

**FOURTH DAY**

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**DRAFT HANSARD**

**Friday 12 July 2003**

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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**  
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Corrections should be authorised by signature and contain the name, office and telephone number of the person transmitting/making the corrections.

Amendments cannot be accepted over the phone.

Corrections should relate only to inaccuracies. New matter may not be introduced.



**Sarufa M. Haro**

Principal Parliamentary Reporter

## DAY FOUR

Friday 12 July 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 10.25 a.m., and invited the Member for Kabwum, **Honourable Bob Dadae**, to say Prayers.

‘Our Heavenly Father, you are mighty, gracious and everlasting. You reign forever and ever. Father, this morning we come before you humbling ourselves, confessing our wrongs and Lord, we ask you for your wisdom as we deliberate on the Floor of Parliament today. Thank you for the privilege of being Members of Parliament. Father, we continue to pray for our Speaker, our Opposition Leader, Ministers and Members of Parliament, Departmental Heads and staff of Parliament that you shall give us wisdom and understanding to run this country.

Father, as we deliberate on today’s issues, we ask that you will lead us. We ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to guide and lead us. We thank you Father for listening to our prayers and also listening to the prayer that Jesus taught us. Amen.’

## QUESTIONS

**Mr RONNY KNIGHT** – Mr Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister for Communication but he since he is not present, I will reserve my right.

**Mr TOBIAS KULANG** – Mr Speaker, I wanted to direct my questions to the Treasurer but since he is not here, I wish to re-direct them to the Minister for Finance.

Mr Speaker, the questions I want to raise may put to rest some anxieties in our communities regarding the banking system in our country and the way they operate. In light of some recent incidents one might ask whether everything is okay with our banking system.

Mr Speaker, not long ago, we read in the newspaper that monies invested by ordinary Papua New Guineans with a small licensed financial institution in Lae have gone missing and not accounted for.

Secondly, we also read in the newspaper that a senior officer of our largest bank in the country had forged the signature of an eminent person in the country –

**Mr Kerenga Kua** – Point of Order! The honourable Member for Kundiawa-Gembogl knows the people he is referring to because it has been published in the media for quite some time. Since this matter is before the Court, it would be wrong to make such inferences.

So I would like to suggest through the Chair that this part of the statement be excluded from his question.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Minister, your Point of Order is in order.  
Honourable Member for Kundiawa-Gembogl, please ask your questions.

**Mr TOBIAS KULANG** – At least the Parliament has heard.

Before I ask my questions, in the recent past, the same bank had aided a transaction for millions of kina of public money where they claimed that the Prime Minister signed the letter of approval. In fact, the Prime Minister stated that he did not sign the letter.

**02/04**

Under the guidelines of financial institutions of this country, there is a requirement of due care and in this instance and from my opinion, it required only a simple phone

call to the Prime Minister's Office to confirm if the signature was the Prime Minister's before the transaction was facilitated.

What is happening with the banking system of this country? Are these incidents just the tip of the iceberg and should we be concerned that there are weaknesses in the banking system, the system that turns the economic wheel of this country? If it fails, the whole house will come down.

Don't forget the September 2008 experience of the Lehman Brothers; they said it will not fail but it did.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Member, please ask your questions.

**Mr TOBIAS KULANG** – (1) Should there be a cause for concern when our banking systems fail to take proper security measures?

I also wish to know what the Central Bank will do in a situation where one bank has a substantial business interest with the State or government where the principles of independence of banks is likely to be compromised.

People who are on the boards of these banks also have substantial business interests with the State. Sometimes transactions with the State which require rigid scrutiny can be compromised because of fear of loss of business.

(2) What can the Central Bank do in situations like these?

(3) Are these sporadic and isolated incidents or are these signs that we should be concerned?

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me thank the Member for Kundiawa-Gembogl for raising very important questions that have a strong relevance to the way we do business in this country.

For a start, let me provide some background information. We operate on a very small economic environment. Our financial system that feeds off the current financial structure we have is very small.

But nonetheless, let me say with no reservation that we have a prudence system in place which governs the operation of the Central Bank. The Central Bank is totally independent of government control. We maintain discussions at an arm's

length but they have full authority in the dissension of how banks and financial institutions are regulated in the country.

The good Member raised some issues concern but as you can understand, ours is a small economic environment where the major players in our banking systems are not big. We have a very small financial institution system and the current government's policy is to ensure that we support our small to medium business sector. We also are encouraging the growth of the micro finance sector but that also has some capacity issues as we speak.

The Member correctly raised a question about a small financial institution that is facing some liquidity issues right now. That is a business issue that the small financial institution is facing and I think the Central Bank is on top of this one. Financial institutions must have in place strong security measures. Anyone who wants to venture into the financial business, banking business, micro finances or savings and loans business must comply with strict and stringent financial legislation and mandatory requirements that the Central Bank has put in place.

For example, if you want to go into banking you must have a minimum of K15 million of deposit guaranteed to be held in the Central Bank. So those are instruments and the policies of the Central Bank that regulate and control financial institutions. That financial institution that is currently facing a liquidity problem will be brought under the scrutiny of Central Bank, and those held responsible will be penalized. You are dealing with small savings that belong to ordinary Papua New Guineans who are investing in that micro finance so there is a price attached to it.

I can give my assurance that that small financial institution that is now facing some financial problems will be brought within the scrutiny of Central Bank and those involved will be penalized if it is correct. I think the Central Bank has given a warning to that financial institution to try to reshape and revitalize its investment profiles and its own financial structures so that it can fully meet its obligations to those who have deposited money.

**03/04**

In regard to weaknesses in the banking system, as I have said, the Government maintains control at an arm's length, while the Central Bank takes total jurisdiction

and control in as far as monitoring what takes place in commercial banks in this country.

PNG has a very small commercial bank network as we only have four or five banks doing business. They maintain their own market place in this country and because there are only a few banks operating, there is a possibility of them doing business with the State and other clients whom they have been maintaining for some time.

Mr Speaker, I have no problem with the bank doing business with the State, as long as they are doing it above the board and in total transparency and ensure that they are not compromising their position as bankers. This is where the role of the Central Bank comes into play, where they need to control and monitor these activities.

A question was raised yesterday by the Governor of Southern Highlands, Honourable William Powi, concerning the interest rate. We have consulted the Central Bank to look into this matter, particularly the interest rates and the fees that the banks charge on withdrawals and checking of account balances.

We have asked the Central Bank to look into this matter and make sure that the fees charged are justified economically and not charged on daily transactions.

Mr Speaker, as you are aware, the Government announced that interest rates of the National Development Bank would drop to 6.5 per cent to assist our agriculture and our small to medium entrepreneurial sectors.

We deliberately made those interventions at 6.5 per cent through the approval of the National Development Bank Board. This will hopefully trigger much of the other interest rates charged by other banks. As I said, many of the interest rates are based on market places and as a result, the Central Bank is trying to control them to keep it within the affordable range but in most instances, those rates are charged based on banks own rate that is determined to play off at the financial markets.

Mr Speaker, let me assure the honourable Member that the banks are doing well. If the Central Bank is not doing well, we will not have K9 billion today in foreign reserves, which are assets that stabilize the way foreign currency behave. This is an indication of how well Central Bank is doing business.

The Central Bank is doing fine in managing and controlling the regulation aspects of how banks and financial institutions have been conducted in this country.

Mr Speaker, I attended a Human Resources presentation yesterday at Grand Papua Hotel from 12 p.m. to 1.p.m. At that presentation, the Central Bank received an award for the best Human Resources practitioner. The Central Bank Governor thanked the Government of PNG publicly for always giving that independence to Central Bank and maintaining control at an arm's length at the micro-policy level, which has maintained the prudence and independence that cascaded to the way financial systems have been evolving overtime.

I can assure this Parliament that the total liquidity in our system that is embraced within our financial institution right across the country is so high that at the moment there is so much liquidity in our banking system.

We have not ventured out as a Government to borrow to finance our current deficit because we are adequately supported by the current liquidity we have in our system and that is a strong indication that Central Bank, through its own governance structure, has been maintaining control over our banks.

But on the Member's concern, we give our greater assurance that if there are any indications of banks trying to play big and use strong arm tactics against our common Papua New Guineans and the country, the Government will also instruct through Central Bank to ensure that policies are mitigated and banks are friendly to our country's development.

At the moment there is no cause for concern.

In relation to that small finance institution at the brink of collapse, we are getting the Central Bank to look into that matter. And if those who are running the micro-bank have neglected the small-time investors and depositors, then they will be held accountable.

**Mr RONNY KNIGHT** – Mr Speaker, my questions to the Minister for Communications concern the services of Digicel and Bemobile, the only two mobile telecommunication companies operating in the country.

I am disappointed with the limited and unsatisfactory services these two companies are providing.

The Digicel voice call network seems better but its latest services are very poor most of the time and marginalized.



04/04

The Bemobile system seems to be the other way around. The voice call network is seems to be a problem but the data network is really good when it works but most of the times it is off for long periods. Both companies' coverage in my province is miserably lacking in serving the whole province and outer LLGs. Both companies' are corporate entities but they are providing these substandard services and are asking Members of Parliament to assist to build towers for communication. Why is this? They should have enough profits to do this or obtain loans from commercial banks to expand their businesses. We seem to be paying premium prices for substandard services.

Mr Speaker, I next bring to attention the problem of our *Kundu 2* service which was promised several years ago. I have been reliably informed that the equipment to install *Kundu 2* services in Manus was diverted to New Ireland a couple of years ago. I have also been informed that there is now equipment sitting idle in Port Moresby and I do not why it is gathering dust there.

