

THIRD DAY

Wednesday 30 March 2017

DRAFT HANSARD

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THIRD DAY

Wednesday 30 March 2017

The Speaker (**Mr Theo Zurenoc**) 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.

Suspended.

The Speaker again took the Chair at 11 a.m. and invited the Member for Nawae, **Honourable Gisuwat Siniwin** to say Prayers:

‘In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

Thank you Lord you are the Lord, the Master, the Planner and everything we do comes from you. We acknowledge your presence in all our lives and today too. Lord, we are sinners and we come before you, forgive our sins and forgive the sins of our voters who talk at the back of us. Lord, what we are doing for this nation comes from you and we acknowledge that. Again be present in us today, this is the second last week of our 5 years in this Parliament. We thank you for many things we have done for this country, thank you for the money, development that has been taken place in the 22 Provinces and 89 Districts of this country.

Father, mipela tok tenyu, yu stap olsem na olgeta samting kamap, mipela sapa long taim inap, tenyu long yu givim dispela govtman under the leadership of our Prime Minister, Honourable Peter O’Neill wantaim ol arapela ministers, mi tok tenyu. Yu ken kisim bignem na glori na larim yu ken kamap bikpela na mekim plenti wok long dispela nation long brigim lait i kam long kantri bilong mipela.

Again we are sinners as leaders of this nation we come before you, forgive our sins and make us holy because you are holy and bless this nation, Lord bless our Speaker, Prime Minister, Opposition Leader and all the Ministers and Members of Parliament and all those who are working in this Parliament. May you bless us and this nation too we ask this and commit ourselves into your hands, in the name of our Lord and soon coming king in your name we pray, Amen.’

QUESTIONS

Adequate Fire Services

Mr JOE KOIM KOMUN – Thankyou Mr Speaker for recognising the people of Anglimp - South Waghi. I want to direct my question to the Minister for Provincial Affairs but since he is not present. I direct it to the Prime Minister.

My question is in relation to disasters caused by man and nature. Just recently a fire broke out and burnt down shops at Boroko. But the response by the fire services was not good and that shows that our Fire Services are not ready for this sort of disasters. Most of the shop owners lost millions of kina in that fire.

My concern is are we fully equipped to solve this sort of situation because most of our citizens have gone into real estate business and if our fire service is not responding quickly then it's really a big problem to us.

02/03

The other issue that I want to talk about is how ready are we to face this disaster, now that the country is seeing an increase in property development? And if emergency services like fire and rescue cannot cater for this growth, then we are going to see a lot of damages as a result of this inadequacies.

Apart from that, the government also needs to inform this Parliament regarding the increasing premiums by insurance companies, especially where properties are being very closely to each other.

What is the government's state of readiness regarding this issue?

If not, then, I would like to appeal to the government to take a proactive action to set up Disaster Office to address these issues.

Can the Prime Minister assure this Parliament if actions will be taken to address these issues that I have mentioned?

Thank you.

Mr PETER O'NEILL – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I also thank the Member for Anglimp-South Wahgi regarding his questions on natural disasters throughout the country.

Mr Speaker, over the past few years, we have seen and encountered many events that are taking place which have been caused by climate change, and disasters that have been caused by human interventions. And where in many cases, the government has done its very

best, particularly when we saw the long draught over the past few years and the current extended draught for the past eight months or so. The government has tried its best to provide food and supplies using the DSIP and other means of funds that are available to government.

Mr Speaker, we have been able to manage this disasters quite well although sometimes it is not fully to the expectations of some of our people who have been affected by these disasters.

Mr Speaker, nevertheless, we have been able to attend to those disasters in a timely manner. As for the issue regarding the fire in Boroko and the disaster that has happened recently, our investigators are investigating the cause of the fire because of the fact that they think that arson may be the cause of fire. But that is yet to be established. If it was caused by some electrical fault or fire in the kitchen or whatever the causes that is related to the business, then I am certain that there is sufficient cover that be able to cater for those who have suffered some losses.

Therefore, until such time when reports come out then we will establish how we can be able to be of some assistance.

Mr Speaker, in terms of equipping the Fire Department, we have been engaging with the Fire Department over the last few days as well, in trying to build up the capacity that has been neglected for many years. This has not been only under our watch but also in the past as well. We are trying to re-equip the equipment now.

Mr Speaker, we are also getting all the agencies of government including Finance and Treasury, especially the APEC Office to take the lead to try to re-equip all our Fire Departments throughout the country. It will be a long period of implementation of that programme that we are trying to put together but for the major cities where there have been consistent fires, we are trying to put more equipment that will boost the services of the Fire services Division. This will enable us to try and stop these kind of disasters getting worse in the future.

So, Mr Speaker, our government officials are working on that.

Thank you.

03/03

Fiji Re- opened Trade

Mr ANTON YAGAMA – Mr Speaker, we understand that the Fiji Trade Minister has now officially announced that the commercial pathway has now opened for PNG to

export commercial volumes of Ox & Palm, Trukai Rice, and Lae Biscuit to Fiji after the battle with them by our Trade Minister to lift restrictions of export of PNG products to Fiji. On this note I would like to thank the honourable Minister for his strong stand in trying to get PNG exports to Fiji.

My questions are as follows:

(1) Can the Minister for Trade confirm or deny that he has received any official advice from the Fijian Government on the lifting of the ban?

(2) Can Minister confirm if PNG will be allowed to export commercial quantities of other premium export products like our popular grown coffee, our Tuna can products especially those sold to the European Union markets under strict EU Bi-security standards?

Mr RICHARD MARU – I thank the Member for his questions.

This morning I received an official letter from the Office of the Trade Minister for Fiji dated the 23rd of March confirming that Fiji has now lifted the ban of our imports of Ox & Palm, rice and biscuits. It has been a long battle and I am very thankful that the Fiji Government has come good. On behalf of our country and our government, I thank the Fiji Government and its people for finally doing the right thing. We have been trying for almost 15 years so it has been a long time and I am extremely thankful that they have finally agreed to do so. I will officially write to them and thank them for that decision.

In relation to the second question, now that we have got pathway open for three products, our intention is very clear. We need to export more products to Fiji such as our canned Tuna, fresh fish, coffee and other products which are sold globally. As far as I am concerned, there are no reasons for them to be sold into the fixed markets. I will be working with the Fisheries Minister, the NFA and other players to start working with the Fiji Government to allow the pathway for other products to enter the Fiji market.

Mr Speaker, for noting of Parliament, this year we expect Fiji to export K100 million worth of their products into our market in PNG. We have been doing less than K5 million a year so the trade imbalance is absolutely in favour of Fiji. It is important that we continue to work with the Fiji Government to increase exports into Fiji. When you look at industries like Fishing, if it wasn't for the EU market, we will be struggling as an industry in PNG. It is important that we target markets like Australia and Fiji which are quite close to us to open the bi-security pathway to enter those markets.

I will be working with the appropriate agencies and ministers and the Fijian Government to open the pathway for other premium PNG products to enter the market in Fiji.

The Oncologist

Ms LOUJAYA KOUZA – I direct my question to the Minister for Health and the Minister for Attorney General to take note.

It has been two months now since a Court decision has asked the Health Department to pay-up entitlements to Dr John Niblet. Currently, he has been evicted from where he was staying at Lae International Hotel due to arrears that should have been taken care off by the Health Department totalling about K256 500.00

He is now renting a space at the Morobe Hotel while waiting for entitlements and so forth.

04/03

While we are waiting for our Oncologist to arrive, Doctor John Niblet has offered to do a locum on the Cancer patients that are waiting in limbo for a solution. Please Health Minister, tell me how you have been working now to fast track or alleviate this humanitarian case or while he is still waiting to be attended to, what do you say about the locum?

Mr MICHAEL MALABAG – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the honourable Member for Lae for asking that question, especially on Doctor John Niblet.

Let me give a little insight on Mr Niblet's case. Doctor Niblet completed his last contract in February 2016, but it was extended on an understanding for three months up until May 2016.

During that time the department on its own wisdom decided not to continue his contract. Whilst that took place, he took the matter to Court to pursue a tax rebate sighting over taxed salaries and is pending up till now and I understand that the Court is trying to look at the contempt charges against the Health Secretary on this particular matter.

He has been evicted from the Lae International Hospital after incurring debts up to over K200 000.

Now, as far as the Health Department is concerned, that is his personal responsibility and not on the path of providing services for the Health Department. That is the advice that I got from the department because he ceased to be employed in 2016, and there is no contract in place to allow accommodation and other packs and privileges coming in line with the contract that you signed.

Ms Loujaya Kouza – Point of Order! The Court Decision had asked that the Health Department should go ahead and renumerate Doctor Niblet, please follow that. Why have we not followed the Court Order?

Mr MICHAEL MALABAG – If there is a Court Order in place than I am not aware of that. Immediately after this I will talk to the Health Secretary on this particular issue. Now on the locum, about Doctor John Niblet, circumstances have arisen and my department have advised me that while we are waiting for the things to be in place trying to operate especially with the Port Moresby General Hospital, Kundiawa most recently and few others we have taken up with them.

So, Doctor Niblets case must be treated in a very particular manner because he was employed for quite a long time but within his term he never trained any Papua New Guineans to take over when he finishes his contract and that is also a very key issue that we are looking at.

Of course we give him thanks for what he has given to this country and as Minister responsible I don't have any issue, if we need to engage him pending recruitment of an Oncologist. But then again it is for my department to advise me to go about doing.

Honourable Member, let me assure you that immediately after this I will definitely take this matter up again.

Thank you.

Action on SABL Cancellation

Mr GARRY JUFFA – Thank you, Mr Speaker, my questions are directed to the Prime Minister to thank the Prime Minister of his commitment to cancelling the SABLs and my questions are in relation to that.

On 27 November, the Prime Minister stated and it was quoted in the National Newspaper that he has given instructions to the Forestry and Lands Departments for the cancellations of the SABLs and I would like to ask the Prime Minister if he has a plan as to how we can affect those cancellations so that rather than just the commitment the actuality also prevail so that rather than just the commitment, the actuality also prevails and the companies and individuals who are unlawfully occupying land belonging to Papua New Guineans as exposed by the SABL inquiries, so that they may be attended to, dealt with or evicted if they are failing to comply.

05/03

If the Prime Minister does have such a plan, can he inform the House so that the people of Papua New Guinea who have been waiting anxiously in regards to this matter can be informed and be satisfied.

Mr PETER O'NEILL – Thankyou Mr Speaker, and I thank the Governor of Northern Province on his question on SABL.

Mr Speaker, I wish to inform this Honourable House that the National Executive Council has already made a decision that all SABLs must be cancelled and as I indicated in the press releases, we have given the direction already. How the officials implement it, they must conform to the legislations and the laws that regulate all these issues in the Lands Department and other related government agencies of Government. But I want to assure the Governor, that the Minister for Lands will be making a Ministerial Statement particularly in relation to the SABL issues and I wish to urge him to participate in that debate and we will find a way to cancel all these SABL licences throughout the country.

There is no doubt that the displacement of our landowners in many parts of our country because of the SABL land acquisitions that has been going on in the country. It is unnecessary, unwarranted and certainly unacceptable. Our people cannot continue to be displaced in their land. They must be respected and they must be allowed to participate in any development that is taking place in those lands in a meaningful way. That has been our stand in this Government and I will continue to maintain this principle all the way through. The Minister will make a Ministerial Statement right after *Question Time*, thankyou Mr Speaker.

Supplementary Question

Mr JOE KOIM KOMUN – My supplementary question to the Prime Minister is, whilst the Government is making their stand on the SABLs, in the departments there are employees and people who are collaborating in the system. How can we address this?

Mr PETER O'NEILL – I thank the Member for Anglimp South Wangi for his question. Mr Speaker, again the Member can participate in the debate that will come through the Ministerial Statement but any public servant who is abusing their position in the public service and particularly in reference to the Lands Department are being suspended or terminated as allegations come forward and if there is evidence that there has been foul play

or compromise or corruption in those departments, they will be terminated as we go along. Please refer any specific issue, or any specific officer that has compromised his position to the Minister and he will follow that through. But we welcome the debate on the SABL as soon as the Minister presents his statement.

Mr DAVID ARORE – Mr Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Transport. Over the weekend, I returned from Tufi-Wanigela. From Oro Bay, I went for an electoral visit and while returning, it was unfortunate that I came across two dinghy's that capsized between Tufi and Oro Bay. From that incident, there was a casualty and the body was eventually recovered and given to the family of the deceased.

