

SECOND DAY

Wednesday 25 January 2017

DRAFT HANSARD

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SECOND DAY

Wednesday 25 January 2017

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

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

Sitting Suspended.

Mr Speaker again took the Chair at 10.50 a.m., and invited the Member for Nawae, **Honourable Gisuwat Siniwin** to say Prayers:

‘In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Gracious God, the father of our Lord, Jesus Christ we admit and we say that we are sinners for you as leaders of this Nation and give us the right heart and mind to lead this Parliament.

At the same time we ask you to forgive those who are against us, our voter and those who talk against us may you forgive them and give them the right heart and spirit so that they may help us to see what we are doing for this Nation.

We thank you for appointing us as leaders for this Nation. Help us as sinners and forgive us as sinners and make us righteous because you are right and holy, Lord we are here to talk about issue for these three weeks. Bless our Prime Minister, all our Ministers, the Opposition Leader and every one of us here. Lord again, we say thank you for electing us to be leaders, guide us and forgive us and stay close to us at all times.

In the name of our Lord and our coming King we pray: Our Father who art in heaven, hallow be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us this day our daily breath and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thy, is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory for ever and ever, Amen’

**DEATH OF THE FORMER MEMBERS (SIR ANGMAI BILAS AND MESSRS
STANLEY PIL, BABADI SAWASI AND DERE WAMARO) –
STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members, I have to inform Parliament of the deaths on –

(a) 10th November 2016 of Sir Angmai Bilas, a former Member for Mabusu Open Electorate. He was first elected to the Second House of Assembly from 1968-1987. He was appointed as Minister for Trade and Industry. He was re-elected for the Madang Open Seat to the Third House of Assembly and First National Parliament from 1972-1977. He was appointed Assistant Speaker and member of the Constitutional Planning Committee. He was then re-elected for the same seat of the Second National Parliament from 1977-1982. He was appointed to the Constitutional Laws and Acts Committee Chairman in 1977 and then appointed Minister for Public Utilities from 1981-1982;

(b) 6th November 2016 of Mr Stanley Pil, a former Member for Madang Open Electorate. He was first elected to the Fifth National Parliament in 1992-1997 for the Madang Open Seat. He was appointed Minister for Police from January to August 1994;

(c) 23rd December 2016, Mr Babadi Sawasi a former member for Middle-Fly Open Electorate. He was first elected to the Fourth National Parliament from 1987-1992. He was a Member of the Papua New Guinea delegation to Commonwealth Finance Minister's Conference in Barbados in 1987; and

(d) 29th December 2016 of Mr Dere Womaro, a former Member for Western Provincial Seat. He was first elected to the Fifth National Parliament from 1992-1997, he was appointed Assistant Speaker in August 1992. Became foundation Governor for Western Province in August 1995 after the Provincial Government Reform.

As a mark of respect to the memory of the late gentlemen, I would like to invite all Honourable Members to rise in your places.

All member stood in their places in silence as a mark of respect for the late gentlemen.

Mr SPEAKER – I thank the Parliament.

02/02

MOTION BY LEAVE

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

Leave granted.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – REARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

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

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent the Election of the Deputy Speaker being called on forthwith.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members, before I call for nominations, I wish to inform Parliament that Members nominated must inform Parliament whether or not they accept that nomination and that is in accordance with *Standing Orders* and I now call for nominations.

Mr MAO ZEMING – Mr Speaker, I nominate the Member for Maprik, Honourable John Simon as the Deputy Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER – Does the Member accept the nomination?

Mr JOHN SIMON – I accept.

Mr SPEAKER – Do we have a seconder?

Mr JAMES MARAPE – I second the nomination

Mr DON POLYE – Mr Speaker, I nominate the Honourable Member for Kainantu.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Member for Kainantu.

Mr JOHNSON TUKE – Yes, I accept the nomination.

Mr SPEAKER – Do we have a seconder?

Dr ALLAN MARAT – I second the nomination.

Mr SPEAKER – Any further proposals?

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Mr Speaker, I move that the nominations now be closed.

Mr JOE KOIM KOMUN – I second the move.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members in accordance with the practice of the Parliament, the bells will be rung and a ballot taken. Ballot papers must be distributed and Members are asked to write on the Ballot Papers the name of the candidate for whom they wish to vote. The candidates are the Member for Maprik, Honourable John Simon and Member for Kainantu, Honourable Johnson Tuke.

03/02

Mr SPEAKER – Sergeant-At-Arms, ask the honourable Member for Sumkar to resume his seat, voting is in progress.

