

**FOURTH DAY**

**Tuesday 4 April 2017**

**DRAFT HANSARD**

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## FOURTH DAY

**Tuesday 4 April 2017**

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

There being no quorum present, Mr Speaker stated that he would resume the Chair after one hour.

Siting suspended.

The Speaker again took the Chair at 11.50 a.m., and read Prayers:

‘Almighty God, father of our lord Jesus Christ, we come and stand before you in this great House this morning. We open our hearts to you oh God, maker and creator of all things seen and unseen.

Mighty God Yaweh, God of Abraham, Issac and Jacob you are our God. We declare you as our father, as our maker and as our leader.

God almighty on behalf of the people of our nation, our Government, Members of this Parliament and our people, we come before you to offer our lives as living sacrifices before you. We know that none of us are righteous as the Bible clearly states that, there is none righteous for all have fallen short of your glory. But God we come before you knowing that you are a merciful and loving father. As we stand before you, we seek your forgiveness of our sins, as we agree this day that you fill us with your spirit.

This being a very special day in the lives of our people and the leaders of this nation. Lord as we conclude this term, we are concluding it in a very peculiar note where it also marks and signifies the end of an era of a great man in this country, the founding father of our nation the Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare whom you chose in the beginning as the one to whom you would birth a nation.

Lord we are grateful that we have been given this very special honour and privilege to stand here before your people in this nation as leaders elected by your people to represent them at this very significant time in history.

Lord as we come before you we invoke your presence in this House and in the hearts and minds of all our people.

Father, we humbly call on you to forgive us all our trespasses and help our minds and hearts to be focus on the vision that our forefathers proclaimed when they established this nation, that it

stands together as one united nation held together in the bond of love and faith in your word oh Lord.

Father as we begin this morning's special Parliament Session, I wish to quote the word from your holy Bible in Psalms 133 to declare this as the word that will be the foundation of this nation as we say farewell to our Grand Chief and the one whom we now call as the father of our nation, the Great Michael Thomas Somare.

In concluding the Prayer, in Psalms 133:1-3, your word states, "*Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious oil upon the head running down from the beard of Aron, running down to the edge of his garment. It is like the dew of Hermon descending upon from the Mountains of Zion. For there the Lord commands his blessing even life forevermore*".

Father that is word and that was the call of our forefathers and the call of the founding father the Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare when he echoed for unity, bung wantaima and for a hebou in the early days of 1973 to 1975 when our nation gained independence.

Come Lord Jesus and be in our midst this morning as we join to say the Lord's Prayer, Amen.'

02/04

## **BROADCASTING OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS –**

### **STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, I have to inform Parliament that the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings met this morning and resolved that *NBC TV* will be allowed to broadcast live the full proceedings of today's sitting also the *Piksa Media Company* is also allowed to film and take photographs in today's session. Thirdly, the media in general will be allowed to cover today's sitting in particular the valedictory address by the outgoing Governor of East Sepik, Rt Honourable Grand Chief, Sir Michael Somare for news purposes.

## **DEATH OF FORMER MEMBER (MR DAMSON LAFANA) –**

### **STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

**Mr SPEAKER** – I would also like to inform Parliament of a death on 6 March 2017 of Mr Damson Lafana.

He was the former Member for Unggai-Bena Open Electorate in the Sixth National Parliament from 1997 to 2002. During that term he was appointed Member of the Emergency Committee and Public Accounts Committee from July 1997 to March 1998.

He was elected Governor of Eastern Highlands following the disqualification of Mr Peti Lafanama by a Court of Disputed Returns on 11 September 1998. He then relinquished the governorship back to Mr Peti Lafanama on 20 July 1999 following his return in a bi-election.

He also served as member of the Referral Committee on Communications, Transport and Civil Aviation and Education. He was Chairman of the Referral Committee on Health and Family Welfare from July 1997 to July 1998.

He was Chairman of the Constitutional Laws and Acts and Subordinate Legislation Committee. He was Chair of the Pensions and Retirement Benefits. He was also member of the Public Accounts Committee in November 1999.

As a mark of respect to the memory of the late gentleman, I now invite all Honourable Members to rise in their places.

*All Members present stood in silence as a mark of respect to the late gentleman*

### **MOTION BY LEAVE**

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

Leave granted.

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – REARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS**

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

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent a motion in relation to the Farewell Speech for the Right Honourable Grand Chief, Sir Michael Somare for his retirement from the Public Service and the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea forthwith.

**FAREWELL ADDRESS FOR THE RIGHT HONOURABLE GRAND CHIEF,  
SIR MICHAEL SOMARE FOR HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE  
PUBLIC SERVICE AND THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

**Mr SPEAKER** – I ask that all Honourable Members rise as a sign of respect to the Right Honourable Grand Chief, Sir Michael Somare.

*(The Right Honourable Grand Chief, Sir Michael Somare is escorted in by Sergeant-At-Arms and Members applaud him)*

**03/04**

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** (Tari-Pori – Minister for Finance) – Mr Speaker, today is 4 April, 2017 and it was on April 4, 1968, that the Grand Chief walked into the Parliament of Papua New Guinea for the very first time.

*(Members Applauding)*

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – Today I thank the Speaker and the Parliament for suspending the *Standing Orders* that would prevent him from speaking and also the speeches from the Prime Minister representing the Government and the Opposition Leader representing the Opposition on behalf of our people and yourself representing the Parliament

Mr Speaker, on this note, I move that Parliament marks the retirement of our Grand Chief from the Public Service and the National Parliament and we place on record today's sitting our recognition of his long, mandatory and devoted service to the people of Papua New Guinea and we extend to him and his family our sincere good wishes.

So, may I ask the Grand Chief to make his speech to the House.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

*(Members Applauding)*

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members I will now with the greatest honour in this last hours of our term of Parliament with the greatest invite privilege the founding Father, Grand

Chief Right Honourable Sir Michael Thomas Somare to stand before us for the last time to make his farewell speech to this Parliament and the people of Papua New Guinea.

*(Members Applauding)*

04/04

**Sir MICHAEL SOMARE** (East Sepik) – I'm sorry Mr Speaker, I have to apologise, due to the printing problem we have in Parliament, I could not get the papers in time to present but if I can put my statement in the *Hansard* for the National Parliament and to the people of Papua New Guinea.

All I want to say is that, it has been a great privilege for someone like me to be able to stand up in a distinguished foyer like this Parliament and I say this because it was in this very Parliament that we adopted the national *Constitution* of Papua New Guinea. By that, I mean, it was through this process of parliamentary system that we adopted the *Constitution*.