(1) What is the Department's policy on small crafts in the country especially the small dinghies that are travelling in our coastal waters because a lot of these dinghies are usually overloaded with goods? And this particular dinghy was carrying 15 cement bags and that caused the overturn.

(2) Like the third party insurance for land transport, are our small sea crafts insured?

The last time, I raised the issue on vehicle insurance and now I'm raising the issue on sea transport insurance, maybe the next time will be on air transport.

Mr MALAKAI TABAR – I thank the Member for Ijivitari for his question on *Small Craft Act*. Mr Speaker, there is a *Small Craft Act*. The Australian Government has given its share of funding, we have just recruited two weeks ago an officer from Canberra to be part of this program.

06/03

Since 2014 we have been encouraging provincial governments to take the responsibility to register a small craft board within each provinces.

Mr Speaker, a lot of provinces have not done enough or not done anything. The provincial governments have a take on their hands such as the registration of vehicles in their respective provinces.

The provincial governments must effectively have a board and they must be able to help coordinate the small craft Act in those provinces. There was a design of the 23 foot fibre glass dinghy that was worked on since 2014. We brought it back to the melding guys in Alotau but they did not do a good job so Ela Motors came back to me late last year.

Over the last four to five months, there are no fibre boats in Ela Motors and throughout Papua New Guinea. We have corrected that and came back with a design. This time with a four inch buoyancy on the top of the 23 foot fibre glass boat.

The issue on hand is with the provincial government transport department –

Mr Garry Juffa - Point of Order! Just for clarification, the provincial government already passed the laws on small crafts and we are waiting for the ratification from the national government so that we can continue with the enforcement. Also the funds need to be put forward so that we can enforce and administrate this law and that is the situation we are faced with now.

Mr MALAKAI TABAR - Thank you Mr Speaker, the Australian Government has been waiting on Papua New Guinea Government to work on this. I hope to get this through with few other things. This is outstanding for Papua New Guinea especially the 15 Maritime Provinces so we need to work on this to get it right.

SME Policy

Mr DE KEWANU – I rise to ask questions to the Minister for Trade, Commerce and Industry, Honourable Richard Maru. My question relates to the two critical enabling legislations which are called for in the SME policy regarding the Foreign Investment Review Board or regulatory authority which will bring back or oversee the reserve businesses by way of legislation and through the *Franchise Act*.

We are nearing the end of our term now and I wish to ask the Minister to inform this House and the country the latest on this important legislation that we would want to see enabled and enacted by this Parliament.

Village Court Officials

Mr RICHARD MARU - Thank you Speaker. I thank the Member for Mendi for his very important question.

Mr Speaker, I am happy to inform this Parliament that both legislations are awaiting NEC approval. I spoke to the Prime Minister this morning to make sure that it is on the agenda for today's meeting so that we can have that cleared. I can then present the both Bills to Parliament next week. We can get that done before the end of our term.

Mr KERENGA KUA – Thank you Mr Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Deputy Prime Minister but he is not available. Every time we want to ask questions to him, he is not around so I redirect it to the Prime Minister.

We made a decision two years ago to pay the village court magistrates, officers and councils. Implementation of this decision was is not effective with implementation at the village level is not working too well for the village court magistrate; so can the Attorney General take note; I just had a word with him before the beginning of this session.

07/03

About four magistrates in individual village courts missed out. So can the Attorney general look into that. The Councillors in each ward represent the government; population in the wards vary between 2000-8000, so the councillors do a lot of work and for the last six months or so they were not paid their fortnightly salaries and this is a big concern for me.

Can the Prime Minister; talk to his Deputy who is also the Minister responsible for the Provincial and local Government Affairs to attend to this matter before the Election?

Mr PETER O'NEILL –I thank the Member for Sinasina -Yongomugl for his question relating to the ward councillors and the village court magistrates. For the first time this government has recognised the work of councillors in the country; who have been neglected since 1964. And we are trying our best to put over four 4000 people on the payroll. A lot of them are on the payroll getting about K200 fortnightly; previously they were paid K50 monthly.

Mr Speaker, we are trying our best to cater for all of them but those who have missed out is basically due to their unavailability of their personal information, like account and other details that we need in order to process their fortnightly payments. So when they try to transfer their funds across it is not possible because some of these accounts are not correct or either they are missing.

There are some cases where some magistrates and councillors are chosen by the district or provincial authorities; whom the government does not recognise. This is done without proper clearance from the provincial or district authorities. I will therefore, talk to Secretary for Provincial Affairs and office of the Attorney General. My apologies on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister; who is out of the country on medical trip; so this is the response I can offer.

He is an elder statesman so it is alright for him to take a break. So I am happy to say thank you to the Member for asking the question and also he was part of the Government to initiate the program so credit must go where it's due.

Roles and Functions of Livestock Development Corporation

Mr CAMILLUS DANGIMA – My question is directed to the Minister for Agriculture and Livestock. I want to know the status of LDC (Livestock Development Corporation). I used funds from my district to travel to Rome and brought in funds from IFARD but now there is no department responsible to use these funds to implement projects and programs. These funds have now been diverted to vegetables and there is no LCD. What has become of the Livestock Development Corporation?

08/03

Livestock is a big industry and we must promote it. What are the roles and functions of Livestock Development Corporation (LDC) and where is it now? Because it is a very big industry which this country will benefit a lot from it. Some of us must promote some of its benefits, like the one I built at my electorate in Kerowagi.

Mr TOMMY TOMSCOLL – I thank the Member for his questions in relation to Livestock Development Corporation (LDC). Livestock Development Corporation is a company owned by the State. Unfortunately, for a very long time up until now the operations of LDC is not funded under the National Budget. So at the end of the day we 112 Members in here are responsible for not funding LDC.

It has no asset or even own any asset but operate on land that is under CAL to the Department of Agriculture. The only property that they operate from is outside of 14 Mile here in National Capital District, which is a harbour tower for small pig and cattle farmers to pay up fees for operation.

Unfortunately, they don't pay economic or *social fees* and the fees collected for operating is lower than what would be economically viable. If it was operated by non-state entity, they would have charged economic fees. So LDC does not make a lot of money from that operation. They earned about in the vicinity of K70 000 per month and with that amount collected you can't take care of the administration because it's not enough.

The money that the Member is referring to which is about K30 million from IFAD, yes, IFAD in consultation with agencies of government including Treasury, Planning and DAL have decided that, that money should be used by Fresh Produce Development Authority.

And so have appointed Fresh Produce Development Agency as the agency that they would roll-out all these programs under and not LDC.

I hope that clarifies the Members question and bring some understanding. That money is from IFAD and they have the full authority to decide who it wants to work with and what it wants to fund.

In this case, it has decided that it will fund and make available money to the Fresh Produce Development Agency, who will work with all the vegetable farmers to produce vegetables and bring it to the markets in both Port Moresby and Lae. That is the situation and I hope it's been cleared.

Supplementary Question

Mr JOHN SIMON – In the previous Government they have purchased big number of cattle's in Erap, and 1000 of it was given to East Sepik Province.

My question is

(1) Where are those 1000 cattle's designed for East Sepik Province with the rest of the cattle's for other Provinces?

Mr TOMMY TOMSCOLL – Thankyou Speaker, the Member for Kavieng is quite right, some of these cattle's have been slaughtered and eaten so the number has decreased.

09/03

Mr Speaker, the last government both in the vicinity of slightly just a little bit more than 4, 000 cattle; 2, 600 or so were transferred into Port Moresby and parked at Sigeri under a company, which is a joint venture called Papua Bulumakau Limited.

Papua Bulumakau Limited was a joint venture between the owners of the cattle range up at Sogeri, Lord Peter Murry, Cole Koitaki and the Central Provincial Government. So, it was parked there and unfortunately it did not go into full operation because there were some commercial issues that popped up as a dispute between Lord Peter Murry and the State. Therefore, this has not been resolved and the matter went to court and Peter Murry was able to obtain a court order and the matter is still before the Courts as to my knowledge.

The others were kept in Morobe Province in Markham and there were distributed to another company and this company then distributed to the local people. With that, and as far as I know, these cattle are for distribution to farmers, so they were distributed, and if there is

any particular issue that specifically has to be raised and attended to, and please, if you know it then bring it to my attention.

Office Terms of MPs

Mr BEN MICAH – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have a series of questions which I would like to direct to the Prime Minister.

As the Minister responsible for the *Constitution*, Electoral Commission and Ombudsman Commission there have been a lot of misinformation and lies being circulated in the electorates in preparation for the election that is coming. Therefore, as the Minister responsible it would be better to seek clarification from you so that all the sitting Members who are going to contest and numerous other contestants can be made aware so that they will not mislead our people.

(1) Is it true that the term for all the sitting Members will end when the writs are issued and we nominate?

This is because there is talk circulating around that we cannot perform our functions as leaders when the writs are issued.

Also, it has been a common tradition but I do not think this is legal, therefore, this must be clarified, and that is that project funds like the DSIP, DSP and the other district funds are normally frozen or stopped. This is because the Ombudsman Commission gives the Section 27 direction to Members not to use these funds until the National Election has been completed.

(2) Is it legal for the Ombudsman Commission to do that?

(3) Under what constitutional provision or law does it say that Members are not able to access public funds that have been legally appropriated to the districts and provinces under the Budget?

This is an important issue and we seek clarification regarding this.

Finally, Mr Prime Minister, the fruits of our final four months as Members depends on our DSPs, DSIPs, and mining grants and in my case where timber is being harvested in my electorate, the Log Export Development Levies (LEDL).

Therefore, we have made our 2017 budgets and I have been ringing the Ministers for Forestry and Treasury asking them regarding the delayed payments for the LEDLs for the last 18 months for my district in Kavieng.

10/03

So much cubic metres of my logs for people have gone out but what is legally for my district has not been forthcoming. The two ministers have been saying so much about the issue but you as their boss, I would like to ask if there is money for our budgets. There are about five to six months remaining for the year 2017 to cater for our DSIP and DSGs. When are we going to be paid especially those of us who are log export levies?

Mr PETER O'NEILL – I thank the Member for his questions.

Firstly, in relation to terms of Parliament, since 1975 it has always been the practice of Parliament that Members of Parliament cease being one but still get paid and perform their duties until the return of writs, not when issuing of writs. Therefore, every one of us is expected to continue performing our duties and managing the affairs of our people. If we don't do it then who is going to do it? The *Constitution* and our laws are based on common sense and common sense prevails.

With regard to DSIP, as the leaders' Summit concluded on Tuesday it is clearly evident from presentations by the district administrators, CEOs, and provincial administrators throughout the country the pride they take in managing these funds. These funds are not managed by Members of Parliament, we are basically chairmen of the district development authority and governors and chairmen of our PEC and so forth so the perception that Members have cheque books and writing cheques for everybody is unheard of. The only funds that we have access to is the discretionary portion of the DSG which is about K250 thousand. That is that one that is normally being stopped in past as far as I was concerned. They cannot go and shut down the entire district because the Member is going for elections. They must continue to pay for education, health services and others. The responsibility now is for the CEOs to manage those funds. But as Members of Parliament and chairmen of CEOs we will continue, there is no changing to it.

The Ombudsmen and other relevant authorities can intervene only when they see that there is evidence of abuse. But they cannot have a blanket intervention where they will stop the functioning of government services and implementation.

With regards to the log levies, I know that for DSIP and the constitutional grants will continue to come. In fact some the DSIP will be dispersed over the course of this week or next week.

On the issue of DSGs, of course the Office of Rural Development will continue to disperse as acquittals are provided to them. In terms of log levy, I know customs normally collect these fees and then they pay to Treasury who later pay the Department of Forestry

who later disburse it. I will follow up with the relevant agencies and ministers. I have always told them that districts need that money and it should be paid to them accordingly. I see no reason why these funds cannot be disbursed over the next few months.

Kairuku-Hiri – Overdue Royalties

Mr PETER ISOAIMO – I wish to direct my questions to the Minister for Petroleum and Energy.

The first question is in regard to royalties of my electorate especially the plant landowners as well as the pipeline segment landowners from Cape Suckling to Cape Possession on the boarder of Gulf. As per the UBSA and LBSA Agreement, the benefits are long overdue. In 2015, a ministerial determination was made as to who the beneficiaries are. It has taken well over two years and our people are frustrated and as you may have witnessed early this month, people blocked roads into the plant site.