My questions to the Minister are:

(1) Can the Minister direct Digicel and Bemobile to provide the services they promise and advertise on TV and radio, and investigate the quality of services in Manus?

(2) Is it a reality that these companies cannot afford to build additional towers and that they need us to fund them?

(3) If that is not true, can the Minister also direct them to roll out the extra towers to maintain whole coverage of the whole province?

(4) When can we expect this to be carried out?

(5) Can he also get the powers concerned to provide *Kundu 2* TV service to Manus so that our people can see that our government is working for them?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr JIM MIRINGTORO** – I would like to thank the Member for Manus for his series of questions regarding the quality of service provided by Digicel and Bemobile, communication towers and the roll out of *Kundu 2*.

I would like to say that in regards to the quality of service provided by Bemobile and Digicel in Manus, Digicel is currently using 2G towers. In Port

Moresby, you will notice that you are using 3G towers. The 2G tower voice calls are clear but data network is not as fast.

Digicel has got almost 780 towers around the country covering about 40 per cent of the country, if I can recall correctly. The company is now trying to improve its service quality by introducing 3G in other areas and in some, it is already using 4G services.

That is one of the problems faced by Manus regarding Digicel services. As for Bemobile, it only has 121 sites and therefore, its coverage is not very good in the country. The latest arrangement with Bemobile will see improvements in its services in the country in the near future.

Regarding the communication towers there is requirement under the NICTA Law that service providers must make certain penetration in urban centers and rural areas. Therefore, I believe that the reason why the service providers are telling the Members of Parliament to provide certain amounts of money is basically because they will not go into areas where they do not see any market. Therefore, it is uneconomical for them to do so. This is an issue that my department and NICTA will look at and discuss with the service providers.

There is also a rural communication roll out programme funded by the World Bank to complement the work of the first service providers, especially in very remote areas in the country.

In regards the equipment for the roll out program for *Kundu 2* being diverted to New Ireland, it is not true. New Ireland Provincial Government bought its own equipment. Through my own investigations, I found out that there is equipment available, but *Kundu 2* has no money to purchase them.

I, therefore, advice the Member that if he can provide K105 000 for the purchase of a power amplifier and recorder; K50 000 for a VSAT dish and accessories and K20 000 for the engineers from NBC to go and install these equipments, then in a matter of a few weeks, *Kundu 2* can be telecasted to Manus.

Thank you, very much.

05/04

**Mr ROBERT GANIM** – My questions are directed to the Minister for Justice and Attorney General, and I would like the Acting Minister for Police, Prime Minister Peter O’Neill to take note.

In 1997 the Parliament passed the *Inter-group Fighting Act* as a result of the escalating law and order problems in the Highlands, especially tribal fighting. Yet, it is one of the least enforced laws in the country since its enactment. Tribal fighting is still an occurrence particularly in the Highlands.

A brief example of that case in relation to my question occurred in March 2013 when a story was posted through on the Internet through YouTube and I quote, “due to the loopholes in the *Inter-group Fighting Act 1977*, the Wabag District Court dismissed a matter brought forth by the Wabag police who have apprehended and charged 49 men for fighting, resulting in death, under the *Inter-group Fighting Act*.”

This fight was between two warring clans in Wabag District. The presiding magistrate had to dismiss this matter forthwith and asked the 49 men to walk out of the courtroom free because he could not establish from the Wabag police a fighting zone declared by the provincial government, which is the issuing authority. This means that in order for the court to proceed and deal with matters brought forth under the *Inter-group Fighting Act 1997*, the provincial government must first meet and declare the area a fighting zone. There may also be other issues pertaining to the law that requires standing in order to prosecute such matter in the court of law.”

Mr Speaker, my series of questions are ;

(1) To what extent does the Criminal law and the inter-group fighting law are in direct conflict when the Police cannot intervene in inter-group fights and make arrests and diffuse the situation?

(2) To what extent is the State guilty of a crime when valuable human lives are lost and properties worth millions of kina are burnt down because of loopholes created by the State?

Since 1977, following the adaptation of the *Inter-group Fighting Act*, thousands of lives and millions of kina worth of properties have been destroyed especially in the Highlands because of tribal fights.

(3) Could this not be an act of genocide on the part of the State, when the State knew all along that there was a loophole in the *Inter-group Fighting Act* but it deliberately ignored the option to make amendments all this time?

(4) Can the Minister direct the Constitutional Law Reform Commission to revisit the issue of Intergroup fighting in the country and commission an investigation with multi-partial approach and wide range of reference?

(5) Can the Minister guarantee this Parliament and the people of Papua New Guinea as of the date of this question, the Government will act swiftly to fix the loophole in the *Inter-group Fighting Act* so to empower Police not only to intervene in tribal fighting situations but also powers to prosecute in any court of law?

**Mr KERENGA KUA** – Thankyou Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for Wabag for these series of questions.

I will give him a detailed reply in writing on the details of the *Inter-group Fighting Act* later on so that we will know its current legal status. I am not sure of the details of that particular Act that he is referring to because I didn't have any prior opportunity to address that particular legislation, so I cannot answer the question properly off the top of my head. I will give him something in writing in due course about how this particular legislation works.

However, in a general sense, I would like to deal with some of his questions.. There are a number of legislations that together deal with crime situations.

**06/04**

For example, you can have the *Inter-group Fighting Act* and the *Criminal Code Act* dealing with the same situation. So if you have a situation where both legislations overlap then those who are responsible for laying criminal charges have to decide whether they lay charges under the provisions of the *Inter-group Fighting Act* or under the provisions of the *Criminal Code Act* because both of them apply concurrently. So it is up to their sense of professional judgment and in this case, the policemen on the ground will have to make a decision about whether they invoke the *Criminal Code Act* or the other and that as I said is a matter of professional judgment that they have to exercise.

If there are going to be complications in invoking the *Inter-group Fighting Act*, they'd be better off invoking the *Criminal Code*. If there is property destruction involved, grievous bodily harm or death involved, there are adequate provisions in the *Criminal Code Act* to deal with such cases.

They need to look at these and take advice from the Public Prosecutor's office before they lay the charges so that when they do charge and arrest people and take it into the courtroom for prosecution, those charges must stick. This is a professional call that policemen have to take and I'd like to encourage them that if they are uncertain, they should take advice from police lawyers at the headquarters or from the Public Prosecutor's office before they venture into actually laying the charges.

On the question of whether the Government is inferentially committing genocide on the people around the Highlands area by not properly implementing the *Inter-group Fighting Act*, I very much doubt it because I think that the responsibility comes down to the local leaders who they are the people on the ground.

From the council or the traditional leadership hierarchy to the formal leaders like councils, peace officers, village court magistrates, educated people, church people, Open Members, Governors and everybody who professes to hold a leadership position of one type or another, we all have the responsibility of stepping up when there is a volatile situation, taking responsibility in real time before it develops on and gets out of control.

I am from the Highlands myself and I have dealt with a number of these situations and I know that if you do not move in real time, the matter gets out of control. So if you want to be a leader and hold yourself out as a leader, you need to step forward in real time very quickly.

You will then be able to stem it before it gets out of control and that is where I see the weakness. People wait for things to develop and crystallize before they step in, they want to understand it better but while they are sitting and watching, this thing has created a momentum of its own and goes totally out of control and by then, the damage is done and the rights and the interests now change and the landscape is altered. So people's position requires change; where as previously they would have been amendable through peace, harmony and some talk. This time because they have suffered some damage in their hands they need to address that as well so the landscape is totally altered.

Taking the opportunity posed by this question, I encourage every leader of leadership to always move very quickly if you smell or sense the slightest possibility of some communal problems arising before they get out of control.

We must not depend upon the government all the time; the government has its limitations. The primary responsibility goes back to the people on the ground. We should be asking leadership at every level and encouraging them to step up every time social disorder issue arises.

On to the question about whether or not we can direct the Constitutional and Law Reform Commission to review this Act; I will look at the question and if there is a need to review the provisions of that Act in the manner it is designed and implemented then that review will be also conducted, because while we are imposing it on the leadership, if there is any legislative support that we need to do to make it responsive to the needs of society then we will have to do it.

That is our duty and we will look at it and if there is a need, we will do it.

On the issue of loopholes in this particular Act, we will look at it to see if there is any deficiency which prevents the effective prosecution of crimes.

So it is a full utility. As to whether it has any continued use in the current circumstances and whether a repeal is necessary to apply the Criminal Code, it would require looking at all those questions together.

I make an undertaking to the Member for Wabag to give him a written response.

**07/04**

**Mr NIXON MANGEPE** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for recognizing Lagai-Pogera once again.

My questions are directed to my brother, the Minister for Environment and Conservation.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Member, may I remind you to address the honourable Member appropriately. Please withdraw the word brother because it is inappropriate.

**Mr NIXON MANGEPE** – Mr Speaker, I will withdraw the word.

My questions to the Minister for Environment and Conservation are;

(1) Why doesn't the Department have an officer on site to monitor the tailings deposited into the Porgera River?

(2) Why does the Department rely on developers report instead of conducting their own report?

(3) Is the Department aware of the environmental issues that SML and the surrounding communities are faced with at the moment?

(4) Can the Department engage some environmental scientists to look at the impact of the environment caused by the mine?

**Mr JOHN PUNDARI** – Mr Speaker, I thank my honourable Member and brother, the Member for Lagai-Porgera, for his questions on the environmental impacts of Porgera Mine.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Minister, let me remind you to address the honourable Member appropriately and not as your brother.

