customary land, state owned land and also free hold land. We have to adopt that kind of law in our country. Many at times we sell our land at a reduce price and once the buyer develops the lands we start to complain again. Therefore, for our traditional land owners to do business we must encourage them to register their land so that they can use this title to expand their businesses.

Thirdly, I want to emphasise here is that large portion of land given to individuals, not only foreigners but also Papua New Guineans. Most of them are not capable of developing that portion of the land but they are just using as a commodity to trade. Its best the Minister and his Department should consider that seriously and forfeiting this

portion of the land back to the state. Why are we having settlement issues in many of the urban cities in the country? It is because people do not have access to land to build their houses and that is why they are settling in somebody else's land. Now government needs to use the surveyor general's office to go out and subdivide land in the cities and give to individuals

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Mr Speaker, I think that is why they are settling in somebody's land. They need to use the Surveyor General's Office to sub-divide land in the cities and give it to the individuals. I am certain that when the settler is given the title in his/her hand they will prefer to build the house on that land. They will not be settling in somebody else's land. We should allocate just enough land blocks for building a house rather than giving very big hectares of land to one individual who is going to benefit himself and his family or his business.

It is important that we look after thousand of our people and I think the time has come that we need to forfeit many of this land. It has come to our notice that many of those leased land has never been developed into viable economic zone. Many of this leased land have been sitting there and were sold for millions of kina and other lands have not being developed. Purposely, they have to be developed for some kind of business activities but they are now sleeping idle.

Mr Speaker, I know of some people from my own province who have bought lot of land in the city and sold them for millions of kina and went back home and they wasted money on elections. They are now running around here and trying to secure another land to sale. As I said, we can utilized the office of the Surveyor General to make boundaries for the blocks of land for people living in towns and cities to have title over them so that, they can build their houses in the cities. At the same time we can address the issue of settlement in the cities. If we do not give them proper land title, they will have no where to go and build houses for their families.

Mr Speaker, we must give our people that opportunity because this is one of improving the standard of living. Another point that I want to raise is concerning the foreigners coming into our country. I am not discouraging foreign investors but I am

referring to those foreigners buying our lands and own land in our country. We must discourage them from getting land to make business and own land, however, when they want to leave they make millions through the sale of land that they own as if it was their traditional land.

Mr Speaker, imagine you are in other countries like Australia, China, America, Germany or even Indonesia and you want to buy land. Mr Speaker, it is very difficult to get land title in a foreign land because you have to go through certain processes and procedures, especially foreign investment review board for its approval to buy a block of land. In Papua New Guinea, its up to the individuals to sell land and the foreigners buy the land from the landowners or from the Lands Department through some bribery or having few beers or through sharing betel-nut and smoke with officers.

We must think of our future generation and what we give must not affect them in the future. It must be prudent deal than a fraudulent deal to purchase a land. I think the Minister and the Department should tighten the land title laws and ensure that all the land in PNG must be leased out so that, when they leave, the land remains the property of PNG. They won't take with them overseas.

Mr Speaker, I think the free ownership we must tighten up and strengthen it to secure our lands both the traditional and the State owned land. When looking at this Parliament, we are ready to have such laws to operate and protect the land in PNG.

It is encouraging to see that within seven months into the new term of Parliament, you see the attendance of Members in Parliament is well over half of the total percentage. This is because they want attend and participate in issues like this purposely to save guard the recourses and our land.

Mr Speaker, the Minister has the hard task ahead of him. But, we as the elected Members must support him. He does not have land under his name like some of us own land under our names in this Floor of Parliament. He is the right man for the job and this Government supports the policies the Minister brought about to make reforms.

The last thing that I will speak is about the land title registration program and the equipment like computer, which is taking too long to buy and it is well over four years now. How many computers do they need to implement this program? We should bring in

a system to register the land and the people own the land to build their house or business and utilize the land on which they have the title.

This is very frustrating and we must not play the delay tactics because we must allow those people who own the land to have the title so that they can be happy to live in and develop the land. It is the right of a person to own the title so that, he can seek financial assistance from the bank to borrow money to do business with confidence.

If we continue to prolong the system, we might have problems with the computer because their life span too is limited. However, Minister you have the full support of the Government for the job well done and for what you are doing.

Motion (by **Mr Patrick Pruaitch**) put –

That the question be now put.

**COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO
THE SINKING OF THE RABAUL QUEEN, 2012 –
PAPER AND STATEMENT – MOTION FOR ADOPTION**

Mr NIXON DUBAN (Madang – Minister for Police) – I present the following Paper pursuant to statute:

Commission of Inquiry into the Sinking of the Rabaul Queen – Report.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to bring before Parliament the report of this very important commission of inquiry into the sinking of the Rabaul Queen.

The Report that was tabled by this Government concerning the Sinking of the Rabaul Queen is a controversial issue, which the public was vocal about the lost of many lives and demanded that the Government has failed to immediately conduct investigation. There was lot of expectations that the people wanted the Government to do within the time frame given.

I wish to give my support to the families, the survivors and relatives and those that have interest over that major disaster in Papua New Guinea. Firstly, it is a major disaster that is a heart breaking for this country. However, the Government has made a big commitment to sanction a commission of inquiry to find out what really went wrong and it took a while for this Commission of Inquiry to fully understand the consequences and reasons behind the sinking of *mv Rabaul Queen*.

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There are many of us in this country have made negative comments against the inquiry and investigations because we are taking advantage of pain and problems that the victim's relatives are facing for our own convenience.

This is a very sensitive matter where our country has never experienced such great loss of lives lost through a disaster.

So the commission of inquiry has completed its report and the report has been referred to the appropriate authority which is the police, who will evaluate it to identify the types of offences that contributed to the sinking of *mv Rabaul Queen*.

The report of the sinking of *mv Rabaul Queen* is very detailed and many of us have not read through it but again are taking advantage of victim's and the relative's situation, therefore making public statements for the national government to push the investigation.

The inquiry has raised a lot of issues which require further investigation from the police, such as negligence by the owner of the ferry, or the respective departments, whether there was any breach of merchant shipping regulations, breach of company act or breach of contractual acts, or criminal acts such as manslaughter by negligence, or the lack of sea worthiness of the vessel.

These issues were all exposed through the inquiry and its now up to the police to conduct proper investigate into the matter.

I apologies for the delay but it is an important process because when the police conduct the investigation we have to achieve the purpose and result desired when the inquiry was set up.

Otherwise it will be just another inquiry and it will be unjust for ferry accident victims and their relatives.

Mr Speaker in addition, within this month, that is on February 7, the PNG Royal Constabulary will send thirty criminal investigators out to five provinces in the country that is Port Moresby, Lae ,Rabaul, Kimbe and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

Their function is to consult and interview the survivors and their relatives as well as those interested to get their account of the incident.

This is an opportunity from the government to help the people and the contact details of these investigators will be published in the media for the public to access them.

The duration of the investigations will be four to six weeks.

The commission of inquiry has already exposed many of the offences and this will assist the police to fast track these investigations.

Mr Speaker, four officers have already been assigned to four provinces to conduct preliminary investigations and the other 26 will soon join them.

There will be a public advertisement in the newspapers to asking interested public to come forward with information.

In addition, I would like to say that the inquiry has clearly exposed the negligence by the owner of this vessel. As for the Departments of Transport they have incapacity problems but they are still to be blamed to some extent, for not maintaining maritime regulations.

Therefore when the police conduct investigations many of those implicated people will be arrested.

Therefore I would like to appeal to the people of this country not to politicize over the death of these people.

This is a sensitive issue and we would like to make sure that those implicated will face the full force of the law.

Our country should not be seen as a country where people can commit offences and go unpunished.

Mr Speaker I would like to emphasis the commitment of the government and the Prime Minister who honored his commitment through the setting up of the inquiry.

Therefore the Police have no excuse they have to complete this investigation and to ensure those who are implicated are punished.

Therefore people of this country make yourself available to these police officers if you're a survivor or relative or interested party to present your case quickly in order to complete the investigations within four to six weeks so that we can move onto prosecution.

Motion by **(Mr James Marape)** agreed to –

That the Parliament take note of the paper.

Debate adjourned.

MOTION BY LEAVE

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari-Pori – Minister for Finance) – I seek to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE – HONOURABLE JEFFERY PESAB KOMAL

Motion (by **Mr James Marape**) agreed to –

That the Honourable Pesab Jeffery Komal, Member for Nipa Kutubu Open electorate be granted leave of absence for the duration of this meeting.

AJOURNEMENT

Motion (by James Marape) agreed to-

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at