11/03

Assurance from your office to my people was that the issue will be dealt with after 30 days which is about now so on behalf of my people, is your department ready to disperse the promised benefits to the plant site landowners and the pipeline segment landowners because everyone is waiting as per assurances by the former Minister? Also we are reading in media that if there are issues with the landowners, my people were assured that they would pick up their benefits.

(2) The location of the Papua LNG, from what I understand, the investors have already made a commercial decision to establish the second plant in Cautioned Bay area. But with the opposition from the Governor for Gulf, in wanting to establish the plant in Gulf Province, can you explain to the people of Kairuku-Hiri and Papua New Guinea including the Gulf people as to where exactly will be the location of the second LNG plant will be?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr NIXON DUBAN – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I want to thank the Member for Kairuku-Hiri for the questions regarding payments to the landowners.

Mr Speaker, in 2015, I as the Minister responsible have made a ministerial determination for the entire 60 000 landowners of the PNG LNG Project and I am very sure that the ministerial determinations that I have made has complied with the Oil and Gas Act.

Mr Speaker, there is a provision for objections within 28 days but we have bypassed that period and in the entire determinations that we have made, there was no objections from

the plant site and pipeline segment but only one on the upstream. Now that gives us the confidence that the processes complied with the Oil and Gas Act and is completed on record.

Mr Speaker, now that gives us the opportunity to go out and pay our landowners but unfortunately we have a case that was raised by the disgruntle members of one of those provinces which lead to the decision by the Courts to impose Alternate Resolutions which prevented the Department of Petroleum and Energy to carry out that particular exercise. That has drastically delayed various interventions that have been year marked for our landowners and as a result the Government was quite worried about the sensitivity of neglecting the upstream.

Mr Speaker, we have always maintained that we have only one LNG Project in the country and if there is going to be any payment it has to be fair across the board. On those basis we have studied the options of not letting down the plant site and pipeline segment.

Mr Speaker, in the last couple of month I have personally met with the landowners of the plant site and we have given assurance that we will weigh the situation, look at the gravity of the situation and enter into a position.

While we can complain from the plant site and pipeline segment, we must also respect those from the upstream because it is the key issue that this government must manage properly in order to arrive at the right solution.

Mr Speaker, I have assured the landowners who have demonstrated at the plant site that we will take a clear position and that is to commit to electing directors of those villages at the plant site. As I speak, that process has been concluded and it will be important to also understand that this step has been managed by the Electoral Commission and MRDC. These directors can elect the chairman so that they can also be part of the MRDC that qualify for the Petroleum Resources Plant Site Companies.

Mr Speaker, for that process we have concluded the election of the four directors of the villages of the plant site.

I as the Minister responsible, I don't see any problem and I believe that the Ministerial Determination has strong standing in terms of determining landowners around the country but the Courts as part of the Judiciary have their own interpretation. The provision under the Oil and Gas Act is very clear that the Ministerial Determination stands to be counted as the position of this country and we can proceed to pay all the landowners.

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In relation to question number two on the location of the Papua LNG towards Caution Bay, I think the Prime Minister, myself and Total and few others have expressed that in any major projects that we have in terms of the choices that have been made by the company to nominate certain particular location. It is also driven by project economics, where companies will put the money and they carry out feasibility study to look at the right model for such developments. As government we must respect the commercial decision by those who are interested in our country and Caution Bay has been chosen and we can see there are number of synergies in this two projects, the PNG LNG and Papua LNG, where Exxon Mobil has made the move to acquire the interest of Inter Oil so the synergies are important for the terminal that is going to be based at Caution Bay. I think this country needs mature leadership, we have to allow Total to conclude. This year is an important year because final investment decisions will be made and they have declared Caution Bay as the project location. As Government we are supporting Total, we think that the right decision has been made and it is an important milestone for this country. We as Government have respected that decision because it is based purely on project economics and Caution Bay will remain the project location for Total.

Supplementary Question

Pay Landowner Royalties

Mr BEN MICAH – My supplementary question goes to the Minister for Petroleum and Energy, and the Prime Minister and the entire Cabinet can take note. When I was appointed Minister last year, I called a meeting for all the landowners upstream, pipeline, midstream, and processing facilities and we came to an agreement which I presented to Cabinet and the Cabinet made an important decision laying out the steps for paying whatever is already cleared or has got no disputes or issues and Since I left that Ministry there have been many complaints from the landowners from the upstream, pipeline and facility areas.

As a former Minister, I made recommendations and the Cabinet approved it and all we need is implementation.

Before this Parliament adjourns for the Election, can we leave an important legacy for our people in this very important corridor that is now making big money for this country and for the foreigners by paying landowners from the upstream and to the processing plant before the Parliament rise?

Mr NIXON DUBAN – Thankyou Mr Speaker and I thank the Member for Kavieng, I think the Member is aware as the former minister that the important point to be registered is while we want to debate on this matter we have to respect the fact that there are issues to be weighed out correctly. The *Oil and Gas Act* is very specific and when it was made it is very clear that those landowners were recognised by law and it is the process to pay that must make sense and the department has taken responsibility of that. We have started already in the plant site and we have leaders from the upstream area who also observe the election of those directors of the four major villages of the plant site. The question of when do we pay always arises, everybody wants to get paid and we are mindful of that, we are not saying they won't be paid.

Mr Ben Micah – Point of Order!

Mr SPEAKER – You asked a question, allow the Minister to answer.

Mr Ben Micah – Mr Speaker, the NEC decision as far as I know, unless it is revoked, clearly laid out the process already. If the NEC changed the process that was approved under my recommendations, what are those steps Minister?

Mr NIXON DUBAN – We have taken the right step. The first step is we are now going to pay the landowners on the plant site. That process has started and we have given the people a fair opportunity to elect their directors and they have done so. The next step is for them to elect their chairman to be on the Board of MRDC From that point onwards accounts have already been set and MRDC's business is now to settle those 2 per cent free carry equity and the royalties

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 – RE-ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

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

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent Minister for Lands and Physical Planning presenting a Ministerial Statement forthwith.

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STATUS OF SPECIAL AGRICULTURE BUSINESS LEASES (SABL) MINISTERIAL STATEMENT – PAPER NOTED

Mr BENNY ALLEN (Unggai-Bena – Minister for Lands and Physical Planning) -
Mr Speaker, I rise to make a ministerial statement to Parliament on the Special Agriculture Business Leases, commonly referred to by its acronym, SABLs.

Mr Speaker, SABLs were initiated and issued with the most genuine of intentions to attract foreign investors into agriculture businesses using customary land to develop the local economy.

However, experiences to date have proven SABLs to be a contentious issue due to abuses and departures from the original agenda.

In most cases, so-called investors came in on the pretext of developing agricultural projects such as oil palm estates but went immediately into massive logging business much to the detriment and dismay of the local people, the environment and the State.

As leaders and representatives of our electorates and people, many of us Honourable Members are well aware of these abuses I refer to in those electorates and provinces where SABLs have been issued. I will give an example of this abuse later in this Statement.

Mr Speaker, Land, as you all know, is God blessed, God's gifted heritage to mankind. It is of paramount importance to our people, it is the basis and foundation of our livelihood

and sustenance. Peoples and nations go to war over land. Land creates and promotes economies, so we here in Papua New Guinea have always held land and land tenure true to our hearts. We have to manage land uses in the most prudent manner so that it serves our purposes to the fullest.

Mr Speaker, as a responsible government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Honourable Peter O'Neill, we have taken stock of the issues and the challenges presented by the SABL issue and taken decisive decisions and steps to address them.

As I have just stated, we have to manage our land, especially the limited resource available to the State as responsibly and prudently possible and encourage customary landowner partners to avail their vast tracts of land resource for development and progressive use for individual and group benefit as well as that of the State.

As Minister responsible for land and physical planning matters, most honoured to present to this Honourable House, to you my colleagues members of Parliament and the people of Papua New Guinea, an update on SABLs and the decisive steps taken by the O'Neill Government to deal with the issue.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the Government has revoked and called for the surrender of all SABL titles and set in place a process to convert all these titles and present them to customary landowners under the revised Incorporated Land Groups System and the new Voluntary Customary Land Registration System.

This is a most positive, productive and proactive approach to people and Government partnership in development.

Mr Speaker, in 2011 the then Acting Prime Minister, Honourable Sam Abal, ordered an investigation into the allocation and existence of all SABLs in the country to look into alleged issuance of SABL titles.

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The same year a Commission of Inquiry was established, comprising the commissioners to look into alleged corrupt issuance of SABLs'. Officials from the departments of Lands, Agriculture, Forest and Provincial & Local Level Government were interviewed and assisted in the inquiry process. Two out of the three COI reports were accepted and tabled in Parliament as interim reports of the findings of the inquiry into SABL.

Mr Speaker, on the June 12, 2014, the NEC noted the content of the policy submission 157 /2014 by the Ministerial Committee on SABLs and made 13

recommendations. The NEC approved that SABL provisions in the *Land Act* be repealed to prevent anymore SABL dealings as there were other provisions that allowed customary landowners to register their land for purposes of development. The NEC also directed that there should be no more SABLs be processed and that the Department of Lands and Physical Planning continue to observe the previous NEC decision not to issue anymore SABL titles.

The NEC evoked all SABLs recommended by the two COI reports and directed that the subject to formal legal advice from the departments of Lands and Environment and Conservation now the *Conservation and Environment Protected Act* or CIPA review existing SABLs and where legally sound apply a appropriative administrative including the use of show cause notices to holders of SABL. The NEC approved the establishment of a special task force staffed by persons not previously involved in the issuance and the administration of a SABL.

The NEC decision 187 of 2014 in meeting No. 4 of the same year decided that 25 SABLs of the total be revoked outright and no more new SABLs were to be issued. On 3rd of July 3, 2014, the department of Lands and Physical Planning through the office of the Registrar of Titles issued summons for the production of original ownership of the titles of the 25 SABL as prescribed under the *Lands Registration Act (1981)*. Since the notice, only two leases have been responded to, whilst the rest are yet to comply. The NEC decision not to issue anymore SABLs have been fully complied with and no more has been issued since.

The two SABL titles that have been submitted have successfully being issued new customary leases under the *Incorporated Land Group Act* and the *Customary Land Registration Act of 2009*. A total of six SABLs went through the mediation process using the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process whereby five have created 21 new ILGs in the Kandrian Gloucester district in West New Britain province and one has created 57 ILGs in Vanimo West Sepik province.

Mr Speaker, SABLs have been surrendered to the state in favour of land titles to be issued to customary landowners. Leases can then be drawn from these land titles and be issued to the same on related tenants, for the same or related purposes but with new conditions negotiated by and for the benefit of the title holders and the state.

And the state should review the SABL COI recommendations to revoke all the existing SABLs, thus deal with them case by case through mediation and ADR with the leadership of the National court through mediators appointed by the Courts. This is because in the feasibility of the land titles must be respected at all times otherwise chaos will reign over land throughout the country.

The court process and its huge expensive costs can moreover be avoided if the government sets up a policy based on the precedent set in the following cases to deal with the conversion of SABLs to land titles; followed by the drafting and the exclusion of leases for these land titles. Under the current land titles legislative arrangements, the state through the Minister for Lands; first accure customary land for SABL purposes under section 11 of the *Land Act*, the state then leases the same land to the customary owners or others including corporate entities under section 102 of the same act.

15/03

Although the reforms on land that are currently underway in the country did not make any direct reference to SABLs, the introduction of the VCLRS provides at this time an unparalleled conduit in an otherwise highly charged and often volatile onslaught of the SABLs.

The VCLRs gives real opportunity for a gentlemen approach to the surrender of the SABLs in favour of land titles for two reasons. One for indigenous landowners to renegotiate better deals for themselves and two for the State to clearly redefine its revenue raising capacity through these transactions.

Indeed, the Amendments made to the LR Act have synchronised and blended in so well with the operation of other land laws and administrative practices that the new VCLRs could shed brighter lights on the land dealings pathway in the country.

For instance, Mr Speaker, if all property titles like SABLs are to be protected due largely to their indefeasibility status in the face of assertions that these leases were issued under unlawful circumstances by State officials, opportunity for review exists on application for registration of land by the customary owners under the VCLRs. The notice for registration and the ensuing disputes that arise will naturally lead all parties to revisit not only the processes complied with, but also the benefits that were denied to the landowners and the state in the SABLs.

The concept of land titles, (indefeasible parent titles that ILGs can hold into perpetuity and those issued under the new VCLRs) is clearly receiving more attention than leases. In view of the enormity of applications before the ILG office for registration of ILGs.