**Mr JOHN PUNDARI** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your kind reminder, which is well taken.

Mr Speaker, the agency that I am Minister of is tasked with the responsibility to monitor compliance of environmental permit conditions and also to protect our biodiversity or environment as per our Fourth Goal of our *National Constitution*.

Mr Speaker, our people must know and understand that you can not just have your environment or biodiversity and at the same time have resource investment. There is and there will be sacrifices that we will have to make in so far as our environment is concerned if we are to allow resource investment in the country. And Porgera is one example that is in existence already.

Mr Speaker, I agree with the honourable Member that there are environmental impacts in so far as the Porgera Mine is concerned. And as a result of numerous complaints and issues raised by the surrounding landowners, I have instructed the Department to take in stock environmental impact around the mine so as to finding a way forward with the landowners as well as the investor and other agencies of Government such as the Mineral Resources Authority.

Mr Speaker, until such a time I have the reports from my department, I will be able to relate with the honourable Member and will seek his assistance as to finding a way forward.

**Mr JAMES LAGEA** – Mr Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister for Petroleum and Energy.

I am sorry to say that I have asked this same question for the fourth time now and records are shown in the daily *Hansard*.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Member, under the *Standing Orders*, you are not allowed to ask this same question again if it has been answered by the Minister concerned.

**Mr JAMES LAGEA** – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I did not get a good answer from the Minister so that is why I want to ask him again.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Member, the Chair will allow you to do so.

**Mr JAMES LAGEA** – Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Gobe project is situated in my electorate in the Southern Highlands Province. This project has been in operation for over 20 years now, but the agreement signed by the landowners and the government has expired some 15 years back. Up until now there has not been any review on the operation of the project from the government with the landowners.

My provincial government did not benefit from this project in the form of any support grant since its inception. The signing of agreement was between the landowners and the National Government. The Provincial Government was not a party to it.

My question is; can the Minister inform the Parliament of when the review will be done?

You mentioned that there are no funds available and now we have reached the end of the financial year. If there are no funds then say so. Is Gobe not contributing to



the economy of the country? Can you make your stand clear when exactly will the review be done?

**08/04**

Mr Speaker, if it is difficult for you to give a certain time for the review, can I suggest a time for you so that the department can act?

**Mr WILLIAM DUMA** – Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Kagua -Erave for raising this important question again.

Mr Speaker, I cannot confirm whether a review has been done in the last 15 year. It could be less but in the last Parliament, I recall the honourable Member raising this issue and I responded at that time that it was not only Gobe that had an outstanding MOA review process but the other oil producing PDL area of Kutubu also was in the same boat.

Mr Speaker, I don't like to be frank, but I have done my bit and I have been consistently asking for funds to be allocated for those important reviews to be conducted.

In the case of Moran, there was a review that was going to be held in Mt Hagen but due to so many disagreements amongst the landowners themselves, that review was not concluded properly and remains to be concluded.

Mr Speaker, I agree with the Member that the issue of Gobe is an important issue but I cannot confirm or deny whether it is true to say that the Provincial Government has not received any benefit whatsoever. That is a surprise to me and I will assure the Member that I will undertake some inquiries and be able to respond to his questions.

I agree that the issue of Gobe is an outstanding issue and pending the outcome of the review, whatever benefits that are normally payable apart from the royalties are always kept in a suspense account and the landowners do not miss out on those benefits. And as a responsible Government, that has always being the practice.

Mr Speaker, at this point in time, I cannot give the honourable Member and the people of Gobe a precise time. It will all depend upon the availability of funds.

Mr Speaker, I also take this opportunity to point out that even in the cases of Kutubu, Gobe and Moran, despite the National Government and the landowners

agreeing to put a cap on the outstanding MOA commitments of K235 million, we have only being able to allocate K7 million this year.

Mr Speaker, it is an important issue and I need the co-operation of all of us here to understand and to allocate funding so that we resolve those outstanding issues.

**Mr KILA HAODA** – Mr Speaker, thank you for recognizing the people of Central Province. My question is in regards to the Kairuku-Hiri DSIP and Service Funds.

Mr Speaker, I wish to ask the Deputy Prime Minister but since he is not in the Chamber, I will re-direct it to the Prime Minister, Honourable Peter O'Neill, and I would like to ask the Ministers for Finance, Treasury, National Planning and Implementation to take note.

Mr Speaker, the people of Kairuku-Hiri cannot benefit from the DSIP and PIP Programmes because the Court of Disputed Returns have ruled the Member's election null and void.

Mr Speaker, being the Governor and the Deputy Chairman of the Joint District Planning and Budget Priorities Committee and upon the advise of the Government Caucus, I should have naturally rounded the Committee to provide service to the people.

Mr Speaker, my provincial administrator advised that when a Member is in court, his funds are frozen. In addition, the Secretary of Rural Development and Implementation has advised verbally that when a Member is out of office his funds cannot be used.

Mr Speaker, for the sake of my people of Kairuku-Hiri, I cannot swallow this advice. The money belongs to the people of Kairuku-Hiri and it is meant to be used to provide services for them.

Mr Speaker, time is of essence and it is running out. We all do not know when the courts will give a decision on the Kairuku-Hiri case. As we all know, elections take time and before we know it, the year will come to an end.

Mr Speaker, as it is a legal issue, can the Prime Minister give me his views in writing as to what sort of advice I should follow from the following options:

(a) The advice of the Government Caucus which allows me to Chair the JDPBPC meetings and continue to deliver service to the people of Kairuku/Hiri;

(b) The advice of my provincial administrator where a court decision precedes the discharge of funds; or

(c) The advice of the Secretary of Rural Development and Implementation that when a Member of Parliament is non-existent the funds cannot be used.

I am pretty sure this case applies to other districts as well.

**09/04**

**Mr PETER O'NEILL** –Mr Speaker, I thank the Governor of Central on his question regarding the funds for Kairuku-Hiri District.

Firstly, let me say that I am very surprised at the advice that his provincial administrator has given him.

I am not aware of any court decision that has set precedents where the account of a district has been frozen because a Member has vacated the seat and I agree with the Governor that these funds do not belong to the Members of Parliament. They belong to the people and belong to the districts. And again, a Member of Parliament is not a signatory to the accounts of the districts. The signatories are the provincial administrator, district administrator and district treasurer.

I think that it is important that under the law, as the deputy chairman of the JDP&BPC, he should conduct a meeting and work on the priorities that the committee has set previously.

I think by working with the district administration he can roll out the projects that he is talking about, as long as they are in compliance with the *Public Finances Management Act* and due tender processes from both the provincial tenders board and the Central Supplies and Tenders Board are followed.

As long as the process is followed, I see no reason why he cannot have access to the funds so that our good people of Kairuku-Hiri can benefit.

So I will get the Minister for Finance to direct the Secretary for Finance to address this matter to him in writing so that he can access those funds immediately.

## GRIEVANCE DEBATE

Question proposed –

That Grievances be noted.

**Mr JOHN PUNDARI** (Kompiam-Ambum – Minister for Environment and Conservation) –Mr Speaker, I just want to make a few points in this Grievance Debate.

Mr Speaker, we attained self-government in 1973 and Independence in 1975. The man that took us to self-government became our first Chief Minister. He took us to Independence on 16 September, 1975, and became our first Prime Minister. That person is in the Chamber and with us in this Parliament today. He is none other than the Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare.

Mr Speaker, I see him as a living monument of our sovereignty and our Independence; a living monument of our self-government and our Independence.

Mr Speaker, we also have on the Floor of Parliament the likes of Sir Julius Chan who was alongside the Chief when he took us to self-government and Independence.

Mr Speaker, looking at the history of our system of government, Sir Michael Thomas Somare never once became Prime Minister or the CEO of this country through a Vote of No Confidence.

Mr Speaker, he took the mandate from the people in the general elections. If you go through the records of our Parliament, he never became Prime Minister by way of a Vote of No Confidence; he became Prime Minister only through the mandate that our people exercise through the ballot boxes in general elections. The people voted him into office as Prime Minister of our country. Though he was the man behind the *Constitution*, he never used the provisions of a Vote of No Confidence in our *Constitution* to become Prime Minister of our country and lift off my hat to him.

Mr Speaker, he is yet again a living example of our democracy and someone who respects our *Constitution*.

**10/04**

Mr Speaker, I wish to express my personal view on how governments come into power. Governments are voted into power by the people through the election process and it is also through the elections that a government can be removed.

I don't think it is fair to get into government or to form government through the back doors of the provision of Votes of No Confidence.

I believe that our people have that right by way of our *Constitution* to put in a government and to remove a government. Our people have that exclusive right to put in and remove a government through the constitutional provisions that our people have by the way of the ballot boxes. And what any good government can do is to improve the integrity of the electoral process so that our people can exercise that right.

In regard to assessing the performance of government or any other governments in the future, it must be left to our people.

Mr Speaker, some governments were removed through Votes of No Confidence for poor performance, corruption, and et cetera. But I have not seen a Prime Minister who was removed by a Vote of No Confidence and sent to jail for alleged corruption against that government.

Mr Speaker, you would probably agree with me that from our history, we have never seen a Prime Minister been put in jail just for corrupt deals. All the reasons for removing a government were purely for power. Of course, the provision of a Vote of No Confidence had been only enriching us in the power game and that it has never ever served our people the due justice, in terms of development, delivery of goods and services and improving their lives.

The governments that have come in through the Vote of No Confidence have not made any major differences. A couple of commissions of inquiries against the leaders of government were thrown out as a result of Votes of No Confidence and ended in nothing.