04/02

(Voting in Progress)

05/02

(Voting in progress)

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members, the results are:

John Simon – 64

Johnson Tuke – 30

Mr SPEAKER – I want to congratulate the Member for Maprik on being voted as the new Deputy Speaker of Parliament.

QUESTIONS

Bulolo – Menyamya Road Maintenance

Mr SAM BASIL – My questions are directed to the Minister for Works and are in relation to the highway connecting Lae city to Huon Gulf, within Bulolo and Menyamya.

I want to say that this is a important highway that caters for Hidden valley and Wafi Gold mines. This road has not been maintained since work started in Hidden Valley and therefore it has posed problems for PMV operators and vehicle owners.

The sections mostly affected are one in Yangalimu along Wau/Bulolo section and the other one is a bridge that collapsed last week between Timini and Mare village. This is causing a lot of inconveniences as there is a build-up of law and order issues as people are charging fees to provide alternative routes for vehicles and people to ferry their cargoes.

(1) Can the Minister clarify as to whether the Department in Lae is capable of solving this situation? As from my sources, I have gathered that it will take less than a day to cut out another route for vehicles to cross.

(2) Why is it taking the department too long to attend to these problem areas?

Also yesterday, the Prime Minister, said that Works Department do not carry out a good job. I want to correct what he said. The Works Department needs the Government to decide to activate the machinery and PTB and other sections within the department to look after the infrastructure and sustainability of our highways.

We are almost to the end of this term of Parliament and we still need work done on many of our roads but my question in relation to the Bulolo Highway is this. We have three works camps, in Huon Gulf, Bulolo at Gurako and Pine Top.

(3) There are facilities available and if the Government will not reactivate the works

camps, can they handed over to the districts so that we can take charge of them and maintain our roads?

06/02

In many instances when we want to interfere with the national highway the Works Department say they are not district roads but national roads.

I want the Works Minister to make it clear because this is no longer politics, people's very lives depend on it.

(4) And I want him to make it clear, when will these two sections be opened?

Mr FRANCIS AWESA – Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank the Deputy Opposition Leader and Member for Bulolo for his important questions.

His questions reflect the concerns shared by all of us in the Parliament because we must view all the roads and highways in Papua New Guinea according to their statuses.

The Wau-Bulolo Section of the highway is an important section of that road going into Bulolo and will also serve the new mine that is soon to be commissioned.

As so stated by the Prime Minister yesterday and in answer to your question, the government is now taking a holistic approach to all the 16 highways and other roads, town roads, city roads in the country.

I wish to inform all of you that Cabinet has already approved on Monday this week an allocation of K20 million for that road leading from Nine Mile to Wau-Bulolo. This is to serve the long-term interest of that highway. This K20 million is not for this year only, it is an ongoing programme over the next three years.

The contractors working on this road will also be responsible for the upkeep of their particular sections of the roads. So, for the first time this government has addressed this problem faced all over the country.

I must say that this is an important section of the road which is serving many industries such as the chicken projects on the side of the road leading to Wau-Bulolo.

I will immediately put in K500 000 which will go to the Harmony Mine because that money will be used for the maintenance of that section of the road. That is what has happened.

As I said previously, the government is now addressing this problem of deferred maintenance and all the maintenance issues affecting all the roads and highways in Papua New Guinea.

I wish to say that this situation is prevalent and is becoming more and more serious around the country because of the weather patterns we are now facing in the country. The weather is not controlled by anybody. So we must take note of this and allocate more funds to Works for such emergencies. This is the responsibility of all of us in Parliament, both in the Opposition and the Government ranks. We must all take note of this.

For the very first time I wish to say that the major companies in Papua New Guinea such as Ok Tedi and ExxonMobil are going to be in a maintenance programme targeting all the roads and highways in Papua New Guinea.

We have already agreed to that programme and I will make a statement in regard to that tomorrow regarding the process of implementation of these programmes.

I want to say, in answer to your question, honourable Member that the government has taken a very serious stand on this and we are making some bold decisions for the first time in so many years and you should appreciate that.

This is especially to the Opposition Leader. When you were in my position you failed to address these problems. That's one of the reasons.

In relation to Menyamya, K20 million has been approved for expenditure over the next three years so we are, for the first time, addressing these problems. So, you need to listen to my Ministerial Statement tomorrow when all these things will be highlighted.

07/02

Mr Sam Basil – Point of Order! With due respect to the Honourable Minister, we have got about three or four months before the next election. Therefore, we have to talk about how we are going to fix those roads within those three to four months.