It is very important for all of us and as I am making my way out, I had the privilege of serving the people of Papua New Guinea as a Member for East Sepik with all Parliaments since they elected me in 1968. I have not missed one parliament. I want to say this and I want it to go on record, to former Clerks of parliament, former Speakers of Parliament, and parliamentary councils and fellow Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff, the beloved Papua New Guinea here in our Parliament and elsewhere in our land and overseas today I stand here as an optimistic Papua New Guinean proud of our many accomplishments as a nation. We progressed through many waves and changes in the world. We survived our own bad decisions and we have united at times when the world thought it was not possible to do so. We must be thankful and we must always count our blessings.

In my lifetime I witnessed the end of World War II in 1942 when I was only six years old. I remember being taught Japanese in a school run by old Captain Simata in my own village. I remember being carried out as a child in mangrove among bombs and crossfires between enemies.

My father Ludwig Sana Somare was a policeman who allowed me to progress with some education. I was competitive and studied all the way into secondary school where I was awarded with an Australian scholarship by the Australian Government to come to administrative college. By then I became a school teacher but I had to go back to school again.

Mr Speaker, I forfeited scholarship and I decided that political ambition was my choice. During the 1950s we officially labelled as native people. I was a teenager attending

school and learning about the History of the world through western eyes. At that time, I begin to understand the importance of defining our own history. I would later become a school teacher then a radio announcer where I had the chance to tell our story as indigenous people. During this time, I was not referred to by my name, instead I was given a serial number in the Australian colonial territory where I once held an Australian passport. We had few rights and our opinions were given to us.

**05/04**

Mr Speaker, many things have changed and I hope that in 100 years from now Papua New Guineans will realise the importance of being an independent country. I knew that if we were free to decide for ourselves our people could participate in the process of development and democracy that would suit our culture and our ways of being.

*(Members applauding)*

**Sir MICHAEL SOMARE** – Today many issues remain prominent. Our land is still our pride. Our languages and customs remain distinct and our innate sense of familial ties and kinship networks underpins the democracy that keeps this system from collapsing.

In my lifetime we went from being secret indigenous political activists in the Bully Beef Club to being members of our first House of Assembly. In this lifetime, we went from being Australian subjects to before becoming PNG Citizens.

We moved from being self-governing to gaining full independence. Many observers did not think we could do it. I always felt they were wrong. I refused to hear that we ‘the natives’ were not capable or ready. But we showed to them we did and we can.

*(Members applauding)*

**Sir MICHAEL SOMARE** – In my heart I know that we are ready. Papua New Guineans are very capable people. I still believe that.

I was not one to be fearful. I was not good at telling lies to my own people nor could I lie to colonisers. So I was always in trouble somehow.

They said, I was cheeky and did not want to listen to me. I learn the tricks at my old school.

*(Members applauding)*

**Sir MICHAEL SOMARE** - I have reflected on this day often and I must admit I did not want to imagine my life outside of this institution.

There are many things I want to say but in the interest of time I will say only a few words, as it is not easy for me to say goodbye to you all.

I chose a life of challenges and service to my people. I have always respected the true meaning of public service so I lived my professional career that way. I started as a teacher and later on became an information officer. I was lucky enough to be a radio broadcaster and that gave me the platform to convince a territory that we must become a country. Not a dependent country but a self-governing country.

I have had my share of political activism. I have also had my share of great power and great responsibility.

I did not know what today would feel like to say my last farewell to this mighty House. All my colleagues are gone who helped me to build this institution, that delivered on the many promises we had for our people over the years.

**06/04**

In 1984, when we moved to this Parliament House which was partly a gift from the Australian Government, we had also moved into an era of change, where we would decide for ourselves and the future of this country. We experienced political instability and sometimes turmoil and I have had my share of political challenges and turmoil but I benefited from a concentration of political support and therefore grateful and feel blessed. It is on this very Floor that we dreamed of a future, we regularly came together as MPs to support bills that became laws.

It is in our conference rooms here, where I spearheaded many press conferences sharing good news with my people and many times I was forced to share bad news with them as well. It is the Floor of this Parliament that decided my fate as a leader throughout my career. I have sat on both sides of this Parliament as a leader. In fact my two brothers and lifelong peers; Sir Julius Chan and Honourable Paias Wingti, both forced me to become the Opposition Leader when I was quite happy as a Prime Minister after two successful Votes of No Confidence that I lost on this floor of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, when I was a young man I imagined hard enough, talked and spoke loud enough and if I protested against the colonial masters, that was my dream for this land and our people would come to life. I am glad to say that my battles were not in vain.

We once prospered with proceeds from agriculture, then we managed to benefit from our proceeds from mineral riches but all these times we worked together and believed in our individuality and practice national unity. I am proud to be called the 'Father of the Nation'.

*(Members applauding)*

**Sir MICHAEL SOMARE** – Even though many of you refer to me as young fellow, I walk aided by a walking stick through this long parliamentary halls which I once walked I use to be able walk briskly around but no longer have the same appeal as before.

When a candidate goes to the people and asks to be elected, seeking electorate support, they are asking to be placed legitimately in this Great House. Aspiring leaders are asking for their people to let them become legislatures who propose bills for passage into law.

They are not asking to be public figures, managers or guardians of public funds. They ask their people to give them the mandate to provide goods and services to them. We must remember that when we swear on the Bible at the Government House or in front of the Speaker's Chair we are promising that we are servants of our people. It is important to be fit and healthy in this House and to know the importance of parliamentary systems and operations.

Mr Speaker, when I look back, I wished for parliamentary accounts committee role to be reviewed and wondered about bi-partisan, those old days when the opposition and the government combined together on issues of national importance.

**07/04**

I hope that *Hansard* will be recorded daily when Parliament is in session. And I pray that the Members of Parliament will always be present in this House when Parliament is in session to provide quorum so our people's development needs and challenges can be assessed and improved based on available resources.

Mr Speaker, this Parliament is the ninth, there will be tenth and Parliament will continue to operate long after I am gone. But this will only happen, if we let the rules determine our behaviour. We must allow the legislature to mature according to the strict rules and traditions

defined in the parliamentary *Standing Orders*. The *Standing Orders* must be the only bible on this Floor.

The Westminster system of government that we adopted at independence provides in principle a valuable tradition of a separation of powers that guarantees independence amongst the core institutions of the state. These institutions are; the legislature which is the Parliament, the Executive which consist of the Cabinet and the Public service and the Judiciary which is the Courts.

Mr Speaker, I have a parting wish for new leaders and those of you who will be returned to learn what the Westminster system of government is designed to achieve. Democracy has a framework and practices that must complement each other. This is not a new concept. I want you to learn the about the importance of the separation of powers. You must allow the role of the Courts to set precedents. Their role is also to build case law. But this requires citizens or the aggrieved to file cases where criminal or civil breaches occur in our society.