Mr Speaker, Sir Michael Thomas Somare has never exercised that provision of a Vote of No Confidence to come into office. He respected our peoples' right to put in their government of choice or to remove them.. He is still our example today.

As a representative of the people of Kompiam-Ambum, I will support any law that ensures that our people are the judges and have the power to remove or elect a government through the ballot boxes.

I challenge all of us, Mr Speaker, because there is only one position for you as a Speaker, and there is only one position for the Alternative Prime Minister who sits on other side as the Leader of the Opposition. There is only one position for the chief executive officer of the land and that is the Prime Minister.

I think the more we undermine people's right to mandating a government, the more we destroy ourselves and destroy our stability. Therefore, anything to strengthen stability must be supported.

**Mr WILLIAM DUMA** (Hagen Open – Minister for Petroleum and Energy) – Mr Speaker, I rise to express my view as the Member for Hagen and not as a State Minister, and the views that I express are not necessarily of Members of the United Resource Party.

**11/04**

I am concerned for the lack of attention and indifferences demonstrated by both political leaders and people who are in charge of the public service.

Mr Speaker, we are a country that has more natural resources than our neighbouring countries in this region. When it comes to maximising revenue collections for the resources that have been taken out of our country; political leaders including ourselves and those who are entrusted to collect revenue do not take the issue of revenue collection very seriously.

For instance, in my department, I have tried many times to stop this practice where officers simply allow applicants to underpay the required fees. I am sure that most of us will agree that this is a trend that is happening right throughout the departments.

For example, in the logging industry when a Forestry officer goes and monitors logging activities to make sure that the right and specified volume of logs are leaving our shores – and as a poor underpaid public servant working in a remote

area - he will deliberately undervalue the logs and not record the proper number of logs to be exported.

Mr Speaker, I stand to be corrected on this assumption, but I believe that is a common practice. Another example of collecting taxes is from shop keepers.

I have noticed that some of our shop keepers prefer to deal on a cash basis, and I hardly see them go to the banks to bank their takings.

Mr Speaker, when we are allowing these sorts of things to happen, we are losing revenue. People say that we are a blessed country and yet when it comes to collecting revenue that is due to our people, we do not collect it honestly and properly. As a result, we are forced and have been forced in the last thirty or forty years to go to institutions such as the World Bank to borrow money.

Mr Speaker, I can assure you that if we collected our revenues properly, we would not go to international financiers to borrow more money.

Mr Speaker, the World Bank is not a good example, and I stand to be corrected here when I say that the World Bank does not have a good track record of leading a developing country out of a mess. There is no shining example for the World Bank to proudly stand up and tell the world that it has been able to help a developing country reach development stage. Therefore, I wonder why we still go to these sorts of institutions to borrow money.

Mr Speaker, it is about time that we review and find how to raise revenue internationally.

I for one strongly believe that if we took a stock take on the entire view on the way we have been handling our finances, we would not have to seek assistance from international agencies. We do not have to remain as beggars and be dictated by those financiers. In most cases, they lend money to us in terms that are more favourable to them than to us. This is so obvious when they say that it is a development fund.

Mr Speaker, while I have the opportunity, there is another issue that concerns me. As a leader of this country, I am proud to say that I am one of those who contributed to what is now the PNG LNG Project.

Mr Speaker, although natural gas was discovered in Hides in 1998, the licensees stood idle and did not bother to develop that resource. This was simply because most of the licensees were world leading energy companies who had resource projects all over the world and making money from it. They could afford to

warehouse and let this resource of ours lie idle below our earth and do nothing because it was not affecting their balance sheets.

Mr Speaker, this was because they were making money elsewhere and why then would they deal with a difficult country like Papua New Guinea, the landowners and corrupt leaders. It was only when we were able to put pressure on them by threatening to take away their licenses that they decided to develop this resource.

That is now history and we now have a world class LNG project in this country and come 2014, we will be able to export our first LNG shipment and become a member of this exclusive club of LNG exporting countries.

**12/04**

**Mr TITUS PHILEMON** (Milne Bay) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the time to speak during this Grievance Debate.

Mr Speaker, I would firstly like to support the statement by the Minister for Environment and Conservation. I believe that is the way we should govern this country after every general election.

I want to add to the comments made yesterday by the Member for Kavieng and Minister for Public Enterprises regarding the reform system.

Mr Speaker, we all know very well that the reform system came into this country in 1995 and it went right down to the local level governments where the WDC were identified and presidents became members of the provincial assembly. This made it very effective in terms of consultation and coordination between the national parliamentarians and right down to the local level governments to the provincial assemblies. But until now, the current Government has actually put a lot of teeth into it by allocating funds right down to the LLGs, the districts and the provincial governments.

I stand here this morning to commend the current Government for recognizing the provincial governors and also the local level government who are elected by our people.

Mr Speaker, we are already halfway through the year, and I just want to clarify here to the Parliament and especially the people that the slowness in the implementation of some of the major projects that we have is not to be blamed on the governors or even the Members of Parliament. This blame should go to the



implementers and also to the contractors. Most of the time the blame comes to us for not doing our job when in fact we have allocated the funds and we have already made the decisions for these projects to be implemented. But it is really because of the implementing agency bureaucratic red tape that projects are not implemented and we get blamed for it, and likewise for contractors.

I support what the Government is doing now to fast track by removing all these obstacles of implementation. I would like to say that coming to Parliament and being the Governor of my province at this time when more funds have been allocated is more meaningful for me than being the Governor of the province in the past. I know I have money and I can be able to implement a lot of projects in my province, which I am doing right now. I want to thank the O'Neill-Dion Government for giving the funding to the provincial governors.

Mr Speaker, the other issue I want to bring to this Grievance Debate is in regard to the current awareness forum that is being conducted on Woodlark Island. If you haven't been to Woodlark Island, ask the Governor of New Ireland, the former Prime Minister, who has already visited there. He can tell you how beautiful the island is. It is so beautiful that you would not want to operate a mine on it. It is paradise in Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, the awareness forum is conducted on the island by a team of officers led by the Mineral Resource Authority. The team is made up of officers from Treasury, Labour and Industrial Relations, Environment and Conservation, Petromin, State Solicitors Office, and the Milne Bay Provincial Government. They are conducting predevelopment awareness to the people because an application, I believe, will be approved very soon.

I support the predevelopment forum and the consultations that are taking place but my concern is, why aren't the officers from the Department of Lands and Physical Planning not on that team? Why didn't they participate? The land issue on Woodlark Island has been brought to this Parliament and we have written to responsible Ministers over our concern for ownership to go back to the landowners before the mine starts on the island.

That is my concern as the Governor of the province and the former Member for Samarai Murua, where the current Deputy Speaker hails from and I know he endorses what I'm saying.

13/04

The officers from Lands and Physical Planning should be on the team. The people are concerned because that land is not their land. Where are these people going to go to and make all the plans? I learnt on TV about this forum and was not given any letter or any information that this team was visiting Woodlark Island. They just flew over our heads. They flew over Misima, where they created a huge crater there, to get to Woodlark. Those people are now negotiating on Woodlark Island and if a problem were to arise, they will not be around.

I know the people are mindful and aware about these negotiations but the main issue is the land. And the Lands department and the officers are on the island and I want to make an appeal to the Minister for Lands to make sure that his officers must attend to the land issue.

If they avoid talking about the land then what is the point? That very land is where the mine will be located. The land will be the main issue of discussion because the mine certainly won't be built in midair. Today, we hear a lot of grievances and complaints from members who represent mining areas because agreements that were signed in the past have not been honored by the State. And Misima mines is an example of how agreements have not been kept.

Today Misima is a scar in the heart of the Milne Bay Provincial Government. We have given our land and because minerals are non-renewable, the value of the land has gone, unlike agricultural land.

I have heard Members from the mining areas raising concerns and I, too, feel a need to raise these concerns because when there is something good everybody runs to it, but when there is nothing left, nobody wants to attend to it, and this is something we must change.

It is important to emphasise very strongly on mine closure plans in our mining agreements. What happens when the mine closes? What is there for the people? These are questions we should take into account in these agreements.

I want to say thank you for the opportunity given to me to express my grievances as we have been continuously raising this issue in parliament, and I hope this is the last time that I have raised it because I will be watching.

I know through this development we will move our provinces and the country forward but please, we must address the issue of land which is so important to all of us.

**Sir PUKA TEMU** (Abau Open - Minister for Public Service) – I wish to contribute to this debate. Firstly, I wish to take the key from the honourable Minister for Environment and Conservation and discuss some of the issues that he has raised, particularly on the issue of the *Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates* and the experience of a Vote of No Confidence bringing instability.

In each term of Parliament and now very visible in the Ninth Parliament, very good leaders are being voted in who are well educated and articulate.

People are beginning to pick up the need for voting very good leaders in the country and, therefore, I think it is very important for Parliament now to really look at the Vote of No confidence Provision. At the moment, our Prime Minister is trying to look at ways on how we can maintain a stable government so that there is predictability and policies are implemented on time. PNG will then be looked at as a destination for foreign investment. And I think we owe it to our country.

We must now seriously look at Section 145; the provisions of the Vote of No Confidence. As an individual and someone who has been involved in no confidence votes and has watched over the years, I believe it is time for us to seriously look at doing away with the provisions of Votes of No Confidence. I think it is time for us to look at the term of Parliament in this regard. I think it is time for us to promote parties as strong political institutions. Therefore, elections should be focused on party policies and the mandate that we want to get must be based on party policies so voter education will have to move towards party policies. The party which has the best policies will be given the mandate and the party leader automatically becomes the Prime Minister for a full term.