The Minister must not talk about the long term plans. We can do that after the elections but we need to give immediate attention to those roads.

Thank you.

Mr FRANCIS AWESA – Like I have said, the Works Department is addressing those immediate needs like those two bridges you are referring to.

Nevertheless, you still need to have long term plans and we are talking about guaranteed funding by major stakeholders in the country, and to get Ok Tedi and ExxonMobil and some of these big companies involved in the road maintenance programme in Papua New Guinea is not easy.

And that is something that the Opposition Leader failed to do in his time for eight years and I am doing it in four years.

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Mr Don Polye – Point of Order! Mr Speaker, the good Minister for Works needs to answer the question and calling my name is not a solution. The programmes that the government is implementing are my programmes but you are not funding them and giving them priority.

Therefore, you have failed and just tell the people of PNG that you have failed.

Mr SPEAKER – What is your point of order, Leader of Opposition?

Minister, we have gone beyond the answer to your question. Therefore, we shall continue on with Question Time.

(Mr Don Polye interjecting)

Students denied enrolment for non-payment of project fees

Mr ISSAC WAIGAVARA – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister for Education, Honourable Nick Kuman.

Mr Minister, it is assumed that the Free Education Policy is for the O'Neill-Dion Government and it will end at the end of this Parliament term. As a result, in schools around Papua New Guinea, unnecessary fees are being imposed and parents and citizens of this country are confused.

Can the Minister please clarify this because parents are now trying to register their children and have collided with this issue such as project fees, tuition fees, certificate fees and et cetera? This is because we need to know whether or not those fees are necessary.

Thank you.

Mr NICK KUMAN – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Member for Okapa for his question.

Let me first start by saying that I am really disappointed because this morning a parent tracked me down in Korobosea while I was on my way to the Parliament. This parent was carrying a form from the Kilakila Secondary School for the parents of students which

contained a couple of fees that amounted to K700 for a Grade 12 student to pay before they enrol. Now, school enrolment starts on Monday of next week and obviously on the first week of February schools will commence.

As the Minister responsible for Education, I believe that I have said this on the Floor of Parliament on many occasions. At the beginning of last year Cabinet had made a deliberate decision and that was a policy decision that the Department has implemented and advised all the schools, principals, head masters and school boards that no project fees or any other form of fees are to be collected from the students.

This was because the Government has paid all the school fees since the introduction of TFF in this country. And for every fiscal year the Government made sure to pay tuition fees owed to the schools in this country including from the previous year. Therefore, there is no reason as to why the school administration and boards should impose project fees or any other fees to the students.

Just this morning I appealed in a media conference to all the schools in this country not to collect any form of fees from the students or from the parents as a condition in which a student needs to enrol for the 2017 academic year.

Thank you.

08/02

Supplementary Question

Penalty for schools imposing extra fees

Mr ANTON YAGAMA – This is a sensitive issue so can the Minister confirm if there are penalties for schools and their boards who charge extra fees? They say that whatever the Government has decided is not in their interest, they need money to run schools. This is happening in my electorate and I believe elsewhere in the country.

Mr NICK KUMAN – It is clear that principals and teachers are governed by the application of the *Education Act*.

(Mr Kerenga Kua interjecting)

Mr NICK KUMAN – Member for Sinasina-Yonggamugl, please listen up! All the TFF for Sinasina-Yonggamugl has been paid and you know that very well. It was all paid last year so there is no reason for you to be jumping up and down.

(Laughter in Chamber)

Mr NICK KUMAN – It is the disciplinary processes of teachers who fail to adhere to the instructions of the Government. We made every effort although we had problems last year in as far as the cash flow is concerned. The Government was committed to make sure that the TFF were paid to the schools and we did that. There is no reason as to why parents should be charged with all sorts of unnecessary fees. The Government has made the decision so we have no reason as to why –

Mr Garry Juffa – Point of Order! The schools are not getting their TFF on time!

Mr SPEAKER – You are debating here! You have a point of order but it must be in relation to the answers that he is giving. You are arguing with him and that will not be allowed. Minister, please complete answering the question.

Mr NICK KUMAN – Thank you Mr Speaker, can you please teach them how to debate. I know it is a sensitive issue so teachers must be held accountable for their actions in this country. The Government has made a policy and we have met all the obligations in as far as the TFF is concerned.