The States responsibility to issue leases over customary lands would now be very minimal when private owners with titles commence issuing leases under authority of their ILGs. This would eventually render all customary land lease provisions by the State under the

Land Act (and maybe all other natural resource laws) useless leading to their reviews and or ultimate repeal.

Mr Speaker, prior to the introduction of the VCLRs, only two systems of processing land titles were available, the State Land Title Processing system and the Land Tenure Conversion system processed through the Land Titles Commission.

The Land Tenure Conversion system only deals with smaller parcels of land therefore, large tracks of virgin customary lands that are of real interests to developers can only be processed through the State system in what is called a lease-leaseback. The State acquires land from the customary owners, processes a lease out of it, and then leases it back to the owners and their development partners.

In the final report on the Commission of Inquiry (COI) into SABLs the Commissioners have in their own emphatic words recommended that the current SABL setup be done away with entirely. This is the core of their corrective proposal to the Government on the basis of their findings and analysis.

The Secretary for Lands and Physical Planning and the CLRC can be directed to respond to this proposal for consideration by the Government.

Mr Speaker, I will give an interesting example of a SABL which the COI also investigated and highlighted.

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This SABL for 99 years lease was issued to the Aitape landowners in portion 248C covering a land mass of 47, 626 hectares. The title was initially issued to Vanimo Jaya Limited and One-Uni Development Corporation as tenants. The chairman of the landowner company later sold the landowner's share of their title to Vanimo Jaya Limited for a measly K2, 000. This, the COI has described as the cheapest land sale in this modern times.

At the conclusion of the investigation into the SABL the COI recommended the revocation of the SABL and a review of the ownership of the title to allow more participation by customary owners in the development.

The Late Mr Pepi Kimas, as Secretary for Lands, and a delegate of the Lands Minister executed the SABL grant on the 19 July, 2006 and a notice of this grant appeared in the National Gazette the following day.

Mr Speaker, on the face value, this SABL can easily generate bitterness from persons of sound mind in the very first instance. The peoples' land had been excised from them for a

99 year lease or for forever with gross negligence to their long term and progressive livelihood.

Their assurance of sustenance from their land on customary tenure suddenly turns into an SABL with no rent at all to them for 99 years.

Would it be for real? A huge oil palm plantation planted on the 47, 626 hectares with its oil mills, residential blocks and all other enmities be demolished 99 year lease from the date of grant. That is impossible.

However, when the people were informed of the benefits of the land titles as opposed to the SABL and having satisfied themselves, this is what the right thing to do. Fifty-seven ILGs out of the total sixty-seven ILGs whose lands were covered under the SABL formerly applied for registration of their lands. The registrar of customary lands received their applications at his office on 9 May, 2011. As a compulsory requirement the registrar cost the publication of notices of these applications under Section 34(g) of the *Land Registration Act* made in the National Gazette on 31 May, 2012, and the newspapers on 8 May, 2012.

Only one objection was received by the registrar and it came from the chairman of the landowner company who had advanced suggestions that breakaway ILGs cannot be given separate land titles because the subject lands are part and parcel of portion 248C. Later it became very clear in the court proceedings that the chairman indeed was acting on behalf of the developer Vanimo Jaya Limited and its interests.

Mr Speaker, the 57 ILGs that mobilised themselves under the Oil Resource Owners Limited and proceeded to file proceedings in the National Court against Vanimo Jaya Limited and others on OS 411/2013.

The villages were represented by the Public Solicitor Office and in this case under special permission of the Public Solicitor in person.

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This representation by the Public Solicitor's Office is rather contrary to its constitutional duty as the Public Defender in criminal matters, but for now, the office is defending the public's single most important property, the land. The grounds relied on and advanced by the 57 ILGs were constitutional, customary and legal.

They were also able to fill the Courts with all the non-compliances that were made in the processes leading to acquisition of their lands and the issuances of the SABL over their land. For these villages their land still remains untouched and their share of the development should have been commenced in the next 10 years from now.

These case dragged on for the last two years until the Court made Orders for parties to proceed to mediation in September 2015. This Mediation was held in Wewak where all the parties attended. Also in attendance was a special State team led by the Deputy Secretary of the CLRC and comprising the Registrar of Customary Land and a lawyer.

Very interestingly, all customary landowners in the project area combined to express desire in the registration of their land under the new VCLRS. This clearly showed that the people wanted substantive Land Titles to hold into perpetuity and not SABLs with limited lifespan. Their presentations naturally compelled the Developer to comply with their wishes and this culminated in a Consent Mediation Order made by Justice Ambeng Kandakasi on 5 October, 2015.

Mr Speaker, generally, the Order gave recognition to and protected the interest of all parties, the Developer and all the ILGs. But for purposes of how the Government can from now deal with SABLs, the Order is summarised in the following terms;

The parties have now agreed to:

(1) Surrender the special agriculture and business lease on Portion 248C, Volume 13, Folio 177;

(2) Recognise the perpetual rights and interests of the customary landowners and for the developer to protect these rights and interests;

(3) Process the ILG through the ILG Office and process and issue land title under the new Voluntary Customary Land Registration System; and,

(4) Allow the ILGs to develop leases out of their land titles, negotiate with the developers on the terms of these leases, and once agreement is reached, lease their lands to the developer. The ILGs also invite the Government to assess the leases to ascertain the application of the required fees and charges.

This is the Government's position on SABLs.

Mr Speaker, for a landowner with his Land Title in substitute for the surrender of an SABL, what then is there before him? First is the surety that the ever volatile land disputes disappears.

This is replaced by a title that can be held generation to generations. The title also qualifies an owner a certain degree of disputed claim to everything that is within the boundary of his title, starting with the land itself, water and water sources, trees, minerals, gravel, and so on.

The potential for economic growth by the persons, by communities and by the country could as well be in the land, but for now locked away from use. The Land Titles issued under new VCLRS might as well be the key to unlock its potential for our realisation.

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This case and the experiences gained over the last three years has necessitated the establishment of the Customary Land Accusation Board with responsibilities to the ILGs and the Land Title Holders. The creation of the Board is eminent now that there is a need for the supervision body on the timeframe within which all applications are processed to enable speedy delivery of results. As a matter of urgency the Board, presided by a committee to be established by NEC.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I wish to say that SABLs have provided challenges and lessons we have learnt from and they have indeed been a blessing in disguise because we have, through this experiences devised ways and means for a better approach that will benefit the people and the State.

I am proud that this is happening in my term as Minister and the Prime Minister, honourable Peter O'Neill, PNC led government. I am confident that the mechanisms and the process now being put in place will emerge benefit to the Nation.

Mr Speaker, I commend this statement to the Parliament.

Mr GARRY JUFFA (Northern) – I move –

That Parliament take note of the Paper.

Mr GARRY JUFFA (Northern) – Thank you, I would like to debate on this matter. I would like to thank the honourable Minister for his presentation and the Government for its efforts to try to address the SABL issue.

I wish to speak in a way were we are not divided by the Government and the Opposition but we come together as Papua New Guineans, as leaders, as people who have been mandated to protect and promote the interest of our Nation and the people who have put us here.

We are all land owners, let us first and foremost recognise this fact. We are very fortunate, in most Nations around the world, people do not own land to the extent that we do. We could say we are blessed so we must not take this for granted.

The world's population continue to increase so thus ours, vital resources became scares, there is less land available and new land has been made, I have said this before, taking that into stock, we have to work exceptionally hard for what we have to especially from exploitation.

Today the world is driven by profit and greed so we have to be mindful of this.

The SABL is 65 000 hectares of land, 12 per cent of Papua New Guinea land literally stolen from Papua New Guineans.

Yes, the SABL was a great idea like many great ideas that comes here but it was hijacked by those with ulterior motives and purposes, profit and greed and I can say that those who were vested with the responsibility of protecting the interest of their people have failed to recognised the threats posed and under their watch, 12 per cent of Papua New Guinea was stolen.

It's pleasing to see that efforts were made that some members of Parliament who are still here took necessary steps and this steps gave birth to the Enquiry and reports were produced, at least two-thirds of those reports were produced because one report is still outstanding. It cost us K15 million for those reports and that Enquiry. The cost of that 65 000 hectares, we have not yet calculated and it would be quite alarming if we actually made that effort. Of that 65 000 hectares, only about 425 hectares were deemed to be legal legitimate SABLs.

When the reports were furnished, the Prime Minister made an announcement that those SABLs will be cancelled and actions will be taken against those named in the report, this is the individuals' etcetera. It has taken almost three years and I feel that the government departments responsible have dragged their feet and not acted responsibly or have not taken heed of the Prime Ministers instructions and to date many of the SABLs are still operating unlawfully, illegally etcetera often to the misery of many of our people. They are watching us to see whether we are performing our mandated responsibility to protect our land and their interest.

Let me tell you that we have to zealously guard our economy and our resources and when we talk about our land, we talk about everything that is in it, on it and around it.

In many countries you cannot go into those Nations and simply take a portion of land and do as you will. Try do that in Vietnam, or Singapore, or China for instance, no one will let you do that in their country.

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It is like we are opening the doors to our house and allowing criminals to come in and evict our children and take what they want and do as they please and soon we are outside our own home. This is what the SABLs are. So we must treat these people the way they ought to be treated. We must not be unnecessarily gentle with them and not take a gentle men approach towards what this people have done to us. They have insulted us and our people.

I would have proposed that once we knew the SABLs were illegal and we have identified the entities involved, we should have secured the Army instantly, declare a state of emergency and evict these people who are here insulting our nation. They are threatening not just our economy and our resources but our very future. You think they do not laugh at you and me? They do, they ridicule us, and they toast champagne in fancy hotels and tell one another, 'we own this country.' We let them do this to us and our people and instead of dealing with them the way we should deal with thieves and criminals, instead here we are inviting them to continue to remain and do as they please. Where is our sovereignty? Why are we calling ourselves an independent nation, if we cannot act independently to protect and promote the one most important resource in this nation besides ourselves, land?

Our forefathers went to war, they fought and they sacrificed their lives so that we could be here and what are we doing with it, this land that we have been gifted with. Why aren't the army and the police engaged to identify these perpetrators because that is what they are? They are making significant revenues and funnelling them offshore to build their empire avoiding taxes in very elaborate tax evasion schemes and scams that they have established with their clever accountants and their clever lawyers who operate offshore. They have even put aside significant amount of money so that they can control, manipulate and compromise the systems that have been established to protect and promote the interest of our nation. These systems no longer protect Papua New Guineans, they are merely packaging and selling the country and we in here are letting them. It's not the Opposition or the Government, I am appealing to you as Papua New Guineans, as leaders, let us not let this happen to us, let us not let this insult against our people. At the end of the day when we return home, one day we will move on and we will all be expected to be buried in our home land. We have to ask ourselves, do we own that land? I take note of a comment from a presentation made by a speaker at the Leaders' Summit. I must inform you, I did not attend because of where it is and where it is located and the irony of that but the Speaker stated that this is not rocket science, this is development and exploitation of resources. The processing, the downstream processing,

the manufacturing of these products and the trading of these resources in such a way that we get the price that our people deserve. We have more than enough capable intelligent Papua New Guineans not just here but out there in the world who are able to do this. If a Government stood up and said let us

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If a government stood up and said to map out our resources and develop them in a way that is sustainable that ensures protection and promotion of our people, not just during the eight parliament but for all time, then let us put appropriate legislation in place and develop this nation to what it could be. A nation most blessed with greatest resources per square kilometre in any other part of this world. We would see true transformation.

The Lands Department must be recognized as a vital department, an important department with economic portfolio. It must be given the necessary resources. It must be structured in such a way that it can perform its duties effectively. The people that are employed by that department must be true patriots paid in a way that they will be completely immune from corruption and fraud, because they are performing a very fundamental duty out there on behalf of the 8.5 million people of this country.

We must restructure that organisation so that it has an investigative capacity. Customary and State land has been stolen everywhere. Not a week goes by without us reading about it in the papers, hearing about it on the radio and watching it on TV.

We need a lands department that can use modern technology to map out our country. We must take stock of the fact that many of our landowners who holds vital information are passing on. How are we recording that information so that we know all the boundaries and who owns what? We can ask people to turn up and say; here is an ILG form and I am the landowner. Then we process it.

We are asking here that the lands department be given that responsibility again when it has failed in the past to meet its responsibilities to protect the interests of our people. Anyone can turn up here claiming to be a landowner. The true landowners are on their land so when you go home, you find them and interview them with video recording devices so that the information is capture on video as well as written document because many of these people are passing away. Then, there will be significant confusion as to who owns the land. So that effort must be undertaken immediately.