To the MPs, you must learn what the role of the Parliament is. This is a law making body. We also enact laws here. The separation of power must be clear as you all contest for a seat in this House. Once you are here you will not have a handbook to guide your plans or your priorities. It is up to you to learn the rules and respect them throughout your term in Parliament. You must also honour the rules and traditions of our customs. The traditions of our Christian faith are also equally important.

In 2002, when the economists and the technical experts modelled our economy on the benefits that could be derived for our people, we trusted that the system would process our intentions through various policy and legislative frameworks that we had commissioned. At the time I wanted our institutions to be strong enough to handle the amount of money we were going to make from the sale of our oil and gas.

In my time, democracy and the technical advice of qualified public servants who led our departments determined all my public policy decisions. I wanted investors to come here again to this land of riches. I knew we needed the political will to translate to political stability. We wanted to create a safe regulatory environment for foreign investors. But even more importantly, I wanted Papua New Guinea to enjoy the benefits of the riches of this country.

**08/04**

People will say that we are not a rich country but our country is a very rich country and it is for us to unite together, and sit together here to make decisions that will enable our people

to progress further. I may be a fourth generation politician but the future lies in your good hands.

In the years between 2002-2011, we had worked hard to bring the Budget to surplus. We ensured that the foreign reserves were topped up as we made sure that earnings on imports were balanced with the need to keep our currency and exchange rate buoyant and realistic, so that the cost of living pressures would not exceed the ability of Papua New Guinean families to afford to live with dignity.

Polices are the way of the future in Papua New Guinea. We must rely on rules and we must always work to improve them. Our political party system requires reform so that the parties reflect the challenges and needs of our people. Political parties must plan to prioritise the needs of Papua New Guineans first. This will translate to service delivery, institutional capacity and governance. Law and order will benefit from rules and public tenders and other social standards will improve if we honour and worship the rules of our adopted system as we honour and worship our Christian principles in Papua New Guinea.

As I say, there are many things to discuss here today. Nevertheless, I bid you all farewell and say this. I am a man of principle. This rule has determined my conduct throughout my life. I am blessed with a woman who has been my friend and my guide since we were both young people.

*(Members applauding)*

**Sir MICHAEL SOMARE** – We have six children who trust us because we built that trust by respecting them as they were growing up. We have grand children who we think of when we make our private and public decisions. I hope Papua New Guineans will find their own ways to live and trust and care for their family units. I tried to do that my whole life and I think my family can be proud of that.

To the generations of Papua New Guineans that believe in me, I thank you, for your love and affection. I gave my best years to this country and I hope you will each find the grace to continue our dream for our great nation Papua New Guinea.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr PETER O'NEILL** (Ialibu-Pangia – Prime Minister) – I move –

That Parliament take note of the address by the Grand Chief, Sir Michael Somare and that, I wish to also make a statement.

**09/04**

Mr Speaker, today is an historic occasion for Papua New Guinea and today is also an historic day for our Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare and for our National Parliament.

I can say with certainty that the record we are honouring today is certainly going to take a long time to repeat.

Today is exactly 49 years, since Sir Michael took his Seat in the House of Assembly in Port Moresby.

It is very fitting that on this day, April 4, we recognize the services of the Grand Chief to the Parliament and to the nation.

Mr Speaker, the period of 49 years in the National Parliament and the House of Assembly that has preceded is certainly a record not only in our country but also in the Commonwealth.

*(Members Applauding)*

**Mr PETER O'NEILL** – Sir Michael Somare was elected to the House in 1968, well before most of our 8 million Papua New Guineans were even born. I know that this Parliament also acknowledges and expresses our gratitude for his services to our nation.

After being elected Chief Minister in 1973, he and a group of our young leaders then, encouraged our people to gain Independence.

There were very many, who said that Papua New Guinea could not become independent for many decades to come. The doubters also said that our people could not run their own affairs, could not manage our foreign policies, could not manage our security forces and certainly we could not manage our Treasury.

He fought against intolerance and doubt often based on racial biased and told the world that Papua New Guinea could and would be an independent State.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr PETER O'NEILL** – His position was supported by many eminent people from our nation and he turned that support into a plan for independence.

The special contributions by people like Sir John Guise, our first Governor General, the Right Honourable Member for New Ireland Honourable Sir Julius Chan, our first Finance Minister, and many others in that critical period of our history is a fact that we shall never forget.

Many of the leading Papua New Guineans are no longer with us but their contributions and support for independence is now in manuals of the history of our nation. The likes of Sir, Maori Kiki, Sir John Guise, Sir Thomas Kavali, Sir Iambakey Okuk and there are far many more for me to mention their names but we remember them.

These founding fathers of our nation are immortal in the hearts the every Papua New Guinean. Their contributions laid the foundation of this great nation we will continue to build.

The Grand Chief was supported during this transition to independence by some of the most prominent departmental heads who served with distinction. This includes people like the late Sir Anthony Siaguru, Sir Rabbie Namaliu, Sir Buri Kidu to name a few.

While the world was going through a process of decolonization in those times and the impact of these changes on all countries achieving independence around the world was profound and far reaching for their citizens.

While our people had tens of thousands of years of being in charge of their own destiny, the decades of colonial rule as brought about significant change in our country. Some of which were positive that delivered improved quality of life, religion, education and health care. But there were also many elements of freedom that our people desired to be returned to the men, women and children of our country that is our land.

It is very important for every person to know that they are in charge of their own destiny. It is important for us to have our own government who will manage our own affairs, who have the right to elect our government on their free will.

While Sir Michael Somare as a driving force in the development of our national constitution, this has made it possible to have a remarkable smooth transition to independence.

This was not the same story for many other countries that have transited from colonial rule to independence during those periods.

**10/04**

Mr Speaker, our move to independence was peaceful and organised which has now laid the foundation for the great nation we have today. Sir Michael Somare negotiated with the Whitlam Government in Canberra and the Australian Opposition led by Malcom Fraser. Agreements were set that served our country well in the early years especially those challenging years of our nationhood.

His government forged relationships with many other great partners in the international community. The United States of America, People's Republic of China, the United Kingdom, Japan, New Zealand, Indonesia and many other countries. He played a leading role in establishing our presence in the United Nations, the group of 77, the Melanesian Spearhead Group and the South Pacific Forum as it was known then. As the head of a newly independent nation, Sir Michael Somare firmly established our presence in the global community.