We have paid all the school fees up till last year. If any school in this country has not received up till last year then you can complain directly to me and pin point that school so we can go back and check the books. Otherwise, we have paid all the TFF that is required so no school must collect any form of fees. I urge all the schools to not collect any form of fees as a condition of enrolment.

Supplementary Question

Timely release of school fees

Mr KERENGA KUA – I have a supplementary question and it is important that I ask the question.

Mr SPEAKER – I will allow your supplementary question but do not make it become a debate. You ask the question.

Mr KERENGA KUA – I think the Minister has got his head buried in the sand. The reality is that these funds are not being released in a timely manner and therefore forcing the administrators of the schools to impose those fees to keep going.

Can he undertake in just one word that he will release the funds in a timely manner this year?

Mr Don Polye – That's the point!

Mr SPEAKER – That is a good question. Minister, please go ahead!

Mr NICK KUMAN – That is a good question and as far as the Government is concerned it is a budgeted programme every year. I can assure that honourable Member that for this year before school starts, K75 million will be remitted to all schools for 2017.

Mr Kerenga Kua – When?

Mr NICK KUMAN – Last week the Expenditure Committee sat and they appropriated that amount of money. When it hits the bank it will go directly to all school accounts in this country but let us not forget that we have not failed.

We have not failed in any one year in paying school fees in this country. We have retired every TFF commitment made by this Government. You should be proud being the Member for Sinasina-Yonggamugl that we have paid all the schools fees for all students in your electorate like every other school in this country.

Mr BIRE KIMISOPA – My questions are directed to the Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, the Prime Minister gave an undertaking that he would table in Parliament on the outcome of an independent investigation into the management of the Housing Commission but that has not taken place.

Mr Speaker, housing is a critical issue in this country especially the National Housing Commission. A number of tenants across the country are waiting for investigation that has been promised by the Prime Minister.

I understand there is an internal investigation being commenced by the National Housing Commission in a number of prominent Papua New Guineans led by chief secretary.

09/02

Mr Speaker, can the Prime Minister confirm to this Parliament if that investigation has been undertaken and how soon, if it has been undertaken will the report be tabled?

Also the Prime Minister gave an undertaking to cease of all National Housing Commission houses right across the country.

Has that undertaking being honoured, and if yes, can the Prime Minister address this Parliament.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr PETER O'NEILL – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Member for Goroka for this very important question.

Mr Speaker, yes, there is an internal investigation that is being conducted but I have not received a report as yet. But as soon as I receive it I will make it public or I will table it.

And, Mr Speaker, I would like to say here that you will see that the Housing minister is going to present a statement on the issues of housing in the country.

I would also want to raise a concern to this honourable Members and this Parliament that I have given instructions that there should be no evictions and no sale of property until such time that we clear some of this backlog of issues.

Mr Speaker, like in many other cases, sometimes some of our offices are finding it difficult to adhere to some of these instructions so we are taking some disciplinary actions against some of those officers. We have received complaints from tenants, some of them have written directly to me, progressing tenants around the country saying that they have received some reports from staff of the Housing Corporation and we are investigating that individually.

I want to assure the people that the last thing this Government wants to do is to have Papua New Guineans out of houses all around the country. We would like them to have first preference in making sure that they either buy or secure a tenancy of the house that they are living in throughout the country.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Delayed Funding – Two Fire Incidents and Landslide

Mr GISUWAT SINIWIN – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for recognising the people of Nawae. My questions are directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Provincial Affairs and Local-Level Government.

Firstly, I am still awaiting a response from the government on reports I submitted regarding two fire incidents that occurred in Nabwae District. I asked for financial assistance but am still waiting for a response. Can the Minister give me a response?

Secondly, I raised this at the caucus meeting that there was massive landslide which occurred in two areas one on the 11th of this month at Bosa Primary School with surrounding villages being destroyed. Is it possible for the government and your department to assist us?

Many times we hear about major disasters in the country and the government always help them so now I am asking for your help.

Mr Sam Basil – Point of Order! Two corrections here that I want to bring up.

First of all, the Prime Minister said that the Housing Ministers Statement is on the Notice Paper.

(Members Interjecting)

Mr Sam Basil – Secondly, the Member indicated that he mentioned the issue in the caucus so it is not good to see Members begging the Prime Minister in front of every one.

(Laughter in the Chamber)

10/02

Mr SPEAKER – Deputy Opposition Leader, all Members of Parliament are entitled to ask questions on the Floor of Parliament, it is their privilege. Your Point of Order will not be recorded as a point of Order. I rule that out.