The Lands Department must be given that responsibility and the resources so that they can undertake that vital exercise. I would propose that we ensure that every province has an

effective provincial lands board in place so that decisions are not only made at Waigani. How many times did the officials from Waigani turned up in my province and we have removed them because they were there without the knowledge of either their secretary or minister and suddenly convert agricultural lease or commercial lease or hand over title to some logging companies. We stopped so many of these factors even to the point where I have to say, if you turn up in my province and end up in an area that is traditionally owned, you are doing so at your own risks. We will apply tribal law to what we feel you are doing.

I am proposing that we must establish Chief's council for every electorate. The late Sir Manasupe Zurenuoc embarked on a program with me. We established a small chief council in the Binandere area. That was a pilot project. The chief council will encompass women's and churches representatives, ward councillors and council presidents. Any development in that area can only be endorsed by the chief's council. In that way, the genuine landowners' interest will always be protected. We need to legislate that. We need to support that. Remember we are not just here as Papua New Guinean leaders but we are here as patriots and it is our responsibility to protect Papua New Guinean interests at all times. Thank you.

Mr DOUGLAS TOMURIESA (Kiriwina – Goodenough – Minister for Forests) – Thank you Assistant Speaker. I also rise to make my contributions on the paper presented today. Before I proceed, I would like to commend the Government of the Day for taking the bull by the horn to make certain that we put SABL to rest.

More so, I would like to commend the Prime Minister through his leadership, SABL is now coming to rest.

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Mr Deputy Speaker, there was a Parliamentary committee on SABL where I was the Chairman of that Committee and the good Governor for Oro was the Deputy Chairman. The 13 recommendations that were forwarded to the Ministerial committee on SABL have now come into fruition to have us see this and I am thankful that we did not sit back and allow time to just pass by. We have to also admit that the SABLs issued at that time were in a rush and did not do things correctly, however the time to point fingers and blame each other is not now. This Parliament must take corrective measures and fix what has gone wrong in the past.

That is why I said we should commend this government for taking measures to make sure we fix up the SABL.

SABLs that were wrong at the first place and the Courts and the landowners also knew that these were rushed at that time and I am thankful that these have been fixed. Today as we stand together as leaders we must make certain that our land; something that we rightfully own is not stolen and taken away from us. And I hope some take these seriously, because when the committee met at that time we looked at the SABLs it was not surprising that it was not about forests alone but it also took the villages that were occupied by people. Their livelihood, gardens, houses, schools churches and even their toilets were under the SABLs.

So if you were to go out there and decide that it was nature's call to relive yourself at the back yard, the owner of the SABLs who were the foreigners would come and remove you from answering your nature's call. The SABL covered all those areas, that is why when I say there was a rush in issuing of the SABLs, nobody took consideration of villages, hunting grounds; so if you were to go hunting for your meat for a meal, you are hunting illegally.

Mr Speaker, to day when we look at the measures take, I would like to commend the Government and that we have done the correct thing. And having said that; I would like to say something under the SABL regarding my department the PNG Forest Authority. Under my ministry we have given ministerial determination to make certain that these SABLs are cancelled.

However; there is a process that the SABLs have gone through and it is as follows; Lands, Agriculture, Environment & Conservation and Forestry. Forestry gives the FCA, Forest Clearing Authority. Giving the go ahead for the forests to be cleared for agricultural purposes but again I do agree with the Governor for Oro that some of these land that were supposed to be for agriculture purposes were cleared vastly for logs. And again why did this happen; because we have failed to make certain that we took appropriate measures right at the beginning so that when logging is taking place, agriculture also must move on but that has failed.

I am glad today, the Minister for lands has announced the correct processes;

1. To surrender the SABLs,
2. Recognise the perpetual rights and interests of the landowners.

Landowners must have the rights over their land. We must not remove that and say that the government has power over these land and give it away to the foreigners. Land rights must remain with our people.

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(3) ILGs must be done correctly, if you go back to the history of SABLs not a single ILGs was done correctly. Today we must revisit this process and follow but if we don't follow this process then we are setting precedence for failure in the future.

(4) Allow the ILGs to develop leases and it must happen; landowners, government and developer must work hand in hand. But we allow the developers to come and take over the land from our people freely then our people will suffer big time.

When I look at this process, I see one thing and that is landowners participating equally in the development of their land and I totally agree with that.

Finally, I want to commend this Government especially the Prime Minister, Prime Minister thank you very much with your Ministers.

It's about time we put to rest this issues of SABLs because I am fed-up of reading about land owners on the face book talking about SABL referring to this Government. We must get it right that this Government did not put this SABLs in place but it was the former Governments. And this Government came in to fix up the root of the past.

I once again conclude by commending this Government on behalf of the 3 million plus landowners in the logging sites right through the Papua New Guinea, thankyou Mr Assistant Speaker.

Mr BEN MICAH (Kavieng) – Mr Assistant Speaker, there is no other former Government but it's the same Government, before it was NA-PNC now its PNC-NA.

Alright let me go through the heart of the issue. The issue is not called SABL, Mr Assistant Speaker, the issue is about land ownership rights. But most of us here talk about SABL I don't think we really know what we are talking about. This SABL is a category of leases. We have three category of leases; Free-hold leases, State leases and Special Agriculture and Business leases created so that customary land owners can register their land and take ownership of their land so that they can put it for economic productive use.

It is the corruption inside the Government system that corrupted this well-meaning initiative. We won't point fingers at each other. All these things happened over the last 15 years under the leadership of the same people who are still sitting in this Parliament and the same Public Servants who are sitting in the Department of Lands. It's a corrupted Departmental heads that should be completely dismantled. One phase is SABL and the other phase is Manumanu and the others are land grabbing in Lae, Madang and other parts of

Papua New Guinea. The Lands Department is responsible for all this corruption that is going on in the issuing of leases whether it's Lease-lease, Free-hold lease, State lease or Special Agriculture Business lease.

The old process of identifying customary land rights is established in the ILG. I spent four years doing a Special Agriculture Business lease for my 3700 Hectare Island with 1700 landowners, not to do any of the corrupt businesses that you guys are talking about. But a technology project to launch rockets to the space. They need our Island to do this project, I spoke to Prime Minister in cabinet and said don't blanket this issue because it's not about corruption in forestry or agriculture, no, there are genuine landowners who need to determine their rights over their land to put into business use. But we are now being subject to this same rubbish because we don't really know what we are talking about when we are dealing with this issue of Special Agriculture Business leases.

We should be addressing the issue of corruption in the Lands Department. Why is it that wrong landowners were identified and selected by agriculture, oil palm and timber companies to come and sign for ILGs

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This was because the people in the Department of Forestry were paid off. Also, the people in the Lands Department doing the ILG process were paid off. And one of the biggest complaints is still going on and there are some leading people connected to your government that are now in New Ireland Province talking about oil palm and logging under the SABL.

(Mr Benny Allan interjecting)

Mr BEN MICAH – You know who they are.

(Mr Benny Allan interjecting)

Mr BEN MICAH – Don't drag me into some other issue. You know who they are. You deal with them.

(Mr Benny Allan interjecting)

Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER – Member, continue with your speech, please.

Mr BEN MICAH – Mr Assistant Speaker, this issue of land ownership rights has also been corrupted in the mineral sector. It has been corrupted in the LNG sector and that is why we have landowners all over the country in uproar over the issue of land rights.

Wrong ILGs have been done for the wrong landowner groups just because there is oil and gold sitting under ground.

Mr ASSISTANT SPEAKER – Member, you have one minute.

Mr BEN MICAH – Just because there is a timber and oil palm project, Mr Assistant Speaker, you know, being proposed for a certain area. So, we have a lot of conmen holding talks with developers and the rightful, silent and humble landowners who are uneducated and ignorant are bypassed. This is because conmen and devious people are collaborating with the departments and the companies are stealing the land rights of our people.

So, by saying that we are solving this problem today and we are praising the PNC-led Government, I say to you, Mr Assistant Speaker, the State, this Parliament and the people of Papua New Guinea, so long as corruption continues to reside in your department, Minister for Lands, and continue to reside in the departments of agriculture, forestry and everywhere in the government system –

Mr SPEAKER – It is not allowed to point fingers at another Member.

Mr BEN MICAH – Okay, I withdraw my finger and will put it in my pocket from now on, Mr Speaker.

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Mr Benny Allan – Point of Order! Before the SABL that we are talking about there were no ILGs. The *Voluntary Customary Act* did not come into force because there wasn't any at that time. So, now, we are telling the nation and telling you as the Member for Kavieng that we have a new Act now, and that ILGs and voluntary customary registration system has been established.

Therefore, as a result, we are cancelling the old SABL and asking all the SABLs title holders to surrender their titles and follow the new process to register them all under the ILG and give them titles. This is what I want to make clear here.

Mr SPEAKER – Thank you, for your Point of Order, Minister.

I, therefore, have to caution you when replying to serious accusations on the Floor of Parliament and not to mislead Parliament.

Mr BEN MICAH – I would like to correct the Minister here. This *ILG Act* was already established long before and on the basis of the ILG process SABL titles were issued.

I was involved in this for four years, Minister. This VLL or whatever of yours only came about lately as an alternative to SABL, and you are now proposing that instead of big areas, particularly customary landowners inside SABL areas can go and identify their land rights and titles can be issued. I fully support this.

That is the right thing that you are doing but I am just saying to you that, let us not get into the issue of SABL and talk about something that will divert us from the issue of the failure to properly identify the rightful owners of customary land areas and the failure to address the corruption in the departments that are colluding and collaborating with foreign investors to corrupt the process of issuing titles and leases. These are the issues.

This presentation of this statement, Mr Speaker, will not solve that issue so long as we continue to allow conmen and women and wrong landowners, and criminals to corrupt the process of land identification, registration and ILGs. We will continue to issue wrong titles whether it is SABL or this new title that you are proposing Minister.

If you look at it, it is the same. A lot of good policies and laws have been put in place but instead of focusing on the intent of those laws and the correct and proper legal processes we have allowed corruption to divert the issue.

Mr Minister, you are just putting on a fresh new coat of paint just to make this issue look good but unless clean up your department unless the Government is really serious in going beyond just talking about the SABL but the fundamental changes that really need to be done in the old governance structures and system in changing people that need to be removed.

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We will not resolve the issue that are at the bottom of the SABL LNG landowner issue until we address this point.

Mr Speaker, I am worried about my little island. We do not have any forest. About four thousand American troops settled there about 80 years ago and they destroyed all our forest and the Prime Minister knows about that. We would like to bring in investment and open a gateway so we can have some better services in this country. Why should we be lumping to this rubbish and deny our people from investments. If they are landowners who have followed the same process, who have a special proper lease title then they should not be blanketed into this same thing.

Thirdly, we should not go tell investors different kinds of stories there and then come and make another story here. We need to put the investors where they should be. I think this is a problem to all of us. We lead them to believe that we are stupid, we can bought and sold. These situations are created by us. Once we stand up to our principles then a lot of things will change. Once we start respecting the laws that we pass in this Parliament then we will start respecting the process that we as leaders are supposed to be custodian of and make sure that beaucrates are accountable to the laws of our country. They follow the processes that require transparency, accountability and credibility so that our people in our villages will then come forward to a credible system.

The real issues of importance that really need to be identified in the proper ownership right of the customary landowners and the corruption that is so rife in our systems that needs to be eliminated like a cancer cell. When investors come in and realise that we have a clean system then we will gradually get rid of investors who are here to steal from us.

Dr ALLAN MARAT (Rabaul) – Thank you Mr Speaker, I too would like to contribute to the debate with regard to the Minister's Ministerial Statement.

At independence, there were two sets of legislations that were passed. The *Land Dispute Settlement Act* and the *Incorporated Land Groups Act*.

The *Incorporated Land Groups Act* was passed to supplement the processes that were taking place within the *Land Dispute Settlement Act*. About 97 percent of the total landmass in this country is under the customary landowners. There are processes where people started following immediately after independence. They followed the processes under the *Land Dispute Settlement Act* and any decisions that were made by magistrates or the land courts at that time which went through the Land Titles Commission who *used Land Titles Commission Act and Land Tenure Conversion Act* to make decisions as to the actual ownership of the land.

The *Incorporated Land Groups Act* was there to support and supplement the actual ownership that was determined by the Land Courts at that time. This sets of legislations have

not been repealed. They are still in existence and for some reason, new ideas and new incorporated land groups came about. It was supposed to amend or compliment the processes that were already in place to settle disputes relating to customary ownership. Today, there are so much confusions in us ascertaining who the true landowners are.