Mr Speaker, with our growing international reputation, Sir Michael Somare was also firmly focused on national development and building our nation at the domestic level. In the land of a thousand tribes, people from such remote and diverse locations his government set out a purpose of building a sense of national harmony. In the years around the first post-colonial decade under the Government of his leadership followed by Sir Julius Chan and then Pias Wingti they turned this country from a diverse country into a united nation.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr PETER O'NEILL** – Mr Speaker, today we turn to take our national unity and harmony for granted but achieving this social cohesion took a lot of hard work. Again we only have to look at the faith of so many other newly independent nations around the world of that era and understand how things could have gone differently.

In many other countries the divide of ethnic and cultural differences has led to civil war and genocide but not here in Papua New Guinea. Our national unity and harmony under pins the wonderful democracy that we enjoy today. From the very outset Sir Michael Somare and our founding fathers believed that national unity in a country as diverse as ours was of paramount importance.

Mr Speaker, the Right Honourable Governor of New Ireland, the Right Honourable Governor of Western Highlands, the Leader of Opposition and a number of us have served as Ministers in the Governments led by Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare. This capacity to work

together even before and after periods of political disagreement is a testament to the democracy that we have in our country built by our founding fathers.

While we may not always agree on issues, we all believe in the supreme good of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea. That is a sentiment that binds us together in this Honourable House. We all come here to this Parliament to serve the greater welfare of the people of Papua New Guinea. To serve the ideals set forth by the founding fathers as was demonstrated by our first Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, I was privileged to serve as a Minister in Governments led by Sir Michael Somare. We might not have always seen eye to eye but I am grateful for the opportunity and the grounding that that experience gave to me. After the elections of the National Government in 2012, I was proud to have Sir Michael serving on the Government side of this House. In this Ninth Parliament, we have not always agreed but, Mr Speaker, that is the nature of politics. But we have a robust and a vibrant political system in our country where Members of Parliament are free to voice their opinions and vote as they choose. This is the system of government that our founding fathers have built and the foundations of which we continue to work.

11/04

I know that the House and the Nation will join me in expressing our best wishes to Lady Veronica.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr PETER O'NEILL** – We thank her for her wonderful support throughout this long career in this House. I also want to thank his children who have supported him and contributed in their own way to our Nation and our communities.

Mr Speaker, I thank the Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare for his contribution to Papua New Guinea through the National Parliament by guiding this Nation through Independence. This House will be a different place when we return for the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament which convenes later this year. We will certainly miss his wisdom and his knowledge that only comes with 49 years of elected service. I wish the Grand Chief and Lady Veronica a long and happy retirement.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** (Kandep – Leader of the Opposition) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, being in the Opposition sometimes you do not get the privilege of the information available as to speaking today.

I was of the view that the grand farewell for the Grand Chief was going to be on Thursday that is from my discussion with the Leader of Government Business.

But, I now realise that it is Tuesday so I have just put something together for our great leader in a matter of a few minutes during his speech so, Mr Speaker, excuse me if I do not express as much as I would want to.

Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Opposition and the alternative Government of Papua New Guinea, I am speechless that it is a farewell to Sir Michael. Yes, a man cannot live forever as a leader even as great as Sir Michael is and I do realise that it is a farewell for Sir Michael.

Mr Speaker, this House will miss him, the Nation of Papua New Guinea will miss him, and the 8-10 million people will miss Sir Michael for his Godly stewardship and his quality leadership.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – When people are around in the game, you take people for granted and you don't see those important quality until the person is gone. You take it for granted because you think that they will always be there. The many qualities you overlooked but once they are not there anymore you will start to feel the vacuum or missing link starting to creep into the heart then you will realise that you could have listened to that man and you could have interacted more with this great leader. I would have set down and have a yarn with him or her but now it is too late.

Sometimes I think of that of my own father Polye, or even think that I would have sat down with him with a bit of admission from him because I need it now in my life but the old man is gone.

Sir Michael, we will miss you and Lady Veronica we will miss you in PNG Leadership.

12/04

I came to know the name Somare in 1972. I was only a four-year-old boy then, a little malnourished and dirty and with some sore on my body and my skin was dusty and white because there was this huge frost in Kandep that year. And all our edible food crops and herbs and plants had withered from the downpour of the forest in Kandep. And you hear about the frost these days but due to global warming it is a little better because the temperature had risen but in 1972 the country was still virgin and the trees were still intact and there was no rise in temperature it was freezing cold and I was very hungry. The people of Kandep were hungry and I heard of this name Somare. My father Pomb Polye and my mother Hakim told me, 'don't worry son'. I was crying for food and other children were crying too and the people of Kandep were shrinking and dying and young men and women were too weak to stand up and walk because of this hunger for food. My mother says to me in Engan dialect saying 'Don don't worry Somare is bringing the rice. I'm hungry now and my father would reassure me of what my mother said, saying rice is coming and a man called Somare will be sending rice to a no man's land to people who are dying out there in some place called Kandep. We had no airstrips and there was no good roads there and how the rice would come, we don't know? I didn't know, I was a small child so I couldn't understand. And yes, the rice came.

Mr Speaker, I ate the rice that Somare had sent and that was in 1972, he was a leader in the self-government then. Sir Michael, I ate that rice you sent, when I was a four-year-old child."

*(Members applauding)*

**DON POLYE** – My mother told me again that Somare would send a vehicle to take me away. Those times, they were using a jeep. And back then there were no roads so they carried the wheels and they walked with the Kiaps and when they came to a flat land, they put the vehicle together and they drove around. So thank you Sir Michael, a vehicle did come to take me from Kandep to Hagen where I was adopted into a Hagen tribe. So Somare did send a vehicle to rescue me and the Kandep people. When I left Kandep to come to Hagen. I was sitting in the vehicle and I thought everything around me was moving in the opposite the direction. I was taken to my adopted parents in Hagen, my father was Koan, he's from the Kuli tribe and my other father Wak Onguko also from the Kuli tribe and Joseph Wate. and Somare had sent them to take me to Hagen. So Somare made me part of the Kuli tribe of Western Highlands. Sir Michael, thank you.

13/04

Mr Speaker, I contested for 2002 National Elections and the man I knew as a small boy came as the Leader of the National Alliance Party to Kandep. He came with an axe. He held the axe in one hand and told the people in Kandep that this is Don Polye and I will turn him into an axe that can cut all bad governance and corruption going on in this country. I am the party leader for National Alliance and you have to vote for this man. Mr Somare came and endorsed me in Kandep in 2002.

I was so thrilled and humbled that this man rescued me and set me on foot. I knew him when I was a four year-old-boy and now but he came to Kandep to endorse me as a National Alliance candidate. Oh my goodness, what can you expect that is far more than you would have imagine.