Mr GISUWAT SINIWIN – Mr Speaker, as I have said to the Deputy Prime Minister, a lot of disasters have occurred in the country and the Government keeps forgetting the Morobeans

(Members interjecting)

Mr GISUWAT SINIWIN – Yes, I am not lying. For my electorate Nawae, a large primary school in the hinterlands of Sarowagat Range was devastated by disaster. I made a two-day visit there and the reports are with me.

(1) Can the Government through your department help provide some funding to Bosa community?

In addition, the landslip that occurred along the Erap section had destroyed the road.

(2) Can the Government look into assisting the Bosa community and the two villages that were destroyed by fire in 2014?

Mr LEO DION – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the questions raised by the Member for Nawae on behalf of his people.

Firstly, on behalf of the Government, I express my deepest sympathy over the recent landslip that has affected them. The Government has not forgotten about them.

I would like to start by answering the question in relation to the fire in Labuta village, I have not received any report regarding that fire since 2014, simply because, maybe the provincial disaster office in Morobe Province has attended to it, since it has a good record of attending immediately to all disasters, like the other provincial disaster offices as well.

Mr Speaker, the National Disaster Office has emphasised that all provincial disaster offices must attend immediately if there are reports of disasters occurring. Natural disasters is something we cannot avoid but we can try to mitigate by working around it or work with it unlike manmade disasters which is created by humans.

To satisfy the Member in regards to his question, I will check with my department to find out what actually happened to that particular report. For the recent landslip, I have not received any briefing yet and I will have to also find out more on that. The National Government has made some funding available for this year and as soon as I receive a report on that depending on the funding availability we will consider funding through the National Disaster Committee. The processes are as such and we will have to comply. The Department of Provincial Affairs through the National Disaster Office emphasises that the provincial disaster offices must be functioning and they have to provide immediately certain amount of funding through their budget and also through the DSIP and PSIP and other funding that the national government appropriates to the provinces.

I apologise to the Member, if my officers delayed in attending to the disaster that occurred. I want to thank the Morobe Provincial Government as well as other provincial governments who have attended to similar disasters faced in their provinces to assist our people.

Mr JOE KOIM KOMUN – Thank you Mr Speaker for recognising the people of Anglimp South Wahgi.

My question is directed to the Prime Minister and is related to the SME sector in Papua New Guinea, since, the Minister for Trade Commerce and Industry is unavailable. The SME sector will bring this country forward in creating employment and other opportunities.

10/02

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SME Funding and NDB Expansion

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My question is directed to the Prime Minister and is related to the SME sector in Papua New Guinea, since, the Minister for Trade Commerce and Industry is unavailable. The SME sector will bring this country forward in creating employment and other opportunities.

11/02

(1) In relation to the commitment of the Government on SME, if it is still there, can the Government put some money in there so that it can assist many of our people to engage in the SMEs?

(2) I would like to commend NDB for partnering with us in various SME programs in the country and being a bank or financial institution that assists our people, can we give them powers to expand and do more business thus to look after themselves as to sustain their own operations because right now, most of the SMEs seeking assistance from NDB are getting negative feedback from them. Can we tell them to assist our SMEs and small family micro finance in the country?

Mr PETER O'NEILL – Thank you Mr Speaker and I thank the Honourable Member for Anglimp-South Wahgi for his very important questions about Small to Medium Enterprises in our country.

Mr Speaker, as you know, we have already launched a SME Policy which is a very comprehensive one for the first time in the our country, which is to guide the development of our SMEs throughout the country and of course, get the assistance from government programs that we are trying to roll out.

Mr Speaker, over the past four or five years, our Government has from time to time allocated money through the budget process through institutions like NDB and of course through Commerce and Industry to try help Papua New Guineans get into businesses in many sectors across the country. But, Mr Speaker, the demand is very high, there's quite an increase in demand and we are not able to meet the demand because we are running out of money all the time.

But of course, one of the other initiatives that we have created is through the DSIP where we have allocated out of K10 million, K1 million to be allocated through the districts to support SMEs in the districts. I know many districts and Members are starting to assist women groups, some of the credit schemes are happening and some are very successful. This is something that we can guarantee to continue to build on because district support grants or district service improvement funds are continuously been funded by the Government.

Mr Speaker, the success of that fund cannot be underestimated; the DSIP and PSIP programs in our country. When you look at these funds in the districts and when you look at the contractors who are building classrooms, health centres, maintaining roads and young women's association who are borrowing money from the DSIP programs; they are all Papua

New Guineans in small to medium enterprises. We have small contractors building small classrooms in remote areas throughout the country and they are not some big foreign companies doing it, our people are doing it. And that has now totalled to well over K1.5 billion every year. So that is supporting our SME industry in the country and I think it is a program that we might continue to support by both sides of the House.