The SABL does not really affect the State leases but is affecting the vast areas of customary land where the landowners are. Under *the Land Dispute Settlement Act, Land Titles Act, Land Tenure Conversion Act*, the customary landowners were able to secure Free Hold Title.

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The financial institutions will not accept them because they are not proper guarantee but a Free-hold Title issued after the whole process from mediation under the *Land Dispute Settlement Act* right through to the decision that the Land Court makes, then to the Land Title Commission for a Concession Order to the Lands Department where it will get registered. After all those stages in the Lands Department then you can be able to use the Free-hold Title. A Certificate of Title is issued by the Lands Department to the customary landowners who have been identified during this process.

When I heard about the SABL I thought, okay, what kind of process will it follow to determine who the customary landowners are? There is a lot of confusion there and no bank or financial institution will recognise a Certificate of Corporate Land Groups and give money to them to develop their customary land. Banks will only accept a Free-hold Title because that is undecivable under the process that I have been talking about, it will accept that.

It is an undecivable title and the banks will feel safer and the financial institutions will accept it as security for money that they will have. Now, we are talking about SABL, it's a big problem which belongs to the foreigners who come and steal land from the landowners, they never followed the proper process that I have talked about in giving the proper Free-hold Title to the landowners which they can show to the foreign investors so that they can register under the SABL.

So, we leaders need to correct this and thank you, Mr Prime Minister, your government has taken back those SABL. I think the Northern Governor wants you to take this step by step to remove all of the SABL from the foreign investors.

In inland Pomio, they are suffering and I understand that some Non-Governmental Organisations are fighting the Pomio people and the foreign investors are using few selective individuals to go through the media and to say that they are doing the right thing with the

people, when in fact the true customary landowners are suffering. Who will we blame? We as leaders have must put our efforts together and we get rid of all of the SABL once and for all.

I think in your department as the Member for Kavieng has already mentioned, you really need to put your foot down and remove those rotten apples that continue to facilitate the existing SABL in the Department of Lands.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, this is the little contribution I want to give on SABLs.

Mr DON POLYE – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I want to add on and support the thoughts that have been aired from this side of the House on SABLs.

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He mentioned some relevant points relating to that issue especially the investigations that occurred in the Commission of Inquiry and he gave some recommendations and for that we are thankful because it's very necessary, important and crucial that this Parliament must address those recommendations. At least we must thank the Government and the Minister for addressing this issue the way they are addressing it.

Secondly, whilst giving when I give credit, I must say that it was a last minute decision, I had hoped it would have been done three years ago. If the Commission of Inquiry Report came in then the Government and the Opposition would have the time to debate and come to up with implementation mechanism to execute these recommendations as outlined by the Minister as well as the leader for movement and change Governor of Oro has said. We are now on the eve of election and I 'am wondering how these recommendations will be implemented. Maybe the new government will implement these recommendations because I think it's the wrong time to address this issue because it's overdue. Probably because of this wrong timing, maybe there is a wrong motive because the people are there and they are the landowners that want their land issues to be addressed so maybe the Minister under the PNC led Coalition government stat to address this matter at this time to show that PNC is doing some work. While I give credit for addressing an issue that's relevant and valid and crucial, but it's the wrong time and with a wrong motive.

Anyhow, I will debate on it. On the alternative policy perspective on this side of the House, t the statement is very reactive in a policy vacuum land system. I would like to remind the Prime Minister and all the Members.to understand this, we don't have an overarching policy to manage customary land Power issues or state land or alienated land. That is a fact and when people talk about policy and sometimes we take it from a very political perspective

but policy guides public servants. The public servants can be misled and can deviate from the course of their work if there is no policy to guide them. The public servant is cultured to work using instructions and guide. When there is no policy, there is problem.

Mr Speaker, I must criticise the government that it failed to put an overarching policy, but the good news is the Opposition has an alternative policy, we have covered it all so PNG is safe with us because in 2014, I did launch a policy, do read it, it is in the *Hansard*.

So Mr Speaker, the real substance of the landowner issue remains and even if we implement SABL recommendations, this will not solve the problem.

Let me address the five features and you will understand where the Opposition is coming from. Some of us are treating ourselves like we are immigrants who migrated into this country from the outside.

Mr Speaker, let's pause for a moment and think. Europeans, migrated to Australia and now their descendants live there. The Indians and Chinese migrated to Singapore, Malaysia and some parts of Indonesia and I will go on and on. The Americans, were Europeans who migrated there so they come up with a policy in their land management framework which gives all the land to the State.

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In my country people have come from other parts of the world to this new land so let's make sure that all the land belongs to the State. That means any emirates coming in, the State has an authority to lease it out or commercialise or however they want to do it.

But Papua New Guinea is not an immigrant country, we are an indigenous country comprising of more than a thousand different tribes and 862 different culture and ethnicity. We are a nation of indigenous people.

We own the land and I agree with my speakers on this side. So how do we address it? Do we run away from it or we must scare the investors away so let us just alienate this land from the landowners otherwise the investors will not come? Whom are we going to alienate this land from, the land owners own it.

I own my land in Kandep. The people of Manumanu own their land too. Some of us own the islands but I am not going to the sea because we need special regulations to go there. The sea is always floating and the current is weeping so which part of the sea, we might have to map out.

This is a very important issue so the policy has to be developed for us to own this land as indigenous owners. The State land is owned by the indigenous people because three

percent is owned by the State. But who is the State, the State is the people. So the people own the State land. Our towns are built on the people's land. The Parliament is also built on people's land. The land belongs to the people of Central Province.

We should not make decisions to suit the investors. Whether it is State or Customary, every land is owned by the Papua New Guineans. That is where the policy should emanate from. We should have powers to give birth to a policy on this fundamental principles.

The resources are owned by the people. We are running this country on some concepts brought to us by foreigners. We are made to think like them and we are still thinking like them in the 21 century.

We need to come up with a policy that must boldly say, 97 percent must be owned by the indigenous Papua New Guinean.

Mr Speaker, firstly, we need to identify the landowners properly. It will take us ten years to do that, so be it. It is too important to rush it or overlook it. Land is important but we are not giving the time and energy and the perspective to it. Even if it takes ten years, that is what we should be doing. We should do a sole mapping for petroleum or money project.

Where did we all come from? I did not come from America and living in the Kandep bush, you should know what I mean. Where did my ancestors come from? Maybe from Israel, and they may be Jews? The people from Western Province maybe from Levite Jews in Hebrew.

Mr Speaker, we have to do social mapping. Identify the landowner and carry out genealogy study. This is important that we cannot overlook because we are an indigenous country. Let us do it properly because we are the landowners who owns this land and who belong to this tribe, clan, this father, this mother and going back many generations. We must identify every landowners in every square kilometre.

We should not be driven by investors and depriving the landowners from their land.

Mr Speaker, the Minister for Land is a little hypocritical, you have to listen to me from a very broader perspective. You are bulldozing Papua New Guineans living in the settlements out of their land.

Mr SPEAKER – There are provisions in the Standing Order that guides us.

Mr DON POLYE - Hypocrisy is not a bad word. It is a political word.

Mr SPEAKER – You should not be calling the name of the Minister.

Mr DON POLYE – Okay, I withdraw it. What I was saying is contradictory statement where you do one thing and you do not look at the holistic way.

Mr SPEAKER – I understand that but calling the name of the Minister is not allowed.

Mr DON POLYE – Thank you, Mr Speaker, I withdraw it. Hypocrisy is a political word that can be used all the time everywhere in the world.

Mr SPEAKER – I said nothing about the hypocrisy. I said calling the name of the Minister is not allowed.

Mr Peter O'Neill – Point of Order! Under the Standing Order when you make interjections, members of Parliament must sit when the Chair is making a ruling so can you remind the Opposition Leader to sit when you are making the ruling?

Mr DON POLYE – Thank you I accept those admonishment. The point is, you cannot talk about SABL and forget about settlers or Papua New Guinea citizens, the indigenous people of this country living in Morata and you send in bulldozers cost by foreigners and chasing them out of their own land.

You cannot sell a land at the back of the people of Manumanu and let the leaders get rid of them. You cannot kill the conduct of an inquiry and then you talk about SABL. Then you talk about SABL, it does not work like that. You cannot talk about the people at ATS because the people of Oro lives there. There are about more than thousand, women and children, churches and schools out there. Even the Peter O'Neill classroom was opened by Mr O'Neill himself there.

But the land has been sold at the back to them.

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And now you talk about SABL, what hypocorism is this? When I talk about a policy, I talk about the policy that addresses all those issues, not just SABL. It must address every issue that pertains to the landowners and their land rights.

It is ironic that I am able to justify that the motive is wrong. It is just political expedient policies statements. There is nothing to do with substance of solving a problem, so

PNC is on the wrong track. If we look at the perspective that we are focusing on this anti-social mapping, the landowner issues by organising them, you don't only have to do it through SABL or any other projects. We have to consider that as a very important exercise by this Parliament so that even 20 to 30 years down the line you have already identified landowners who have registered their land already. So when you want to do an investment you will have already portion it. In that way you are making the landowners participate in that business.

The third point is the legislative framework that is in place such as *Volunteering Customary Registration Act*, the *Integrated Landowners Act* plus other Acts that are there. And some other Acts that were put in place with the concept that did not look at the issues of Papua New Guineans.

This Parliament needs to reform the land sector by coming up with a more holistic and given time to do that and not just in one Parliament session. I think it needs two to five years to develop this legislative framework that is beneficial to the landowners of this country to maximise their benefits and also protect their land to be under their ownership.

When we have this advance reform laws in place, then the landowners will not be displaced from the land. You will not see few landowners capitalising on an opportunity by selling the land to few corrupt investors or other people even own fellow citizens at the back of others. This law will guide everybody even the public servants that we are accusing will know exactly what to do. At the moment we don't have these laws and policy in place to guide all of us to know what we want to do. Therefore, there are a lot of confusion as mentioned by the leader of People's Progress Party.

And that's where we can focus on but right now the time is limited, but in the next Parliament, if we happen to come back then that's where our focus should be to create that framework and policy to have that land ownership issues. Whether its State 3 percent or customary 97 percent or settler settling on State land rather than just going out there and bulldozing people away.

Finally, I agree with honourable Ben Micah, he mentioned about corruption and some of us are feeling bad about it. But let's just call what it is by its right name instead of pinpointing officers from Lands Department only and I commend the Minister for doing a good job. I remember at one time in answering question, he said he will deal with the concern officers. And now he terminated 15 officers who were implicated in this corrupt deal. That's a fine job but that doesn't solve the problem. Corruption is a big issue and it's so systemic

and so chronic and tough so we need to be tough to handle that, we need to arrest and prosecute corruption.

So that's why we talk about ICAC, Ombudsman Commission, the Public Prosecutor, the Judiciary System and the Independence of these institutions on how to addressing and creating a lawful society.

When we addresses these issues from this side of the Parliament then it's not a politics but we mean what we are saying and know exactly what it is. With due respect to this Government, it has failed to address corruption in this country but rather addressing symptoms of corruption. We have not addressed the roots that are giving birth to things like SABL and other issues. But yet we come up with all sorts of excuses by saying no money. It's a symptom of an existing issue called corruption and mismanagement and it's not just the Government only but systems and everybody throughout. And it's an issue where both the Government and Opposition in this Floor of Parliament not just for the Government only but the system is everybody's too

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To conclude, let's have a policy in place by reforming our legislative framework to guide land. We are not immigrants and we cannot evict settlers who are on State land by using bulldozers to remove them and cater for some foreign investors. No, it's very wrong, we have to correct it. If we address this issue than we would have a better country, we are the only country that owns the land and that's our asset. The landowner uses the land as its asset and the State facilitate and the developer comes in with the money. That's how we empower land owners to have money in their pocket and not being deprived, thank you Mr Assistant Speaker.

Mr BIRE KIMISOPA (Goroka) – Thankyou Mr Assistant Speaker, I too want to join in with the other Members in commending the Minister for Lands in his statement on SABL.

Mr Assistant Speaker, very good statement in so far as this particular issue in Aitape, I think the Minister has done an excellent job in terms of resolving. I would also like to congratulate the Government for an NEC decision in all SABL.

Mr Assistant Speaker, my contribution to this paper would be brief, firstly, I would like to state on record that no land in this country has been stolen. Not a single piece of land that I know of was stolen by anyone in PNG 378 000 square kilometres of land in this

country is still there. The only thing that has been stolen or deprived from our people is the right to economic benefits and that has always been an issue.