Thank you Sir Michael.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – I won the 2002 National Elections. I am proud that Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare empowered me into politics. I feel so humble. This is a special and rare, very peculiar moment to be somebody he had raised, that he had set foot for and sent a vehicle to pick me up. He campaigned for me to win the seat and I continued to be a Member of Parliament winning that seat. He kept returning again and again on primary votes because Mr Somare empowered me follow his steps.

I want to stand here to say goodbye. It is so hard for me to and I cannot even believe that this is a farewell day for the Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare. I wished that this man could live on in politics so that we all can learn from him.

You will agree, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Sure.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – Mr Speaker, Mr Thomas Somare is the source of my pride and honour in a very humble way. I sat with Grand Chief in different capacities, in his Cabinet as a young Minister discussing issues across the table with this great man.

I have seen him from childhood to the current times. Mr Speaker, it was a wonderful experience and it is still a wonderful experience. In many years to come for me, it will still be a wonderful experience.

Mr Speaker, he moulded me. I learnt to see Sir Michael in various ways. He moulds and builds men. He is not a destroyer of leadership. He is a leader that builds other leaders, knowingly knowing that when he passes on, the country will need other leaders. Therefore, Sir Michael finds a need to build man and not to destroy them. And that is what he is.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – Mr Speaker, like the Prime Minister said, I am one of the products that he built. It was a wonderful moment to be acting Prime Minister under his leadership. When he was out for official duties, he made me serve as acting Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, he made me Deputy Prime Minister two times. The Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare accepted and partnered and worked with me in very conscience approach as his Deputy leading the National Alliance Party in the Highlands Region.

Mr Speaker, he made me Minister for Transport and Civil Aviation. You will see many reforms in the Transport sector. The airports are done, wharfs and jetties are done and programs are put in place that was when I was the Minister then. The government and everybody else are enjoying it now.

I went to Goroka recently, and one of the airports that I designed and put in place with multi-finance facilities is now under construction. It is a wonderful thing to see.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – It was under the leadership of Grand Chief Sir Michael. He made me the Minister for Works, Transport and Civil Aviation. He made me the Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology. I learnt a lot. He also made me the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Immigration.

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He made me Deputy Prime Minister and sent me to various meetings and forums in the world. I attended the APEC, IFAD, UN and other meetings that the Grand Chief deliberately chose me to represent the country. I learnt a lot, he moulded and shaped me. I am speaking on behalf of everybody who has served under him, he moulded and shaped many of us. So I see the Grand Chief as a builder of other leaders. The funny thing is he taught me a little about drinking wine because I am a strong Adventist follower, and he said, just drink.

If you are an Adventist, why did you become a politician? I said Adventists do become politicians but I don't want to drink wine. He said, come on just taste it. So he taught me how to drink wine, I enjoy at least three glasses from day to day and when I do drink I think of Sir Michael.

But now that he is going out of politics, I will give up drinking because I do not want to drink wine. I learnt the skills of being a shrewd leader and politician. I came in as a soft young man, innocent and sincere, he taught me how to be shrewd but very honest. He is truthful and honest, has prudence governance. The other qualities which I learnt from him as well as from Sir Julius are keeping, cool and relaxed. These are some of the great traits that these to senior leaders have taught me, even when you are angry you just have to relax and be cool.

Mr Speaker, it is wonderful, the Parliament will miss him, the country's leadership, public service, the people and the country will miss him for those values that he has. And let me humbly describe our leader as a champion in many other areas. In 2002 when he became the Prime Minister, he inherited into his government a lot of problems and challenges that were difficult and the country needed a Somare type of leadership to rescue this nation in 2002.

It could have been anything else and I am saying this boldly and confidently. It couldn't have been any other leader, it needed a Somare quality type of leadership. A servant type leadership to rescue the country from the calamities that the country had been running to in 2002. I would like to qualify my statements; the country had been governed by two previous governments then. The Skate Government which was taken over by the Mekere Government but it is a situation which I do not know and cannot go back to that history. The situation that the nation was in was very bad. And most of my colleagues on the Floor of Parliament who had actually came in 2002, including the Prime Minister will agree with me. The two governments had been responsible. I do not know who was to really share the blame but at that time it was the then Prime Minister, the late Bill Skate, and then Sir Mekere afterwards and the country had been run into very deep problems.

Mr Speaker, but the Grand Chief championed the rescue package for this nation. He became the Prime Minister and came with the rescue plan. We forget the rescue plan that he came in with, it was called the export driven strategy. He saw that the country was in a quagmire of economic crisis and recession and he came with a package called export driven strategy to rescue and save this nation.

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Foreign shares had fallen below K200 million and you had no export cover, import rate has escalated and nobody could go to the bank and borrow any money so I have to give the credit where it's due. The exchange rate of PNG kina against other major currencies where below 0.15 and it's about 15 cents in US dollar.

Mr Speaker, Somare took over when inflation was very high and investment was so low and no investor would want to come and invest a single toea. The macro-economic stability had eroded and employment had declined, GDP growth was at the negative 0.15 to negative 0.2 percent.

I could remember on those days we were in the cabinet meeting and looked out to the streets of Port Moresby, people pushing their buses and taxis rather than riding on it. And with the export driven strategy under Sir Michael's leadership, we worked.

I remember at one time Sir Michael suggested to us Members that we should forgo some of our perks and privileges to help our people who are in dire need of their daily living. And at that time, Sir Michael sent then Minister for Public Service, Sir Puka Temu and then Minister for Treasury, Bart Philemon to the World Bank and IMF to ask for a rescue package. And these two gentlemen did a wonderful job under the leadership of Sir Michael and I salute them for that.

So to cut the long story short, we must not take Somare's leadership for granted by just calling him a father in vain, but must acknowledge most of the work that he did since independence and we build on his credibility. Sir Michael rescued this economy by bring it up to 9 per cent.

Mr Speaker, he saved this country when it was about to collapse, but, I also recognised others who participated with him. And of course the current Prime Minister was also part of the team too as the Minister for Labour and Employment.

When our country's economy was down to nothing, Sir Michael showed his style of leadership and rescued this country. And if it was not for Sir Michael, we would have failed this country's economy and declared as a failed nation.

Mr Speaker, as for export driven strategy the Somare Government looked at developing ways to bring in foreign currencies into our foreign reserve to stabilise the exchange rate and the economy.

At that time there was no investment and so Sir Michael, the then Minister for Mining, Sam Akoitai, Member for Central Bougainville, I remember at Mirigini House, we planned and implemented the Ramu Nickel Project.

But many now complained and say that so much as given, but I tell you when the situation was so bad, the Somare Government rescued the country's economy.