**14/04**

Mr Speaker, I seriously believe that the Parliament must now make that decision in preparation for the future. I think we have come to a mature level. With the public awareness and education going on out there, there is a lot of debate on transparency and accountability and the spirit out there is very good. Most of the

debates and questions that are raised on the Floor of Parliament are based on good governance, accountability and transparency.

If we move concurrently towards promoting party institutions and the people vote according to policies, we don't need to campaign and lobby and waste our time. And I look forward to a time when we amend the *Constitution* and the Organic Law to allow the party leader to automatically become Prime Minister. You don't have to be invited by the Governor-General to come and vote for the Prime Minister. And we will not camp in Alotau anymore so we would have done away with that culture. That must stop but it requires this Parliament to provide the political will. We really have to consider that very seriously.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, from experience we have learnt that numbers on the Floor of Parliament determine the way that we move Bills on this Floor of Parliament. And just recently, through the leadership of the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General, we have repealed some laws that we bulldozed through.

We have also had to make amendments to money laws that we have passed in Parliament. For instance, since the passage of the *Organic Law on the Provincial and Local Level Governments* in 1995, many amendments had to be done and had to go through the Supreme Court. Does that mean that we have not been debating the Bills properly before we pass them? Our structure in Parliament probably has to be reviewed. We are now a unicameral system, and I think it demands for a bicameral system to be debated. Perhaps we need an upper house and senators so that any constitutional bill, organic law or enabling law can probably be debated at the upper house. And when it's on the Floor of Parliament, we will just vote for it including the Appropriation Bill. We have had these experiences so why are we not enacting these changes? I strongly support and advocate that the bicameral be seriously looked at.

In restructuring the Parliament into a bicameral system, we may have to say that each province will elect one senator each so we have 20 senators. We then amend the *Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Governments*, and allow the Governors to go back to the provinces and grow the economy of the country in the provinces. But we have to resource them fully so that a Governor can then help to grow the country's economy because that's where the growth has to take place.

The third issue that I want to debate on is the issue of autonomy. How many times will the honorable Governors wait to walk the corridors of Waigani? Why are

we letting politicians go to Vulupundi Haus looking for project funds? We should not be allowing leaders to go and look for bureaucrats, it's a wrong structure.

Mr Speaker, we now must pick up the issue of autonomy. Waigani, National Parliament and the provincial assemblies must be linked. When we pass Appropriation Bills, we must resource the provinces fully and allow them to raise their funds and select their public servants to run the provinces. Most of the time, we feel insecure about the future.

We have had 38 years of development experience and I am pretty sure that we can guide the Vision 2050, the way we need it to go. Most of the time, we feel unsure to venture into the unknown, therefore, I strongly recommend that we look at it seriously and make decisions in this 9<sup>th</sup> term of Parliament so that in the 10<sup>th</sup> term of Parliament and onwards our political culture, Parliament structure and delivery of services in the provinces will change enormously for the better. The good Lord has blessed this country more than many other countries in the world that I know of.

Mr Speaker, once upon a time, I made a statement here and I quote: "One day the UN Organisation may declare PNG to be the richest black nation on earth". But we can not achieve that if we do not make changes and seriously look at those issues.

**15/04**

**Mr KELLY NARU** (Morobe) – Mr Speaker, thank you once again for recognising me as the servant of the people of Morobe.

Mr Speaker, you are also the servant of the people of Finschhafen, comfortably seated at the Chair of the Speaker, so we will both be able to serve the interest of our people.

Mr Speaker, my grievance is in relation to Civil Aviation and more particularly in relation to air traffic control, unauthorised flights, unlicensed pilots, unlicensed aircrafts, unauthorised airstrips and the issue of proper audits and inspections and related issues.

Mr Speaker, there has been serious revelations in the media last week; on the NBC news and current affairs of an alleged near miss midair collision by two aircrafts recently over Morobe airspace. Two aircrafts almost collided in the air and if you had listened to NBC radio, you would have heard of this incident.

Mr Speaker, the media reported that there was an unlawful interference by a light sixth-wing aircraft with a commercial airline recently. The light aircraft was said to be flying at a very high altitude designated only for bigger aircrafts without authorisation and knowledge of air traffic controllers in Port Moresby. It was heading for an unknown destination in Morobe Province when it allegedly trespassed into the path of an Airlines PNG aircraft that was flying into Nadzab Airport.

Mr Speaker, according to media reports, the pilots of the commercial airline picked up the obstruction on their radar and avoided what could have been a midair collision between two aircrafts that could have resulted in the loss of human lives and another tragic air disaster in Papua New Guinea. According to the news reports, the air traffic control service had no information about the small aircraft's presence in that controlled airspace and it was flying to an unknown designated aerodrome.

Mr Speaker, this is dangerous activity involving an aircraft and it is a very serious breach of the aviation safety under the *Civil Aviation Act of 2000*. The small aircraft in question had reportedly crash-landed on an unauthorised makeshift airstrip last week on the coastline of Bukawa in the Nawae District between Nawae and Finschhafen, and it is now immobile on the ground there.

Mr Speaker, the locals who spoke to the radio journalist who reported the matter on condition of anonymity claimed that the aircraft is owned and flown by a white expatriate man who resides in Wau but he has been operating an aircraft carelessly and he may also been flying without necessary Civil Aviation documents or a license. And some locals claimed that the plane is owned by missionaries. However, that does not justify the numerous unauthorised flights that have been undertaken by this particular pilot. It is not known whether the light plane is registered with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority and whether or not the pilot has an Aviation Market License to fly it.

**16/04**

Is the Minister for Civil Aviation aware of this incident? Is there an investigation into the near miss collision and the infringement and endangerment caused by the light aircraft to the commercial plane over Lae, and what about the illegal aerodrome and unauthorized flights into Morobe Province?

If what has been reported by the NBC national Radio is factual and can be substantiated then it clearly shows that PNG airspace is uncontrollable and continues to be violated by illegal operators.

It would be in the best interest of the people of Morobe and Papua New Guinea to know if the Civil Aviation safety authority and National Airports Corporation has ever received reports of unregistered aircrafts that are operating illegally in Morobe and the country.

Mr Speaker, it is my understanding that a complaint regarding an unregistered light aeroplane operating in Morobe Province had previously been brought to the attention of Civil Aviation and relevant authorities, including political leaders by another third level operator in Lae but nothing was done in terms of investigations.

This third- level airline operator has complained that his airline company was losing out on business in servicing remote airstrips in the province because of competition from an unregistered operator operating out of Wau.

The third level airline operator had also raised concern that the light aircraft had no Global Positioning System or GPS and other communication equipment onboard the plane and was flying illegally to remote airstrips in Morobe and Kerema in the Gulf Province, and the remote mountains of Central Province like Goilala.,

Mr Speaker, only a thorough investigation by Civil Aviation authorities would ascertain that.

Mr Speaker, through you and this Parliament and the Minister for Civil Aviation; in the best interest of air safety, are there proper audits and inspections carried out by Civil Aviation every year on the small privately owned aircrafts, pilots and airstrips? And is there a register that holds all these data? These are questions that come to mind.

Mr Speaker, it seems that the National Airports Corporation and its entities are so hell bent on generating money and are neglecting aircrafts and passenger safety in this country.

We are waiting for another civil aviation disaster to happen and that will open our eyes. They must assume full responsibility regarding safety before we get any unexpected disasters in the aviation industry. And it is my call, Mr Speaker, that the Civil Aviation Minister must issue a statement as soon as possible while investigations are carried out on this concern and issue.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave of Parliament to have the rest of my statement incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

*The rest of the statement reads as follows:*

Mr Speaker, the smuggling of drugs and illegal gold runs including arms and money laundering are imminent in such operations by unregistered aviators as seen all over the world.

Mr Speaker, is it true one of the prime reasons why renegade aircrafts have been going undetected in the airspace of Morobe for many years is because there is no radar system at the Nadzab Airport control tower?.

All air traffic controllers previously stationed at Nadzab have been moved to Port Moresby and control the Morobe airspace sector from there.

The skeleton staff at Nadzab are monitoring landing and take offs through visual and this may contribute to the endangerment of planes.

There are now plans in place by the National Government to develop Nadzab Airport to becoming the second international airport in the country hence the competent authority must assume responsibility for the aircrafts and persons onboard by re-installing vital aircrafts equipment and re-deploying staff at Nadzab.

Mr Speaker, I trust my questions to he Minister have been taken in good faith and can be addressed.

**Mr SASINDRA MUTHUVEL** (West New Britain) – Mr Speaker, I would like to join the debate and raise some points.

We have called for the promotion of tourism in PNG but let us look at issues like airfares. Airfares from Port Moresby to Sydney or Brisbane are cheap. For example, you can go to Brisbane or even Sydney for AUD\$380, but when you want to come into PNG from elsewhere, it is expensive. Even the domestic route from Port Moresby to Hoskins is a minimum of K1 250, which is the equivalent of AUD\$400 or AUD\$500. How can we improve tourism with that kind of airfare?



The second point is accommodation. It is difficult to find decent and safe accommodation in Port Moresby for K700 to K 1000.

**17/04**

Mr Speaker, even as a Member of Parliament, I cannot find decent accommodation with the housing allowance I am paid. The Parliament does not only sit for one week; it continues for two or three weeks and the K2 500 housing allowance will not cover those two or three weeks.