Mr Assistant Speaker, land in this country is roughly less than 10 to 12 per cent which is owned by the State under its own leases; that includes schools, airports, wharfs and jetty's, towns and cities. These are all the tracks of land that is vested in the State. The honourable Minister for Lands has jurisdiction over what constitute to only 12 per cent of our land. And it will always be a struggle not for him only but any successive Minister coming along trying to deal with land in this country where 85 to 86 per cent of that land is held in our hand. And perhaps one of the greatest thing for this Parliament to resolve and the Parliaments to come is the word 'landowner'. That word itself is misconceived, when you say I am the land owner than it means you are God, that's why we are having so many problems in this country. Perhaps we should call ourselves stewards or caretaker only and one day we'll die and generation after generation will go through the same process. The challenge for us is looking forward and we have clocked 42 years of Independence. I think the best years for this country is still ahead of everyone of us.

Mr Assistant Speaker, we should be trending roughly about 7 per cent in terms of economic growth for a country richly blessed with natural resources. We should be clocking 7 per cent in GDP every year, how do we do that. The moment we look at both extractive and non-extractive industry, and start looking at the non-extractive industry where most of the problems are in such as land issues.

We cannot build infrastructures on tree tops, no, it's built on land and land will always be a problem. Until and unless we start thinking seriously about policy as indicated by Leader of Opposition than we will begin to solve the problem. This is not a Governments or Opposition problem, it is our problem. We want economic growth sustain at 7 per cent every year for good living conditions not only for town folks but back at the village as well. They have to send their kids to good schools and build a permanent house instead of still living in the kunai house. How do they do that, only by mobilising land and SABL is not a silly con we are talking about trying to kill.

I facilitated for 27 SABLs in Goroka alone for the Peri Urban Community wanting to develop their land, why should they be victimised? I didn't ask white man to come and choose Goroka to be a town he only facilitated the land and the town came to be

Mr Speaker. He just turned up all of a sudden with excess soaps and bush knives to trade with the people and claimed the land.

The white men claimed the land and my people were left living on the fringes and outskirts of the town and there is nothing that can be done about it. So, they procure SABL and try to do business on the sideline and that is fair enough, Mr Speaker.

So, what do we do? Towns and cities, we have got roughly about 22 towns and cities in this country. Just look at the traffic congestion and the cost of doing business in these towns and cities. How do we move ahead, Mr Speaker? We cannot.

There must be a circuit breaker in all of these mess. We just cannot kill the SABL, and now we are going to the ILG. This ILG will become another monster. Sooner or later we are going to take the bullet out and kill the ILG as well. What will then come after that? SABL, ILG, GGL, GXL what else?

The reality, Mr Speaker, is that, we need to grow some of our towns and cities so that the cost of business and rentals must go down. We live in the real world, Mr Speaker. Rentals are going up and the only way that we can facilitate is that, we need to have debate on the Floor of Parliament and understand what the issues are. You cannot sell 24, 000 hectares of land for K2, 000, that is impossible. No, we cannot blame our good citizen there in Aitape. He has been always there in that rural setting so how then was he supposed to know the selling prices of land. He is just a simple villager and to him K2, 000 is big money.

Somebody must tell him that K2, 000 is peanuts and whose responsibility is that, Mr Speaker? This responsibility falls back to the Department of Lands. We should have at least had a caveat in there somewhere. If you are going to sell 1, 000 hectares then fine but not 20, 000. You cannot do that. So, some of these things we have got to really think it through before we decide to do things.

Mr Speaker, we will continue to have this conversation about lands unless we sit down and begin to talk about development for what it is for our people. You know, in the process of having a debate on this Floor of Parliament sometimes we kill every one. Those people who are genuine investors come into the country, but we run the risk of killing them. We are frightening people off. Who would go into bush and start a business in the bush? Tell me. Many people will not go. Many investors will not come with the kind of rhetoric and language that we display here in Parliament.

We still own the land, Mr Speaker, the last time I checked at least legally our little portion in Goroka is still there and no one has put it into a suitcase and carried it away.

Mr Speaker, let us have a conversation and perhaps the next government should articulate a way forward. We need to mobilise land and first and foremost.

Mr Speaker, instead of 12 percent as alienated land, we need to increase it to at least 30 to 40 per cent. If we are going to see an economic growth at a sustainable level at possibly 7 per cent annually, we can do that. We cannot criticise investors in this country. We have got to encourage them but it is incumbent on us, Mr Speaker, to make sure that we have all the laws in place and we indeed enforcing these laws.

If we are not enforcing these laws we should never in the jobs that we occupy and I think that it is quite obvious, Mr Speaker, that the Lands Minister is doing a fantastic job as far as I am concerned. He cannot be blamed for the 86 per cent of the land where he has no jurisdiction over. His only responsibility is on 14 per cent of land and the moment we start arguing on this Floor of Parliament and putting our ideas forward. Let's think about development because we live in the 21st Century with 42 years of Independence and waiting for another 42 years to come.

Therefore, sooner or later people from Pomio, Okapa or Telefomin must see roads coming through. They must have access to some of the things that some of us take for granted in this country. We cannot sit back and, you know, with the kind of language we put out on this Floor of Parliament, we are frightening away everyone.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari-Pori – Minister for Finance) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, let me just quickly try to summarise the government's side in supporting our good hard working Minister, in so far as bringing some sensibility to many of the debates around SABL. This is because this issue has been quite sensitive for the last five or six years. When the O'Neill Government took office we never shied away from this issue.

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We ensured that we progress matters in as far as SABL to where it is now. We have arrested what was evidently a messy business in as far as the SABL is concerned. Commendation to the highest order must go to our hard working minister. It is not an easy ministry to manage. It is a challenging ministry and a steady hand was needed and he was the one for it. Come the eve of elections, this Government announces to our people that it has put

a stop to SABL and we have brought order to the SABL mess that was quite rampant throughout the country.

I would like to take a quote out of his statement in the last part of it and reemphasise it in my speech. I am pleased to announce that the Government has revoked and called for surrender of all SABL titles and set in place a process to convert all these titles and present them to the customary landowners under the revised incorporated land group systems and the new voluntary customary land registration system that we put in place. So we are bringing order to what was a messy thing in the first instance.

In my view I think the debate by the Honourable Bire Kimisopa is one that is fair and balanced debate in as far as this issue is concerned. When we look at our country and as I spoke in the closing of the leaders' summit two days ago, the reality of the matter that stares us in the face is that the resource envelope we have in this country right now and the manner in which we are developing them within the current laws that we have is inadequate to really ensure that we have an economic base to sustain the needs that we have today.

As rational thinking leaders of this country, we must always be mindful for instance, all of us ask for money for roads, bridges, hospitals and everything else put in place. The total need and I quote some figures in the summit for instance, if you look at the road sector alone 30 thousand kilometres of existing national highways, provincial roads, district feeder roads put together at cost of K1 million per kilometre than the cost will go beyond K30 billion. That is just for maintenance alone. We are not talking about punching new roads that everyone of us need in our electorates. When you throw in recurrent on educational needs or health then you will realise that the cost of delivering services to our country far outweighs the current resource envelope we have in place.

When we discuss in the context of harnessing resources through discussion of land and unlocking the potential of land and resource, there must come in the context of how do we best maximise what is true benefits for landowners and our people and our country. at the same time encourage genuine investors to come in to develop them. We still need investments in our country but I agree with sentiments that investments must not come at a price of advancing the cost of our landowners and our people and our country. Therefore balancing discussions and debates in this sort of very sensitive issues must be very paramount with great care and sensitivity amongst us. Whilst nationalist and very zealous view in promoting nationalist idea is equally important, we must fund them in the form of a balance view so that genuine investors are not killed in this country.

This Government in as far as SABL is concerned, has brought in back all SABL matters and has given titles to landowners. That is a fair go and an important go in empowering our landowners.

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When we argue that the O'Neill-Dion Government hasn't done much in as the SABL is concerned, I beg to differ and what else can you ask for? We have now ceased completely the issuing of all new titles, in the last five years it has not been easy while we were forced into the matters that took place early in this term, we were confronted with Court Cases from companies that were operating successful SABLs in themselves and mind you there are already individual SABL companies operating.

For instance, I have been told that if you go to the Ile Waswas Community in the Pomio area, they have cut trees and they have successfully converted it into agriculture areas, now do we as a Government suddenly say you pack up and go because you have failed to deliver? Where do you balance the rational when the landowners are receiving the benefits at the same time, they are being employed by the company, trees are cut and agriculture plantations are being developed?

So, there needs to be a fair balance in these discussions because every one of us representing our tribes and electorates here have decongested the Planning Ministry, asking if our projects are funded in our planning budgets. How do we get the money to finance our projects in the first instance?

So, I think a fair discussion in all this needs to be taken in place. Leaders of both side of the House at every level of discussion must be sensitive to the fact that our country needs to grow our economic base.

Now, when we discuss about land issues it always becomes sensitive, and as far as SABL is concerned the Minister of Lands has taken the lead under the instruction from our government and he has put to rest the issue of unnecessary proliferation of SABLs and today, bring back order.

I also share the sentiment on both sides that the department needs continual work in as far as ensuring that no unnecessary funny businesses are played.

You have started the good work and I encourage you to continue on the good work and stop messy and funny deals made in the Lands Department. That is a fair statement that they can make on that side and we can make on this side.

Work still remains there but the SABL issue is something that we on this side of the House focus in the *Alotau Accord* that we will deliver and make progress, and today as we come to the eve of this term, we are happy that we have brought the situation under control and no more new SABL Titles have been issued. In fact, we have totally transferred new SABL Titles to be issued back to the Voluntary Customary Land Registration System that our Government has put in place.

Mr Speaker, I am always blessed with listening to some comments from the other side, how the Opposition Leader always talks about us operating without policy. This Government has not been operating in a policy vacuum in the last five years. Our record stands, in as far as our delivery to our key policy focus areas we have delivered amidst the concerns we have. And in the sector that the Minister of Lands is responsible for, he has stood up in many challenges and today he presents the SABL should enlighten to the Nation that something has happened.

But, really the onus is now on us at different levels and I especially appeal to those at the provincial level to embrace the laws and within your responsibilities and within your area of influence some of these changes are happening so make it happen in our provinces and if it can happen in the provincial level then it will happen at the National level also.

So, thank you, Mr Speaker, I commend the Minister for a job well done in managing the sector especially bringing SABLs into some sense of direction.

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Mr ELIAS KAPAVORE (Pomio) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me to give a brief statement on SABLs.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Minister for Lands and the government led by the Prime Minister for their support in addressing SABL issues in the country.

Coming from a district that has three SABLs at the moment it is a big challenge for us but I would like to say that it is an issue that we all are trying to address. Taking queue from the Minister for Finance on what he said, looking after a district of about 11000 square kilometres of land mass is a big district. I believe we cannot depend on the government alone in trying to address and put roads in some of the remotest areas of our district. I would say today that the comment made by the Minister for Lands in saying that SABLs were a blessing in disguise, I believe is a fair statement, It's a challenge for us and we are trying to work with our partner at the moment that is in our district and since the government's announcement to cancel SABLs we have understanding by the company and there is no more logging in the

district and what we are trying to do is to sit and discuss with the Department of Lands and Department of Forest to address this issue together.

The point I would like to make today is, what we have identified in the past led to our current situation where there was the improper demarcation of land and lack of awareness. For the point of this discussion, I would like thank the people who led the SABL discussion in the past and for allowing SABL in the Pomio district. We have a company that has constructed more than 200 kilometres of road to some of our remotest areas with no or very little government support. I think we must acknowledge our partners for doing this. It also providing employment of up to 7000 people in agriculture projects. Some of this people usually travel long distances to earn a living but they are now able to stay in the local area and seek employment. As a local Member people are actually blaming me for supporting the SABL in which I made my stance clear that we must also be diplomatic and seek understanding from all partners both the landowners and the partners in the district. At the end of the day, we have to reach an agreement and come up with fair decisions that can benefit everyone.

Pomio is a very huge district and I think we need the partners who are now in the district and are supporting us in constructing some of our roads. The Prime Minister in his past statement in responding to one of my question regarding SABL said that SABL in Pomio must be seen as a very special case and I think that is a very fair comment. We are working without partners to revisit some of the agreements if they were not done properly and we are also in discussion with our partners over landowner benefits. So it is a win-win situation as we are discussing. I thank the government on its stand on SABL and we will work together with the departments of Lands and Forest, our partners and the local landowner to come up with solutions that can benefit everyone on the long run. I thank the Government for making this important decision for the benefit of our people.