In the future, if we continuously invest a consistent amount of funding through the districts and provinces, you will see a gradual overcoming of some of these challenges we have. It is not impossible, it does not matter who is in government and that they can say, we will fund K200 million, K300 million and K400 million in one year. This is a lie because we also have many priorities of government like health, free education, infrastructures, maintaining Public Servants' salaries and when all these are added together, we run out of money every time.

Mr Speaker, so that is why we must all work together to support some government programs and DSIP is one area where we are doing it.

Mr Speaker, on Monday, the National Executive Council gave approval for what we call a National Plantation Management Agency Program. This program was established before in the 1970s and 1980s where this government system helped Papua New Guineans to manage their small coffee, cocoa or copra plantations and assisted them to borrow money from institutions like NDB and it assisted our people to manage their businesses and it was very successful. For instance if you can recall the success of the Stret Pasin scheme stores.

12/02

They were very successful so we have now authorised that it be revived. As a result, many Papua New Guineans who are really interested in doing business can take advantage of programs like that. One area is the concessional funds that are available from our development partners. The European Union and the UK Exim Bank. They have allocated close to one hundred and fifty million pounds for Papua New Guinea small to medium enterprises.

So what we need is a government agency to access that money so that we can obtain them through concessional rates. We can lend it to Papua New Guineans who are in business at very cheap rates. Not like the ones that the commercial banks are charging where we pay 12-14 or 16 percent. We can have them to repay at 4-5 or 6 per cent instead and give our people the real chance to do real business.

I think such a program will continue to build the SMEs in the country. The national plantation management agency is a very good program. The Ministry of State Enterprises is driving the Kumul Consolidated Holdings forward and we are going to arrange some funding through that. We can revive coffee plantations too. For example, the Waghi Mek Coffee Plantation is one of the biggest in the region but because of landowner issues and mismanagement it was run down. They continuously come to government asking for funding for over K20-K30 million every year but we do not have the money to give to just one project. That is why we can work through the NPA arrangement and we can go in there and help them to manage it as well. Some landowners don't keep their books in order. They do not know how to manage the businesses so that is why the government must come in to assist and provide that leadership so that they can have a real chance of developing those plantations.

I think we are heading in the right direction so we just need to continue to strengthen the programs that we have. Thank you.

Electoral Commission – Clarify Process

Mr MARK MAIPAKAI – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to cause a notice to the Prime Minister in respect to some election related issues.

We all know that at the end of the counting of the ballot papers in 2017, the Electoral Commissioner will have to advise the Governor General to invite the party with the highest number of elected members to form the next government. At the moment the Electoral Commissioner is circulating form 29 which requires candidates to disclose personal data including the names of political party from which they wish to seek endorsement.

Later on all the candidates will also be completing nomination forms which requires them to disclose the name of the party that has endorsed them.

Can the Prime Minister put on record publicly whether the Electoral Commissioner is going to extract and rely on the names of the political parties disclosed in form 29 or in the nomination forms?

Mr PETER O'NEILL – Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank the good Member for Kikori for his question.

The Member is a third term member of Parliament. He has been through many elections and knows how the governments are formed and how elections are conducted in the country.

Mr Speaker, we have to be careful, it does not matter which side of the House we belong to, we must try not to undermine the workings of the constitutional officers. Despite the negative perceptions about our electoral processes in the country, the nine elections or so that we have had in this country has been quite successful. So we need to give credit where it is due, that Electoral Commissioners have independently conducted good elections from time to time. And that is why we have seen smooth transfer of powers from one government to another since independence in 1975.

So, Mr Speaker, let us play politics around policy and what we can do for the country rather than attacking individual constitutional office holders. As the Member explained I have not filled in form 29 and I do not think it is necessary. I am told that is not a legal requirement for a candidate. It is just to assist the Electoral Commissioner to understand the data for each candidate who are willing to run for elections.

The official document for you to run as a candidate is the nomination form which you will fill in when you nominate at the respective electorates and you will indicate which party you are running under. That is entirely up to the candidate. Nobody will force the candidate to sign. It is an individual's choice which is guaranteed by our laws. So, Mr Speaker, allow the process to continue. Let the Electoral Commissioner run the elections -

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The Electoral Commission will need a lot of assistance from everyone across the country, let's give it a fair chance. When the nomination comes I know thousands of Papua New Guineans will run for the many seats across the country. And it is their right and no-one is going to stop them.