**16/04**

And we embarked on the same way when I was the Deputy Prime Minister then and also the Minister for Petroleum where the Somare Government devised the plan for the Queensland pipeline where we would pipe gas and oil down to Queensland.

Luckily enough that failed but Sir Michael Somare as the Prime Minister had other plans at the back of his mind. Sir Michael said, it is good that this plan failed, and I then said, what are we going to do then, and he said, No, I have got a better plan. He then tasked Minister Somare and some of the Ministers in Cabinet to look at building a PNG LNG Project here in Papua New Guinea.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – Mr Speaker, I have got to articulate here that within my term as a Member for Parliament serving under and with Sir Michael Thomas Somare. I feel that it is necessary that I must articulate that, when we call a man the father of a nation, when you call him the founder of this country we cannot just say those things to make it look good. We have to articulate what it is that makes us say that he is a great leader.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – We cannot get those names for nothing. We cannot just call a man great for nothing. We cannot just call those names just because we would like to make somebody happy. It must be earned and the Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare adequately earned it, and he earned again and again ten times over.

So, the PNG LNG Project, the Ramu Nickel and some of you criticised the Green Revolution. Now, we have a lot funds, Mr Speaker, and because of it there is a lot of talk. At that time when we had no money we said that we had to change the mindsets of the people and their perceptions psychologically. We had to move towards agriculture and Sir Michael Somare as leader of the Government and Chairman of the NEC, Sir Michael Somare said, let us look at agriculture and drive this Green Revolution.

Some of us said that, this was a waste of money but you did not that some of the money filtered down to the SMEs and the farmers who grew coffee, cocoa, copra, even to the Turubu Oil Palm located in the Sepik Plains and the many other projects we have seen also in the Morobe Province. This Green Revolution helped developed these agricultural projects but even when some of them have failed there some that were a success. This is was the result of the Green Revolution bringing in foreign currency into our foreign reserves, Mr Speaker, Sir Michael Somare did this under his leadership.

As for the PNG LNG Project that I mentioned earlier, well, it is a big story on its own. With that, I would like to express my profound gratitude to the former Minister for State-owned Enterprises, Minister Arthur Somare. I must salute him.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – The Somares with the rest of the Cabinet, I must also commend the Prime Minister too, he was part of that committee, the Treasurer and Honourable William Duma as the Minister for Petroleum. Also, I think the Deputy Prime Minister Leo Dion was also part and parcel of that and we under Sir Michael Somare's leadership brought about the PNG LNG Project.

Mr Speaker, but look, listen to this, the difference is this, and I want the government to listen very carefully. We have to see what Sir Michael Somare did. He built into this programme equity sharing benefits for landowners, provincial governments and the people of Papua New Guinea. He never decided that this share of these benefits would be tied to

foreigners and foreign banks but must be benefiting Papua New Guineans. That is what Sir Michael Somare did, Mr Speaker.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – And when I realised when such was not being implemented under those arrangements then I had a lot to question.

In farewelling Sir Michael Somare, I, as one of those few leaders or one of the leaders on this Floor of this Parliament, would like to see those things that he did as an example so that we may continue that same kind of leadership into the future.

Mr Speaker, he also established other important institutions I will not go into. Another thing that I saw, Mr Speaker, the Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare is the a founder established with the help of the Constitutional Planning Committee the *Constitution* and the *Organic Law* and the other laws that come out from the *Constitution*.

**17/04**

As the founder of the Constitution of this country, I learnt that the Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare avoids breaking these laws.

In one time he was referred to the Leadership Tribunal for some trivial matters of Returns because there were discrepancies in those statements, he had to be referred by law.

Am not downplaying the work of the Ombudsman, I actually promote their work. But because of the law the Ombudsman Commission referred the Grand Chief and he humbled himself and went through that process. I expected him to vigorously defend himself but he put all else down and he went through the processes.

*(Applauding in the Chambers)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – I was frustrated there and then and instead of me being the Acting Prime Minister my colleague Honourable Sam Abel was appointed Prime Minister and it didn't go down well with me.

I am saying this as part of giving my attributes and acknowledging a great leader. I must also express myself in order to empty myself of the sins which I committed against the man.

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – That resulted in Enga losing out and Peter O'Neill and Belden Namah took over as the Prime Minister of this country.

Sir Michael, I apologise for that but Grand Chief realised that it happened because of a situation that was created and Don Polye to survive, I did what I had to do.

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – Mr Speaker, I am just being honest. But I salute the Grand Chief because he established the justice system which he himself went through and complied with Ombudsman Commission's directives and that shows the kind of a great leader he is. He established the public service and every time he debates, he is very careful and he is always admonishing, cautioning and always allows them to improve rather than just condemning them.

Mr Speaker, arguably these are great qualities, unique, that the Grand Chief, a great leader has displayed for all to see and follow.

Mr Speaker, he is a strong Christian too, not as good as myself because I am a bit of here there Christian –

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – He is a very strong Catholic and when I was Deputy Prime Minister, I told him I was a very strong Seventh Day Adventist and I told him, we might clash because Catholics and SDA's always clash on issues and that's when he won me over.

I have never seen or heard Sir Michael talk too much on the Bible and preach when we went out in rallies but I have seen a living testimony where the great man has been conducting himself and living and walking the Bible for the last 50 years.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – Mr Speaker, how can a politician immaculate a Christian life for the last 50 years in politics? Some of our young politicians come in for 5 years and 10 years and we are shot down and things happened that are not Christian but this great leader is a Christian for a long time over 50 years. That is my admiration and I want to emulate Sir Michael if my people give me back my gun and ammunition –

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – Mr Speaker, I can do that. I like to conclude here –

*(Government Members interjecting)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – The Government side is happy. The Prime Minister spoke for a long time and yet you are uneasy?

You guys are very unfair and unjust. You have pushed this great man to the corner and now you are just briefly farewelling him.

Mr Speaker, Sir Michael is a unifier that unites and I agree with the Prime Ministers statement where the Grand Chief created solidarity and cohesiveness in a country that was so difficult even the Australians feared and were bogged down on ways of how to unify this country.

Australians had to develop their massive country and to engage in unifying a country with over 852 different cultures and languages, they just couldn't.

*(Members applauding)*

**18/04**

To unify a country they found it difficult and almost impossible but this great man stood up and says Papua and New Guinea unite, we are one people. The highlanders and the coastals united and Sir Michael you did that and I am proud to say that I am a Papua New Guinean.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – I am not just a Kandepian or from that part of the mountain region but I feel I am a Papua New Guinea because of a unifying spirit that this great leader instilled in us. Do you agree, Mr Speaker?