Mr Speaker, with this opportunity, I wish to appeal to you to propose a development plan to build some hostel facilities for the Members of Parliament. This is not new because in most Parliaments around the world hostel facilities are provided specifically for Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, my third point concerns the difficulty of obtaining PNG visas overseas. Papua New Guinea has recently established many overseas Commissions throughout the world but to obtain a visa to come to Papua New Guinea is extremely difficult. For example, if an Indian wants to obtain a visa to come to PNG, it is very difficult because he or she will only be referred to obtain a visa in Port Moresby. This is an extremely difficult situation because how would you expect an Indian to apply for a visa when there is no relative here in PNG to obtain his or her visa in Port Moresby. We have to open up a PNG High Commission in India. If we do not have the right to issue PNG visas in India, how we are going to promote tourism in PNG?

We have many of those bottleneck and attitude problems within the bureaucratic system that will hinder the development of the tourism industry in our country.

Mr Speaker, in West New Britain, we asked Air Niugini if we could subsidize airfares for those who want to come to West New Britain from 19<sup>th</sup> July to 22<sup>nd</sup> July to promote the tourism industry as well as to showcase our province.

The process of obtaining a visa is a nightmare. And it is the same with obtaining work visas and others because it takes too long, sometimes a year. Maybe it is because of the bureaucratic system.

However, if you go to the US Embassy with your family for an interview for a visa, they are ready to give you ten-year multiple entry visa to go for a holiday in US.

Mr Speaker, why do we have a complicated system that makes it difficult for tourists to obtain visas to come to PNG? I believe we have many bureaucratic systems that will keep the tourism industry from booming.

Mr Speaker, one thing that surprises me too is that the Department of Labour and Industry has classified India as a non-English speaking country. I want to put it on record that India is one of the largest English speaking countries in terms of the population. I know that the entire medium of education is through English and I am one of the products of such education system.

However, we have classified India as a threat and a terrorist country. I am not clear as to what sort of terrorism is implied when in fact, many Parliamentary Services staff have attended courses in India, particularly in downstream processing and rural technology.

Mr Speaker, coupled with that, attitudes of some of the public servants is a major hindrance. For instance, I wanted some assistance from the Indian High Commission to get an ambulance and they asked me to submit my proposal through Foreign Affairs for endorsement. I have gone through Foreign Affairs with all the requirements and I am still waiting for the correspondence but nothing has eventuated. It has taken almost six months now.

The Indian High Commission only needs an endorsement from Foreign Affairs for, and to follow protocol I cannot deal directly with foreign diplomats in Port Moresby. If they had endorsed it, the Indian High Commissioner would have given me the ambulance a long time ago.

Mr Speaker, a similar problem occurred at the University of Papua New Guinea where the pro-vice chancellor submitted a proposal to the Indian High Commission to build a hostel but they are still waiting for the endorsement from the Foreign Affairs Department.

This also has posed a question of whether the public servants really have the hearts to serve the people. Another instance is when I wanted to purchase five vehicles worth K150 000 each from Ela Motors to assist the Public Service sectors with various departments. We were given a special offer of K108 000 for each car.

Mr Speaker, we got the first batch of cars and even though they are budgeted for and the funding is allocated through DSIP, we decided to get five more cars, which will be allocated to Police, Education and the Disaster and Emergency sector

where there is funding. I took the initiative to negotiate even though it is not my responsibility. I negotiated for the prices with the Ela Motors manager and was given a special offer of K105 000 for the vehicles. The normal price is almost K140 000 for a 10-seater landcruiser. I accepted the offer of K105 000. The offer will expire at the end of May so I waited for PACP to approve it so we can get them on this special price. But then the offer was only for one month and it expired. I re-negotiated for further extension to June but nothing was confirmed, so I kept on renegotiating with the Ela Motors' Manager.

Mr Speaker, I am beginning to wonder whether public servants care about the country they serve. Their argument was, if I have budgeted for K150 000, why not spend that exact amount and no less? But commonsense must prevail when such offers are granted.

Why pay K140 000 when you are given an offer of K105 000? We can save over K200 000 from the five vehicles and use it on something else. This goes back to the attitude and slackness of the public service system.

**18/04**

Mr Speaker, this issue clearly needs to be addressed because this machinery will slow you down even though you may have good plans that you would like to implement. Therefore, this is a big hindrance to service delivery.

Mr Speaker, the class of service delivery differs from province to province. The class of service delivery is not the same for Morobe compared to West New Britain. Some provinces are predominantly coastal areas and maritime-provinces. The government must also acknowledge the various classes of services for each province because they cannot treat all the provinces as the same. The needs of Maritime provinces are different from other provinces. Therefore, the Government must allocate resources accordingly.

Many times I have requested for this issue to be addressed but through this Grievance Debate, I would like to state here that West New Britain is a big province on its own. It is almost 24 000 km<sup>2</sup> and the population is about 300 000 but we only have two districts.

Sometimes I sympathise with the Member for Talasea because the electorate stretches from Hoskins, Bialla, Talasea and Bali Vitu. Bali Vitu is an island on its

own and it has its own population of almost 18 000. Therefore, we truly deserve to have at least four additional Open electorates for West New Britain. I am not saying this just because we want additional electorate but in terms of bringing effective service delivery to the people of West New Britain. At the moment, we are giving one Member to look after almost 70 per cent of the whole province and, therefore, it will be difficult to bring services to the people.

I would like to reinstate my appeal for the National Government to seriously implement the recommendations by the Electoral Boundaries Commission and give us additional electorates.

Some of the points that the Minister for the National Planning raised in Parliament was that we should not be asking for additional electorates but talk about additional resources. I for one do not have trust in this because whatever plans and policies that the Government comes up with will still be for individual districts like the DSIP and still the funding will be different.

The Government will not give additional funding just because we have additional population and land mass. Therefore, I will still pursue my request for additional electorates for West New Britain.

**Mr ANDERSON AGIRU (Hela)** – I just want to make a brief statement.

Yesterday on television, the Honourable Loujaya Toni made reference to her Department looking at the spiritual journey of Papua New Guinea and what spiritual path it will follow after more than 38 years of independence.

I believe that this is important if the journey is to discuss whether or not the country is following Christian principles as we are a Christian country. The preambles of our country's *Constitution* also talks about this and it says, '*we the people do now establish this sovereign nation and declare ourselves under the guiding hands of God to be the independent State of Papua New Guinea*'.

Our National Pledge reads, '*we pledge ourselves to guard and pass on to those you come after our noble traditions and the Christian principles that are ours now*'.

I think, my distinguished friends, that the time is right for us to take this debate head on. Where do we want our country to be 20 years from today? Do we maintain the country as a Christian country?

In 1973, the Constitutional Planning Committee chaired by the Grand Chief travelled extensively throughout Papua New Guinea as well as Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and in their wisdom and by choice, they declared our country to be under God.

My friends, I would like to offer my peoples' felicitations to the Minister for Religion, Women and Youth, and Community Development in her desire to work towards defining whether or not we have freedom of religion or do we declare ourselves a Christian country under God.

**19/04**

But should this question be posed when in fact our founding fathers in 1974 in the Constitutional Planning Committee declared in Articles 19 and 21 that we will adopt our Christian principles. And in the *Constitution*, they intentionally wrote into law that Papua New Guinea must be a Christian country. Many different religions and foreign beliefs have come into the country. Some religions are promoting different ideas such as suicide and going to war. I'm sorry but our fathers created this country for us to look after, guard and protect.

Mr Speaker, we need to re-write that chapter. The Ninth Parliament has this responsibility to re-write and protect this country from all these ideas and beliefs that foreigners have brought into this country all in the name of freedom of religion to destroy our virtues and culture. At this juncture, I want to say that, we, the 111 members of this Ninth Parliament, must not be leaders who will write footnotes and memos but we must be leaders who will write chapters in the national history of this country.

I declare my faith that I believe in the God Trinity. My father was a pastor and I will be failing him and God if I don't declare his authority in this Parliament and this country. I want a national debate on this and I want the Constitutional Development Committee and the Minister for Home Affairs to approach this issue in a bipartisan manner with the Opposition also contributing. I think I can also nominate the Member for Kundiawa-Gembogl to be part of that committee to look at this important issue so that we set the agenda of the spiritual journey of our country straight today.

With that, I want to move this motion to support the effort of Minister Toni and make this an agenda of Parliament

**Mr TOBIAS KULANG** (Kundiawa-Gembogl) – I am excited that I am in this Parliament when such a very important question that decides the destiny of this nation is raised and debated. I am also excited that this thought has passed the minds of the Minister responsible.

Mr Speaker, I was going to talk on two other issues but I would also like to take the queue from the Governor of Hela and pledge my support and also set on record on behalf of my people from Kundiawa-Gembogl that this is a fundamental issue.

We are at a serious crossroad where certain amendments have been proposed to Section 145 and 124 of our *Constitution*, which our forefathers have handed down. I pay respect to the forefathers who have given us the *Constitution*. I would like to believe that by divine intervention or Gods grace, we have somehow survived to this stage and now I'm thankful and I recognize that this Parliament is enabled by very astute people who can think a little further than our forefathers and enhance our *Constitution*. This particular question of choosing which part is fundamental at this stage.

**20/04**

The first thing that I would like to contribute to during this debate is the proposed amendments to the *Constitution*. I want to acknowledge that there are things that need to evolve over time and so does our *Constitution*. My main concern is the process by which we subject the *Constitution* to this review.

From the outset, we can debate in Parliament and use all the persuasive words but no amount of these words will justify the true intent for making these amendments. Whether our intentions are genuine, only our people can make that distinction. We will continue to have a conflict of interest because Opposition will want to take over Government and Government will not want to be moved.

The only way is to have an independent process whereby amendments to the *Constitution* have to be subjected to this process before they are passed. Whatever decision we make now will lay the foundation for the future. There are current structures in place like the Constitutional Reform. They are not involved in the reviewing and developing stages.