I want to assure everyone that we will do everything possible to assist the Electoral Commissioner and we in the Government know that we have critical parties that we are running. And we will try to minimise our engagement even with the electoral commissioner, because he must run it independently.

Mr Speaker, we do not want the Government to be interfering in that process and we do not have any say in how he conducts the election and where he gives contracts to service providers that provide work for him. It is done through his office and NEC or the Cabinet does not make decisions on behalf of the Electoral Commissioner as we have done in the past and that is the only way we can have a free and fair election.

Funds for Tidal Basin

Ms LOUJAYA KOUZA –Mr Speaker, since the Minister responsible for SOE is not present I direct this question to the Prime Minister.

(1) Is the funding of K200 million designated for the tidal basin still intact?

(2) Has talks with the Morobe Provincial Government and relevant stakeholders including landowners concluded or still in progress over who the management of the tidal basin will be?

Mr PETER O'NEILL –Those questions concern the State Owned Enterprises Minister and as far as I am aware, there have been some advertisements on the management of the tidal basin which has been contracted to the Kumul Consolidated Holdings and PNG Ports. The process is still going on, they have an independent process but it has not come through Cabinet so I have no information and progress on the status of that particular arrangement.

Mr Speaker, but the sooner we open that port and have it operating the better it is, for the landowners, the government because we need to repay the loan that was made from ADB to build it. That is why I am no privy to the negotiations with the landowners in the tidal basin area and I am sure that once it is concluded, it will be made public and subsequent reports will come to Parliament as soon as it is ready. But the government is not going to interfere with the process. It is an independent process already established and is well advanced. And we will allow it to process.

Environmental Damage – Oil Spill

Mr GORDON WESLEY – Mr Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Transport. On the morning of December 24, 2012; a ship by the name of Asian Lily, carrying refrigerated cargo ran aground on Kaiwato Island on Mururo LLG in the Milne Bay province. The vessel was running at high speed between 72-80 knots when it ran into the island. The reports on-hand shows that there were extensive damage done to the marine environment including coral reefs following oil spill from the ship into the sea.

Why is the Transport Department silent on this issue for more than four years?

The Transport Department should pursue this case and have the company responsible to pay for some of the environmental damages.

Mr MALACHAI TABAR –We are aware as a department on a lot of issues especially the *Merchant Shipping Act* and we have just finished the first legislative council drafting and we are bringing in amendments to that act. As you saw it on the Notice Paper yesterday, and it also involves maritime safety. We have a signing agreement between the Australian Government and the National Maritime and Safety Authority Agency support agreement. It was signed between the CEO of the NMSA and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Australia

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I want to assure the people of Samarai-Murua, there are couple of ships just being abandoned, one of which is in my district, at Gazelle. We tried to get the owner of the ship to move the wreck out of the reef but it has not been done yet. I gave Notice to introduce an *Act* in Parliament when I was still the Minister for Higher Education but unfortunately the *Act* is in need of review and that's what we are doing.

As I said, it is going to Cabinet sometimes this month or the next and hopefully we are going to have some power to address issues pertaining to shipping disasters and destruction to the environment from maritime vessels.

So, allow me to assure the honourable Member and people of Samarai-Murua that we will look into this and I will get back to him in due time.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr FRANCIS AWESA (Imbonggu – Minister for Works) – I seek leave of the Chair to make a personal explanation.

Mr SPEAKER – Do you claim to have been misrepresented?

Mr FRANCIS AWESA – Yes, Sir!

Mr SPEAKER – Go ahead, leave is granted.

Mr FRANCIS AWESA – This explanation relates to a report on page 16 of *The National* newspaper which states that some money has gone missing in relation to Mendi Airport.

I want to state that this money is still intact. It is there and the money is available, the K10 million that has been referred to. It has not been expended. Only a little portion of it, some K200 000 has been spent without the approval of the JDP. The money was spent by the district treasurer without JDP&BPC consent and warrants some explanation from the staff involved.

I want to state here that this report is not correct. It is also not correct in one aspect which claimed that K500 000 was spent. That is also not true because we have spent more than that on Cardno-Davis.

So this misreporting by the newspaper is not new, it has happened many times and I am asking *The National* to retract that that information because it is not true and is defamatory to I and some other hard working officers in my district administration.