**Mr SPEAKER** – Sure, sure!

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – As a family man, he is one colleague I admire. I have problems in my own family and sometimes I get my head banged with a frying pan when I make mistakes but I find Sir Michael to be a very strong family man and I admire him for that.

There were times when I found it hard to get in touch and meet up with you because you were always moving around. But I could always crawl quietly to Lady Veronica who was always welcoming with open arms to receive Don Polye and I think the same thing has happened for every one of us here. Lady Veronica is not just a lady but a leader in a quiet way.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – Mr Speaker, sometimes we speak and talk to be a leader but I think leadership in silence is even more powerful than that.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – Lady Veronica doesn't speak like other ladies do in other countries in the Western World. She is always very quiet but her openness to receive any leader to speak to us despite our cultural diversity or the different levels of leadership that we hold goes to show her greatness and the leadership that she possesses.

Mr Speaker, I want to salute Lady Veronica for making Sir Michael Somare the great man he is and I give respect to that.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – In saying so let me also say that there are so many Lady Veronicas out there and I am struggling to make my wife become a Lady Veronica too.

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – I salute the women of this country and let us emulate Lady Veronica's leadership because we need to have that partnership.

Mr Speaker, let me also acknowledge Sana Somare being the first born. I salute you for being there and always guiding leaders and politicians on policy matters and on strategic issues. I have seen in the last 15 years that the Somares are always there. I have already paid my respect to the former Minister and Member for Angoram, Arthur Somare who is also one of our great intelligent leaders and we should not overlook him. I also would like to acknowledge Bertha Somare with coaching and helping with bits of words here and there. I am proud Dulcie Somare is with the Pangu Party on this side of the House and helping us to rebuild Pangu Party. We don't want you on the other side but with us on this side of the House to form the next government.

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – Junior Michael Somare is a quiet man of his own but also important to the family. This is a reflection of good family between Lady Veronica and Sir Michael Somare. I would like this House to not overlook them and I as a leader will definitely not overlook them. They are an asset that we will always need to work together. They will have some corporate memory of their daddy in them for us to utilise in the future.

When we talk about quality leadership, I see a lot of servant leadership in Sir Michael Somare. He can really go and sit down with his Sepik people and talk with them where ever it is needed. He believes in a conscience leadership where he does not impose his ideas on other leaders. He listens to every body's opinions and then makes a sound judgement where it best suits and benefits everyone. He does not make a one-man decision about issues whereby all are shocked but rather one that everyone agrees on.

I also find him with a high moral. He may not be perfect but he has a lot of moral and which has been a blessing for this country.

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We need high moral leadership, like the oxygen we breathe in this country.

I also find that he is very progressive and he moves slowly but surely he knows how he is moving and set the focus right and guides along, he convinces other ministers and members to think alike and he leads. I also find him transformational; he changed me, the honourable

Prime Minister, the Treasurer, Minister Duma, and all of us. He kind of work to transforms not just the country but also he transformed also public servants and other leaders who are around him so I see him as a transformational leader in his vision and a leader of high integrity.

To say that he is the father of the country, to say he is the founder and to say that Sir Michael is a great leader, yes, he is and we salute him with all his quality. Its justified.

*(Members Applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – When you lead with God, your family and Lady Veronica on this planet for the rest of your life, you should be very happy. Grand Chief, you should be a proud man, because this is your creation, a country that you have moulded and shaped. Here is a Parliament full of leaders that you have nurtured and cultured in a way that you wanted them to lead because you had that right quality leadership. Sir Michael, you should be happy because you have achieved something for the 8 million people.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – Let me end by saying, how do we appreciate him? I am saying, is that enough? Prime Minister has spoken his words of gratitude, is that sufficient? Sir Julius Chan gave his attribution to his brother, would those be enough and ample that we should go home because we have farewelled the Grand Chief?

No, I say those are not enough so we must do more by living by the principles that he has lived and conducted himself and embrace those principles. If he is a law abiding leader, let's be law abiding. If he believes in the *Constitution* than let us believe in the *Constitution*. If he believes in the rule of law, let us believe in the rule of law but if he is a servant leader, let us be servants too. If he is transformation leader, let us transform this country and ourselves too. The only best way to farewell him, is to follow his legacy.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr DON POLYE** – I suggest that we read his book. He has written a book called Sana, and I read it when I was at High School. I think Sir Michael should write an autobiography of himself so every child in this country should read and know him because he is a peculiar and

interesting, a 21 century modern Papua New Guinean leadership which is very cultural and unique to our own country and very relevant to the modern progressive forwardness that Papua New Guinea is looking to. With this, Mr Speaker, I salute you Grand Chief Sir Michael, I salute Lady Veronica, farewell to you in politics but your leadership is alive and we will continue to live and act by your leadership legacy.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Prime Minister the honourable Peter O'Neill, Opposition Leader the honourable Don Polye, Ministers of State and Members of Parliament, I would like to thank the Prime Minister and the Opposition Leader for the words that they have shared in bidding farewell to the Grand Master Architect of our beloved country's independence.

It will be a very daunting task to summarise the contributions of the honourable Grand Chief, Sir Michael Thomas Somare, and Member of Parliament. Even my own attempt will fall short of describing the man that Papua New Guineans, young and old have come to know and adore as Father of the Nation. A man who's impeccable accomplishment and reputation towers above all of us individually and collectively. A few members of Parliament have had the privilege of working with him, some in the years of pre-independence and post-independence, some watched and understood his actions, yet some of us were school kids who did not fully understand the word Independence meant in the context of a new nation.

When Papua and New Guinea united under Sir Michael Somare, they marched to Independence on September 16, 1975, the declaration of independence from our colonial masters. An adoption of Papua New Guinea *Constitution* of the culmination of long hours, months and even years of relentless planning and preparation by Sir Michael and the founding fathers of our Nation.

The Grand Chief Sir Michael first entered the House of Assembly and later the National Parliament at Independence as a Member of Parliament at the first instance as a Member of the House of Assembly first before he became the chief minister than prime Minister and the rest is of course history.

Sir Michael's story will be chiselled into the history book of Papua New Guinea as we remain a united independence sovereign state.

Sir Michael was born on April 9, 1936 in Rabaul, where his father Ludwig Somare Sana was a Policeman. He married Lady Veronica Somare in 1965 and has five children. Somare a man from the Murik Lake in the East Sepik Province. He dreamt the idea of Independence for

Papua New Guinea while a few Papua New Guineans shared in the idea of independence, Somare did not wait for the golden opportunity, instead he seized the opportunity, made the circumstances conducive and Papua New Guinea gained Independence in 1975.