If we are serious about engaging our people then we need to formalize and institutionalize. Why don't we bring a referendum clause into the *Constitution*? Australia and every nation that has a strong governance environment where 75 per cent of the people are involved has a referendum clause where 75 per cent of the people are consulted. They have a look at it and if they agree, it comes back to Parliament and we debate it further and pass it.

Mr Speaker, the outside world views us by way of our governing structure. What we are saying is, we must make the changes but the process by which we do all these things must be in place and our motives must be tested by independent people.

I will not say much on the issue of Section 145 but I agree on some of the views shared by the Public Service Minister. Why don't we leave the small amendments and subject the *Constitution* to a proper and thorough review because it is almost 40 years since it was created.

Our people are no longer stupid and they are well versed with the law now.

In relation to the Appropriation Bill, Section 29 of the *Constitution* says all the plans and policies on the allocation of funds for each province must be approved and endorsed by the Parliament.

**21/04**

Our people need all the basic services and so we have to spend money in order for the work to be done. But those funds must be released in a more transparent way. If all funds are released according to the budget plan, no one will question that.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Member, your time has expired.

Honourable Members, I wish to interrupt the Grievance Debate and make an announcement.

**VISIT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA –  
HONOURABLE KEVIN RUDD –  
STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

**Mr SPEAKER** –Honourable Members, the Prime Minister for Australia, Mr Kevin Rudd will be visiting PNG next week Sunday. He will be coming to Parliament on Monday to meet with the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Ministers and our Prime Minister will host a luncheon for him at the State Function Room.

On behalf of the Prime Minister, I invite the Members of Parliament to attend lunch with Honourable Kevin Rudd, Prime Minister of Australia.

I also take this opportunity to remind the Members of Parliament on the Standing Orders of Parliament in reference to making statements that may be anticipating discussions on matters that are brought before the Floor of Parliament.

I know I have allowed both the Minister for Environment and Conservation and the Member for Kundiawa to make some statements in that reference.

I must now remind you all to adhere to Standing Order No.83 that makes specific reference to that issue.

**Mr WILLIAM POWI** (Southern Highlands) –Thank you, Mr Speaker, for recognising the people of Southern Highlands.

Mr Speaker, I want to place on record my very important concern. During Grievance Debates, I hear matters of national importance being discussed here on the Floor of Parliament. Therefore, Mr Speaker, I wish to emphasise the importance of the presence of Ministers of State during Grievance Debates, and I ask the Leader of Government Business to take note of this concern.

The Governors of Morobe, West New Britain and Hela all can agree with me that important national issues are being raised during Grievance Debates. Therefore, all the Ministers need to be present during this time.

On that note, I want to provide a statement here on sustainable agriculture sector wide program, as the engine room for development and progress of this country.



It would have been better if the Minister for Agriculture was here to listen to this. Nevertheless, Mr Speaker, according to the recent Ministerial Statement tabled in Parliament by the Minister for Treasury, Honourable Mr Don Polye, on the performance of the PNG economy to date, the economy growth in the agriculture sector has actually been somewhat disappointing.

Indeed the overall growth in the agriculture sector according to the Ministers statement has been 37 per cent in real terms; less than half of the overall state of the economy.

Mr Speaker, this is a major challenge facing our people and our country today. In light of this prevailing statistics and in view of the economic boom in the extractive sector of the economy, what programs and policies, if there are any, is the Department of Agriculture and Livestock undertaking to deal with the disappointing scenario in this country.

Members of Parliament will agree with me we all come from villages and districts. It is not rocket science to find the way forward and set the benchmark for the development of this country. Agriculture is the backbone of our progress and the transformation of agriculture sector alone will also transform our people and country in the years to come.

Does the Department have any strategic policy and sustainable programs to translate the windfall revenue from other sectors to a sustainable national agriculture program, which 85 per cent of Papua New Guineans depend on for business as well as for sustainability?

**22/04**

We have a very big population growth rate in this country and agriculture sector must provide the basis through jobs to absorb the increasing needs of the growing population of this country.

Mr Speaker, you will agree with me that Papua New Guinea needs a whole of government intervention program in this sector if we are to progress. Agriculture sector should develop and grow to sustain our small-scale businesses.

On this note, I want to commend the Minister for Commerce and Industry who is embarking on the promotion of small-scale businesses nationwide for our entrepreneurs in this country.

Mr Speaker, the agriculture sector must be developed to absorb the 70 000 to 80 000 school leavers that drop out from our formal education system in this country. The education sector must grow the economy of this country to be sustainable over the medium to long term. The agriculture sector must embark on marketing opportunities for our rural farmers and businesses.

Mr Speaker, the agriculture sector must help improve the lifestyles of our growing population, particularly the lifestyles in the villages and communities throughout this country. I want to see the Department of Agriculture come up with sustainable programs that will link Waigani to my village. If you are looking at other sectors to set the foundation for development and transformation of this country and if you go beyond agriculture, it would become a shattered dream.

Mr Speaker, the agriculture sector must become the biggest employment provider for this country. It must become the pillar of PNG's development in the years to come.

Mr Speaker, if the agriculture sector is carefully developed, it will be the engine room that will transform this country to be a leader in the Pacific. If you look at smaller countries like Fiji and others within our neighbourhood, they have progressed significantly in this sector.

Mr Speaker, I wish to emphasise the need for a whole- of- government intervention program for a sustainable agriculture sector to provide the basis for the progress and transformation of our people in this country.

**Mr ATI WOBIRO** (Western) –Mr Speaker, I also wish to contribute to the Grievance Debate.

I was impressed with the ministerial statement made by the Foreign Affairs Minister, especially on the theme he had in his statement which was '*Papua New Guinea Connect*'.

I am impressed that the O'Neill Government and the Minister responsible have chosen this very important theme. In the past, foreign policy was guided by the theme '*Friends to all and Enemies to None*'.

I would like to think that with the change in the theme '*Papua New Guinea Connect*', there also has to be a shift in the focus of our foreign policy. I think for too long our focus in the foreign policy has been to strengthen political ties with

countries. With this new theme 'Papua New Guinea Connect', I believe business should now be the main theme of foreign policy. For too long, our policy has been to attract business to come into the country.

I would like to see that in the next phase of our foreign policy, we encourage Papua New Guinea businesses to go out and compete in the international market place because that is the only way to mature our business. We need to open our businesses to international competition that will also bring efficiency in the way business operate.

I am very impressed when I travel to some countries and see some businesses from Papua New Guinea already operating, especially in our neighbouring countries. BSP for instance has its offices or practices in Solomon Island.

**23/04**

I am looking forward to the day when BSP can also have branches in Australia. We have to compete with the best in order to be the best. We can't shy away from competing with businesses in their own turf.

Not so long ago I was in Cairns and I was very happy to see the sign 'Hela Honale Haus' on a building located in one of the main streets. I was very proud to see the Papua New Guinea flag flying at the top. We can compete with Australians on their own turf. So our foreign policy must be aimed at encouraging our businesses in foreign countries.

I have just returned recently from a visit to Israel where I learnt a lot of things that Papua New Guinea can adopt, and I am impressed that the Minister has mentioned that the government intends to open up an embassy office in Jerusalem which I think is the right thing to do.

In the discussions earlier on, the Governor of Hela said if we want to make Papua New Guinea a truly Christian country it is logical that we must connect with Israel. I think there are a lot of things that we can learn from Israel.

Many of the leaders on the Floor of Parliament have expressed concerns about our growing and educated young population. What are we going to do with them? There is not enough employment.

I learnt something while I was in Israel. They have a program called the national scheme where every student after completing grade 12 must work for their

national service for a period of three years. I believe this is the path Papua New Guinea must take because the scheme not only helps young people for future employment; it also gives them the discipline to be law abiding citizens.

After three years, the young people can decide whether to go onto university or to do some other things. This is an important scheme which we can learn from.

I would hope that with the establishment or enhancement of foreign affairs offices in different countries that one of the issues that the government will tackle is the cancellation of requirements for visa. I think we should make it easier, particularly with friendly countries like Israel. A lot of our people go there for pilgrimage and for other purposes and a visa is always very expensive.

I had to travel to Canberra to get my visa and that is an additional cost so our government should really be thinking about canceling visa requirements with friendly countries. I know it's already happening in the Melanesian countries and I commend the Government for that but the policy should be extended to other friendly countries and hopefully with Australia as well. We should cancel the need for Australian visas because we are not their enemies; we are their friends. We are their most important neighbor.

I think I have the support of this Parliament to push in that direction.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA** (Kiriwina-Goodenough) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I wish to join the Grievance Debate and it is a privilege to be recognised one more time, thank you.

First of all, I wish to join the two governors and one Member of the Opposition regarding the concept of Christian principles in this nation. I am also a son of a pastor and I concur with the sentiments that have been expressed.

My late father was given the opportunity to go to Israel and I made sure that he went there. A year after coming back from Israel he passed away.

I am happy to hear those comments because when he came back from Israel he mentioned many concepts that the Christian community in Papua New Guinea should adopt. He also mentioned development issues that we should adopt.

I have taken the opportunity also to make certain that my mother goes to Israel in October. So, I wish to honour my parents in that way by ensuring that they go and see the place where our Lord Jesus Christ walked and died in.

**24/04**

Many things must be understood in Papua New Guinea. We must take heed of where we are heading to in regards to the nation of Israel. The Bible says, if we bless Israel, we will be blessed and if we don't bless them, we will not be blessed, that is the word of God.