Mr PETER O'NEILL (Ialibu-Pangia-Prime Minister) – Thankyou Mr Speaker, and I thank the Minister for this balanced statement that he has presented to this honourable Parliament.

Mr Speaker, it is a difficult subject. We have been here for quite some time and I have seen statements come through where it's mostly trying to reflect the good side of a department or a ministry that the Minister is looking after. But in this case the statement reflects the issues and the challenges that we need to confront and mitigate as we manage this

difficult issue of land and the ownership and the benefits of land that the our people are demanding from this land that we are now trying to address.

Mr Speaker, when the Minister for Lands was appointed after we formed the Government in 2012, I did not appoint him because of the need to repay political favours. After spending 15 years in Parliament, I have seen that he is one of our members with an unblemished record of fairness and honesty, and able to ensure that he does the right thing for the interest of the country.

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Mr Assistant Speaker, he has served that ministry and the department well unlike the portfolio ministers in the past. I do not believe there is a portion of land that he has put away for himself. That is how he has managed the department and the ministry and he be commended for. He has managed this difficult ministry in a manner that is trying to project our people and our country and the statement he has presented so far reflects that.

Coming back to the SABL issue, Mr Speaker, we inherited a very messy situation. Although the intensions have been noble, the fact that the implementing bit was quiet messy as a result many of our people were displaced over a large hectares of land. All of a sudden they woke up one morning, they did not have control over it.

The public outcry was quiet large that we had to do something. When we put in an inquiry and many of you and we in the opposition forget is that the inquiry took many years. Despite spending K15 million, we did not get the complete report for the inquiry.

Mr Assistant Speaker, the portions of the report that we got while the member for Kavieng was a Minister, we are now implementing the recommendations. During that we also had to work through a series of court cases which are before us and working with officials who were involved in the process of establishing the SABL who fast tracked the process along the way.

So it has not being an easy ride but the minister and his department have taken the Cabinet's decision and that is cancellation of all the SABL. Despite knowing very well that one or two of the SABL in the areas they were operating were very successful especially in the Pomio area.

I have visited the project area and the developers are working closely with the landowners and in a very successful manner.

Mr Speaker, in many other cases some of our leaders and landowners are involved in displacing our own people. It is not the foreigners alone doing this. Our people and leaders are involved in this process so sometimes take ownership of this issue.

Papua New Guineans displacing other Papua New Guineans in their own areas. So we have to get the land back for our people. The saying is that the genuine developers who are developing under the SABL, please work with our landowners. I am pleased to hear that in Pomio, the registration process reverts back to the ILG where landownership remains with our people.

The developments can go ahead but the ownership remains with our people and the benefits must be shared. They are also looking for economic opportunity. They are wanting to participate in the development of the land as well. So our people must be involved in the process where there is ownership and benefits coming out from those projects.

Mr Assistant Speaker, land is our life in this country that is why our fore-fathers ensured that the land remains with our people. Nobody is going to change that and no government is going to change that too.

We understand that very well. Nobody will come to my village and take my land away. It does not matter what kind of title he or she has and that is a fact of life.

So, Mr Assistant Speaker, we have to protect the land and our future generation and continue to benefit.

Even the settlers were coming in settling in urban areas, they have land at home but they are only moving because they want better opportunities in their lives. They want to have better standard of living in their lives.

Mr Assistant Speaker, when we talk about the displacement of settlers, it is our own people who are taking ownership of this block of land and reselling at a price to some foreign investors. Where is the consciousness of this? People are deliberately selling and trading on land that they got for virtually nothing in the first place. So we are trying to cut all this rubbish out.

We have said no UDL licenses should be issued anymore because we want to make sure that they are subdivided and titled so that Papua New Guineans can apply for them.

We have made the direction in the case of some of the settlements in the cities as a pilot project and want to see that the person who is living on that block is given a title. So that his / her family can have a secured future.

Mr Assistant Speaker, I think that the Government is on the right path and there is more that needs to be done.

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We will continue to do so. But we cannot stop development people need services, people want to improve their standard of living and I think that the Minister and his team are doing quite well.

He is cleaning up the mess in there, he is starting to sack people. Over the last 20 or 30 years, I don't think anybody was ever sacked in the Lands department. Everybody was has held lifetime positions in whatever position they held.

Mr Speaker, I can tell you, when the Minister sacked the Valuer General and all in the Titles Office and people in the surveying office, he is cleaning the mess up. You will find some of the valuations coming out from these valuations where our own people are valuing land at some ridiculous prices and expecting the Government to pay for that land at that rate as well. While we are trying to provide services, building schools or roads, we must have some common sense approach so I thank the Minister for his excellent statement and we will continue to work towards cleaning up this mess.

Mr Speaker, it is not the end of the story but the beginning of the story on how we can continue to protect this country. As Dr Marat has indicated earlier, the legislation is there, it is just the implementation of this legislation in the protection of the interest of our people. Nobody else is going to implement it but Papua New Guineans who are not willing to implement it in the right way and we need to encourage them to act in the best interest of our country and our people.

Motion- That the question be now put – agreed to

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS RE-ARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

Motion – That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the Governor for New Ireland in presenting a statement. – agreed to.

Sir JULIUS CHAN (New Ireland) – Thankyou Mr Speaker and thankyou to the Leader of Government Business and the Prime Minister. I think the Prime Minister has already scheduled to farewell to the Grand Chief on Thursday next week unfortunately I will

not be here. I have already locked myself in for a program that I will be away from New Ireland to the Island. So I thought, I'm the only living person that worked closely with the Grand Chief and without stealing or trying to capture anything from what will happen next Thursday which I think the Government deserve a lot of support and praise for recognising the Grand Chief's departure from politics, I just don't want to miss out the opportunity and to add my voice to what is already a chorus of voices concerning the pivotal and influential role played by the Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare in the history of Papua New Guinea.

On this note, the New Ireland provincial Assembly by resolution on March 15, 2017 made the following decision and I just want to read out as a legal recognition as a farewell to the Grand Chief in recognition of the imminent retirement of Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare, the New Ireland Provincial Assembly on behalf of the people of New Ireland formally commends And congratulate Sir Michael Thomas Somare for his exemplary commitment and contribution to the establishment of Papua New Guinea as an independent nation and to both the Grand Chief Sir Michael and his wife Lady Veronica Somare for the ongoing and tireless public service to the people of Papua New Guinea during the 40 one years here after. Who could have foreseen that the birth of a man child on August 9, 1936 in Rabaul was the beginning of a journey that will not only carry that man child into a tumultuous exciting life but would as well lead to the birth of a new nation. A nation unlike any other nation ever born in the history of the world.

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And I must say I was there in most of the trip by looking back on history. Sir Michael and I were both elected to this Second House of Assembly in 1968, before many of you were born and it will be 50 years next year. We have known each other for more than 50 years. Hard to believe that at times but I remember those early days very well.

Mr Speaker, they were days of adventure, days of daring dreams, days when it seem we could do almost anything we could dream of doing and we had the fullest understanding and cooperation of the people. And we both shared what seems at first like a fantastic dream that the territories of Papua and New Guinea should come together. And not only come together but come together as an independent country, a member of the world of nations standing on our own feet equal to any country in the world. At first it was a small group that showed the way forward, one small group of dreamers who shared the same dream. That includes Sir Michael, Sir John Guise (Pangu Party), Albert Maori Kiki, Sir Barry Holloway, Sir Tei Abal, Tony Vurtas, Sir Julius Chan (Peoples Progress Party), Sir Danadas Molla, John

Medecar and Paulis Harric, these are people you don't really know and none of you have probably never met.

I remember forming Government following the third House of Assembly election in 1972. Pangu and Peoples Progress Party joined in a partnership that would take us to Independence, Sir Michael served as Chief Minister on top of the wheel house and I was Minister responsible for Internal Finance and not Finance, I can only look after internal revenue for this country, I was like an engineer in the engine room below and we got down to work. And my word was there work to do and we had to decide on the form of Government we would adopt and draw up the Constitution and establish ourselves as financially independent by creating a central bank taking over the Commonwealth Bank and setting up our own Papua New Guinea Banking Corporation and of course our own currency.

We had to make our case before the most influential bodies of the world including the United Nations, the World Bank and the IMF. But we did it and through it all Sir Michael was our Chief, Captain of the ship of State. He steered us safely through rough waters, scattered dangerous roads and brought us home to the safe haven of Independence. And let us not minimise the achievement and never forget how difficult this task was. Remember that we were dealing with a land of thousand cultures over 800 languages and a land where relations among tribes and clans were historically more competitive and even violent than peaceful and cooperative. This was not a land of just one, two or three ethnic groups and not a land with shared culture or belief system. No, Mr Speaker, the territory of Papua New Guinea or what would become PNG was like an entire United Nation of cultures and societies on its own. When PNG joined the United Nations in 1975, it had a total of 144 Members. But the territories of Papua New Guinea had nearly a thousand different nation, cultures and almost every one of them with their own language.

Mr Speaker, it's a tower of people and that is what Michael Somare confronted in his quest to unite the territories of Papua New Guinea into a single nation and that is what we all confronted but Sir Michael was the Captain and he had to take the control. How many of you remember a New Irelander Johnson Kault, crying for break away, the Bougainville Independence Movement, Papua Besana. The truth is our country was tearing itself apart before it came together. I cannot over say how difficult it was for us to march together towards independence. It was a choice that was made by those who had been working together for five or ten years. And we all Papua New Guinea were fortunate to have Michael Somare as head and he took control. He brought us all together after the elections of 1972, and after Self-Government was declared in 1973, and by complete hard work he guided us to

independence, your father was with us at that time, Mr Speaker. Sir Michael had the wisdom to know that to build a single country out of thousand cultures we need people from all parts of the country involved in the process of construction. Sir Michael was always a nationalist.

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He brought in people like Sir Albert Mauri Kiki from Gulf on the Papua side. He brought in Fr John Momis from Bougainville to serve as Minister for Decentralisation. In the first post in the Independence Cabinet he brought in myself and Sir John Kaputin from the Islands Region and Sir Iambakey Okuk, and Thomas Kavari from the Highlands Region.

We knew that if our country split apart and if our country became the country of Papua and the country of New Guinea and the country of Bougainville then we would be lost. We needed each other but more than that we needed a strong a strong leader and we needed someone who was 100 percent committed to the idea of a united, free and independent nation of Papua New Guinea. Sir Michael Somare was that man.

Everybody here knows that Sir Michael Somare and I have had our differences. We have had our disagreements. That is inevitable when you have string men with string ideas and therefore, we parted on 7 November, 1978. That was the saddest thing I think in our political partnership but our disagreements, Mr Speaker, have always been about how we can make our country better. Above all, we remained great friends and our families' ties and mutual respects remain intact.

Our disagreements have always been about the means and not ends. We have always had the same goals and the good of Papua New Guinea foremost in our minds. It was only about how we achieved those goals that we sometimes differ.

So, today, I would like to salute Sir Michael Thomas Somare. Today, I want to salute the Father and the captain of the country and today, I say clearly and without reservation that it has been a privilege to share the journey we have shared for more than 50 years. And offer our own prediction that the survival of our democracy and unity in Papua New Guinea depends on the quality of younger leaders to devolve and cause greater decentralisations from Waigani.

God bless Sir Michael Somare and Lady Veronica and the family that he may have often deserted, and now, God bless our Prime Minister Peter O'Neill, Mr Speaker, the Chief Justice, all the Ministers, Honourable Members and the people of Papua New Guinea.

My very best wishes in the coming elections and God guide our future.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

(Applause in the Chamber)

Mr CHARLES ABEL (Alotau – Minister for National Planning and Monitoring) – I move –

That the Parliament take note of the statement by Sir Julius Chan.

Mr Speaker, we also give a special acknowledgement to the Governor for that wonderful statement which begins to signify a further debate that will continue on this particular matter next week. And we look forward to that further debate but thank you, Governor, we take note of that statement.

MOTION BY LEAVE

Mr CHARLES ABEL (Alotau – Minister for National Planning and Monitoring) – I ask leave of the Parliament to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

ALTERATION OF DAY AND HOUR OF NEXT SITTING

Motion (by **Mr Charles Abel**) agreed to –

That the Parliament adjourn to Tuesday 4th April, 2017 at 10 a.m...

ADJOURNMENT

Motion (by **Mr Charles Abel**) agreed to –

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 2:30 p.m...