I also want to point out that the Mendi Airport relocation is an impact project that was agreed to by ExxonMobil and the National Government under the LNG Project Agreement, also included are the Tari Hospital and the Mendi Hospital. To date these have not been funded and we are still waiting.

So, while we are waiting all the ground work needs to be done. Groundwork such as the surveys, landowner identification and other things that needed to be done before the funds are made available.

So, all in all, I want to say that this is misreporting by the newspaper and I would expect some retraction on it.

And, where it says the land was taken back. Well the State doesn't own the land so why would they want to take it back. The still own the land.

So, this is one of the aspects of reporting which is sensational and is motivated by politically motivated individuals in the media. This is not the first time. I have noticed that some other instances like this have happened with the funds that were allegedly misused in the Kiriwina-Goodenough electorate and some others.

I want to ask the media to be factual, check your facts before you print these things out because it is not true, is malicious and is detrimental to everyone.

Sitting suspended from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m..

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**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL – PAROLE
BOARD ANNUAL REPORTS, 2012, 2013 AND 2014 – MINISTERIAL
STATEMENT – PAPER NOTED**

Mr ANO PALA (Rigo – Minister for Justice and Attorney-General) – I present the following paper pursuant to statute:

Department of Justice and Attorney-General – Parole Board Annual Reports, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

I ask leave of the Parliament to make a statement in connection with this report.

Leave granted.

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to table the Reports of the Parole Board.

Mr Speaker, the mission of the Parole Board is to administer the parole system with due consideration and regard to the protection of the public and in full compliance with the *Parole Act 1991* at all times.

Mr Speaker, in accordance with section 9 of the Act, the Chairman of the Parole Board has presented to me the Reports of the Parole Board for tabling in Parliament. The Reports include information on the general operations of the Parole Board and the systems of parole. I, hereby, present some of the highlights contained in the reports.

Mr Speaker, we have what we call the fast track programme. This programme was developed to assist prisons which have a large number of applications for parole but lack the capacity and resources to deal with the large numbers and backlog of matters of consideration by the board. It allows for additional resources and personnel to be brought in from outside the province concerned to assist in the administration of the parole process. Board meetings are also held at the respective prison locations during this programme to address those applications there and then.

This programme was also necessary to ease pressure on the cost of maintaining the prisons and prisoners. With the increased number of prisoners released on parole savings can be made to the Correctional Services budget to cater for other needs.

Mr Speaker, in accordance with the requirement of the Act the Reports contain statistics of detainee assessment report and pre-parole reports as well as parole applications and their outcomes.

In 2012, the Board received a total of 273 detainee assessment reports from the Correctional Services Institute and 273 pre-parole reports from my department's CBC branch. A total number of 273 applications were deliberated on by the Board. Out of the 273 applications, 28 matters were deferred, 7 were dismissed due to being premature and 7 were remission cases. By 31 December, 2012, the Parole Board considered 231 applications for parole, refused 103 and granted a total 120 parole orders.

In 2013, the Board received a total of 202 detainee assessment reports from the Correctional Services Institute and 202 pre-parole reports from my department's Parole Services branch. A total number of the 202 applications were deliberated on by the Board. Out of the 202 applications 2 matters were deferred. By 31 December, 2013, the Parole Board considered 200 applications for parole of which 104 were refused. Those detainees were entitled to reapply for parole after 12 months from the date of the Board's decision refusing parole.

In 2014, the Parole Board dealt with 252 cases where 148 detainees in that year were refused parole, 77 parole orders were granted and 27 cases were pending.

Apart from the statistics given, the Reports also recommended a review of the *Parole Act* in relation to and among other things, the membership and the term in office of the Parole Board members. As such, my department has conducted a review of the Act and will soon propose amendments in the light of the review.

Mr Speaker, the Parole Board continues to play its role in making independent, just and sound decisions in relation to the applications for parole and granting orders for the release of prisoners on parole where appropriate.

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At the operational level in 2012, my department made changes to the operations structure of the Community Based Correction branches and separated the three functions of probation, juvenile justice and parole.

Each of these were given branch status with their respective budget lines to give them greater capacity and efficiency and for improved performance management. These changes have improved the operations of the Parole Board going forward. Officers of the Correctional

Services and officers from my department continue to collaborate and support the work of the Parole Board and parole generally in the criminal justice system in our country.

Mr Speaker, once again, thank you for the opportunity to table these reports.

Motion – That the question be now put – agreed to.

Motion – That the Parliament take note of the Paper – agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

That Parliament adjourned at 2.30 p.m..