As a Christian nation we must uphold the principles and values of our beliefs.

I am concerned that most landcruisers in Port Moresby bear stickers that read, 'Baby glock onboard' with the word glock in tiny print, and every third car has a pistol sticker on it. Where is our nation heading to when we have every third car bearing pistol stickers?

Mr Speaker, I believe that fifty percent of Members of Parliament also have firearms in their cars. We have to be careful what sort of baby we have in the car. We confess to be a Christian nation and yet we have another baby is protecting us instead of the good Lord.

Mr Speaker, when we watch the news on America, we see incidents of shooting sprees in public places and schools. The very guns that are kept in their houses are used to kill their own children in schools. This is the reason why we have to be careful when we legislate. The laws that we make must be for the good of this nation and our people. It would not be good if we pass laws that will be the cause of our suffering in the future.

Mr Speaker, we have to learn from the experiences of the last 38 years. The failures and the achievements of our country should be the guiding principles for tomorrow.

We have set the Vision 2050, so we have to start asking, how can we guide our children and their children to a better future? When we embark on legislating, we have to carefully consider this important question.

It didn't take America or Great Britain 38 years to transform their nations. It took hundreds of years to do that. Some of the democracies we see in these big countries took not 20 or 30 years but hundreds of years and they looked through their

failures and achievements and used them as building blocks to build their nations as they are today.

I agree with Sir Puka Temu that we have to make laws that will strengthen our democracy today. Our democracy must be built on foundations that we have set in the last 38 years.

Mr Speaker, I look at the countries mining industry, forests industry, fisheries industry and tourism industries and I ask, where do we stand here?

Some of the damages that are caused today in the mining and forests industry will affect us tomorrow if we are not very careful.

Mr Speaker, speaking here today, I am very passionate about the tourism industry because my area of Trobriand Islands has no other resources like mining and forestry but through the tourism industry we can develop our electorate.

I thank the Government of the day for recognising my electorate Kiriwina-Goodenough and allocating funding to build our wharves. Thank you, “Kaibola”.

However, tourism will only prosper if we seriously address the law and order situation affecting our nation today.

I urge the Government to seriously look at the law and order situation and tackle it head on. A lot of investors and people would like to come but this issue is daring and we must seriously pay attention and do something about it.

**25/04**

Mr Speaker, education is another issue that I want us to look at. Many Grade 8, 10 and 12 school leavers are being affected by this. I would like to thank the Minister for Education, especially the Prime Minister for taking seriously the free education issue. I for one believe that free education should see our children progress to grade 12. We must not have drop outs from grade 8 or 10. We must give our children opportunities because some of our children’s capacity will only develop if we give them the opportunity to go as far as grade 12. They do have the potentials but the development in their brains will progress if we give ample time to develop.

Mr Speaker, I will speak on the issues of our forestry and fisheries industries. I am not sure if the Minister for Fisheries has been notified of this issue. Nevertheless, one of the issues faced by my electorate of Kiriwina-Goodenough is the harvesting of clam shells which have taken years to grow to reach maturity. Today, foreign vessels

are harvesting our clam shells illegally. They harvest meat and leave the empty clam shells on the seabed.

This is also the same for the forestry industry in the Milne Bay Province. Our forests have been cleared of trees and left bare without anyone attending to them.

. I am raising these issues with passion because the sea is our land and that is where we eat from. We need to protect our peoples' resources.

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to have my say as I know that I have only a minute left and I thank God and the Chair for recognising the people of Kiriwina-Goodenough.

**Mr RONNY KNIGHT** (Manus) – Mr Speaker, I have been reflecting on my experience of being a Member of Parliament for Manus. Three days ago was my first anniversary in Parliament.

I would like to, again, thank the people of Manus for having the trust in me to represent them and I will not let them down.

Mr Speaker, when I got in as a naïve first-time Member, I had grand ideas and plans to immediately change everything in Manus for the good of its people.

Mr Speaker, what a shock we Members were in for. After dealing with the chaos of an inherited office, staff and presidents, we basically had a year of struggle and hair pulling frustrations. Through perseverance and knocking on doors, the assistance with help and advice from senior leaders helped pave the way where we managed to achieve something.

Mr Speaker, why do we have separate elections? Why don't we have both the National and Provincial Elections at the same time? It seems to me like a no brainer. There would be one rollout cost, one deployment with one new government that walks in. I think that this should be considered.

Mr Speaker, most presidents during my elections were campaigning with their candidates and the legal government of the day was actually taking sides in the elections, therefore, setting the tone for antagonism. And when I won and their candidate lost, what picture does that paint to the public? Therefore, here we are after a year of working with people who are not happy with their candidate losing and are trying to sabotage and delay everything when somebody is trying their best to help the province.

Mr Speaker, we should put our country and provinces first and our personal ambitions behind.

Mr Speaker, Manus pioneered the presidential system to its frustration and some of you will find out for yourselves whether adopting this system is good for you. You will find that with the presidential system, if the person is not the right person to hold this office then you will be stuck with him or her for five years. With the council election system, the council elected a peer and it was probably better because they could put someone else in if the council or the president did not perform. We will leave this issue as it is and let every other province see what I mean because it is too much for me to explain.

Mr Speaker, in the last five years, 90 per cent of my presidents have not held any council meetings at all. How then can their decisions and resolutions be lawful?

Mr Speaker, not many of these presidents live in the LLGs as most live in Lorengau. Their district stations are ghost towns, and that is just the tip of the iceberg. I am sure that a lot of Members here are facing the same problem. Nevertheless, we will leave this issue alone for a while.

Mr Speaker, I wish to belly ache about our public dis-service as I like to call it. The mindset of a major portion of our public service is that whether they work or not fortnightly pay is assured. Sometimes I wonder if such people are conversant with their job statements or whether they know what they are doing or they just want to sit there and do nothing.

**26/04**

Mr Speaker, I applaud the appointment of Mr Posong as our new PA/DA. He has done more in month than others have done in years and he is reliable and approachable and he should be made permanent as soon as possible.

Mr Speaker, he is under a huge workload. Please find the book of Organic Law and tear out the page that contains section 73 and throw it away. Seriously, please, fast track an amendment to allow Manus to have a dedicated district administration because that is the only way we can get services quickly implemented.

The scattered remoteness of huge areas of Manus and the argument that the province and district duplicate responsibilities was something of the past. Today it is different; we are aware that there is much to do in the district



Mr Speaker, it took former PA and his associates in the provincial supply and tenders board four months to meet to approve our district project vessel and the bank that seems to want to be member of our joint district planning and budget priorities committee and also our auditor another three months to allow me to get my payment.

If all projects are going to be like this then I have a suggestion and that is to abolish the Manus provincial government, put every person in Manus on government payroll and the use the K10 million from the DSIP to pay the people of Manus. That's the only way we are going to get development there.

Mr Speaker, I do not know whether our public servants go through some training or examination, but I strongly suggest that something along these lines must be implemented. If they fail a public service examination, they have to be removed and somebody competent has to be put in place.

Mr Speaker, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Minister for Forestry for heeding my plight and taking into action my letter regarding the attempted exploitation of timber from Manus in Block 7 of the Pobuma LLG.

The Minister's personal intervention gives us heart, and it was the right thing to do. Manus today will have a rainforest left. If anybody wants to plant rubber, we need them to plant where logging has already been implemented and not cutting down a pristine environment because it's a criminal act.

Mr Speaker, my people demand a stop to any more logging in my district. What we have left, we plan to harvest selectively on a certain level and use a walkabout sawmill and produce quality building materials and building timber to build our schools and aid posts and sell for commercial gain. The cost of a whole tree and the royalty for one whole tree doesn't even measure the payment that you get from the timber cut that you get from that same tree.

Mr Speaker, my grievance today is particularly perseverance on addressing these problems I have encountered in delivering service to my people. The position geographical position of my district and its scattered atolls that need service and the scarcity of suitable third level shipping is the most serious impediment to development in all aspects of daily life. It's often more expensive logistically to set up a classroom than the cost of building one itself. These I have elaborated on before and will not endeavour to bore this honourable Parliament further with this issue. I'm sure you are all tired of me.

I will say though before I go on that I'm a affirm believer with these decent reliable sea transport services all development and strategy goals expounded by our leaders and our government will naturally sprout and grow into striving communities. Transport is the key to development on the island.

Instead of giving us smaller boats, can the Transport Minister consider giving us a 170 tonne landing craft with 150 passenger capacity; not the type that Sir Puka Temu swam in, we would like a bigger one.

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*

**Mr RONNY KNIGHT** – Finally, Mr Speaker, during Question Time yesterday, I raised some concerns regarding the invasion of Asian rats and the coconut beetle on Amik island in my North West LLG . The island has no more coconut trees because of these beetle also known as the Rhinoceros Beetle. It is widespread all over our islands and affecting the plantations in various degrees, some not too bad and some area disaster.

Mr Speaker, they not only attack coconuts but they also attack sago, betelnut, oil palm, bananas and taro. These are the staples that our rural people depend on for food and sustainability.

Mr Speaker, we need urgent intervention and for the rats, it seems the two-legged variety have introduced the four-legged ones. It is quite frustrating when you have to fight off the rats that are chewing on your children's feet. I hope they don't spread to the other islands while waiting for remedial action. These pests were introduced by so-called partners and investors. Let's pack them all together, the four-legged ones and two-legged ones and send them back to where they came from.

Motion – That the grievance be noted- agreed to

## ADJOURNMENT

Motion (by **Mr James Marabe** ) agreed to -

That the Parliament do now adjourn

The Parliament adjourned at 1.03 p.m