We all know that he is a teacher and radio journalist by profession but he left the Public Service to contest the second House of Assembly in 1968, he won the election under Pangu Pati, the first official Opposition Leader. Somare became Chief Minister when self-government was granted in 1973 and was the key figure in the preparation of our Independence.

In 1975 he became the first ever Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea and in 1980 he ended his term as the Prime Minister however, he was re-elected in 1982 and served as prime minister until 1985. From 1988-1992 he was Foreign Minister.

Sir Michael Somare also founded the National Alliance Party in 1997, he served for several cabinet offices from 1999-2002. The coalition lead by the National Alliance Party won the 2002 elections and he again became Prime Minister and his Government was returned to power in 2007.

Sir Michael Somare oversaw national economic growth largely through the exploitation of Papua New Guineas vast national resources. He is a three times Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea and he became the first and so far the only Prime Minister to complete a Parliamentary term

**20/04**

I am indeed privileged and honoured to be in this chair first as a Member of Parliament and then as the Speaker that farewells the father of our nation. As I have earlier mentioned, it is difficult finding the right words to describe Sir Michael and his contributions to nation building. But for me personally it has been an ultimate honour to serve our magnificent country alongside our founding father who has never lost relevance even to this hour. He continuously is coming around to remind us young leaders about the vision he had when he led the country to Independence through various statements and actions that he has taken.

At this juncture, I would like to pay a special tribute to a special people who made him become a national icon. He is a legendary politician, from a simple boy who grew up in his village of Karau in the Murik Lake. Congratulations to the people of East Speak for continuously mandating the Grand Chief every other Election since the Second House of Assemble in 1968.

(Members applauding)

**Mr SPEAKER** – On behalf of the people of Papua New Guinea, I pay respect and thank you all for your wisdom and patience in recognising a leader and continuously returning him to Parliament. Your trust and respect and adoration for Sir Michael as not only the Grand Chief but East Sepik to permanently inscribe into the history books of Papua New Guinea. It is undeniable that when we talk about the Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare after his retirement, we will definitely not miss mentioning East Sepik and Papua New Guinea. Such will be the legacy and the gift of the people of East Sepik to Papua New Guinea. Grand Chief we bid you farewell as we look forward to the next election and the next government with the hope to continue you dreams of a stable democracy, a culturally diverse yet cohesive society in a level of prosperity whilst not yet including all compares more than favourably with the rest of our neighbouring Pacific.

It is my sincere hope that current and future leaders alike will learn from your experience and that of your colleagues and other founding fathers to be better equipped to respond to the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly changing society in a dynamic global environment. In fact we the young leaders of today should more confident in our ability to address development challenges and issues as Papua New Guinea sails into the next 40 years after Sir Michael and the founding fathers, owing to Sir Michael. In looking to the future, we should remember, that our present milestones and progresses as a country of a thousand tribes untied as one is due to the foresight of wise men and women who have gone before us to lay a stable foundation. In particular, the founding fathers who formed our *Constitution* and those who created our principle democratic institutions led by the man who we farewell today, Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare, Member of Parliament.

Today our democracy flourishes because of the wisdom and foresight of Sir Michael and our founding fathers, they laid the foundation of a vibrant democracy rightly separating the people's power into three distinctive arms. As a result 40 years on, we have an effective legislature, the Parliament, we have an effective executive government and an independent judiciary that we are proud of. Each of the core democratic institutions have served us well, individually and collectively for over 40 years, the next 40 years is in our hands. The current and the future leadership that will take the torch from the Grand Chief, may we keep the light continuously burning for however long, it may take until all development aspirations of our people that kindled in their minds and hearts 40 years ago are realised.

During my term, I had the privilege of serving with the reminiscence of the founding fathers, namely Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare and Sir Julius Chan, another remarkable Papua New Guinean who had also stamped his mark and earned an equal right in the history books of our country.

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We will indeed miss Sir Michael as well as Sir Julius when he retires. Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare, I wish you well in your retirement as the nation allows you to return to quietness and the comfort of your loving family and sweet home where the ever faithful, hardworking and supportive Lady Veronica, all your children and many grandchildren will receive you, this time to keep you as their very own.

At this point, I would like Parliament to rise to pay a respect to the great lady the mother of our nation, Lady Veronica Somare.

*Members stood in their places as a mark of respect to Lady Veronica.*

**Mr SPEAKER** – May the Parliament sit.

Lady Veronica, we acknowledge you and your family for supporting this great man all his life in his service to our beloved country.

Grand Chief, may you find happiness and take pleasure in watching from a distance the country you led to Independence. May it grow from strength to strength and find its place and relevance in the fast changing global community.

Once again, on behalf of the Members of Parliament and the people of Papua New Guinea, and off-course the people of Finschhafen of which you have very special bonding with, I take this time to say, Grand Chief, thank you for your service to Papua New Guinea. May God bless you and your family.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** (Tari-Pori – Minister for Finance) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Before I move that this Parliament adjourn, let me say one or two words in regards to this program as well as to thank Parliament for the support of Government Business in the last five years.

Mr Speaker, the remarks by head of political parties and Members of Parliament will continue in the State Function Room when we adjourn from the Chamber.

A program has been organised for an event on Thursday in which the Governor of NCD and the National Government, student and the people of this country and in Port Moresby will gather to continue to farewell him. The Grand Chief will say farewell to the nation for his service to the public.

Mr Speaker, on behalf of my people of Tari-Pori, especially the Hela Province, I say thank you to the Grand Chief in his time in the office as Prime Minister when National Alliance was in office. This is the time he started work on Hela to be a province in which Prime Minister O'Neill finalised it. So Southern Highlands is what we are today.

On behalf of the Hela people, we say thank you to Grand Chief for giving us the gift of Hela Province.

*(Members applauding)*

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – Let me also say thank you personally on behalf of my wife Rachael, my children and my people for allowing me to be part of a Cabinet. Thank you for calling me into your Cabinet in 2008 which I served. I was totally inspired and blessed to work under you as our Country's Prime Minister.

I cannot say more from what the Prime Minister, the Opposition Leader, and the Speaker have so eloquently stated. It was well put as the nation's contribution in your farewell program today.

Let me leave you with one line here, you will vacate your chair today, Grand Chief, but your place in our country's history and, your place in our people's heart will never be vacated today or forever. Your legacy will live on.

*(Members applauding)*

**22/04**

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – On this, Grand Chief, may God give you many more long years to come as you live your life and continue to be an observer and guide from outside this House. Having said this as Leader of Government Business make special mention on behalf of every Member in this House and all Parliamentary Staff for the support given to this Parliament

when we assembled in July 2012 to this day today. We passed all and on record we are the most successful Parliament as far as dispensing parliamentary businesses and government businesses is concerned.

Mr Speaker, as the Prime Minister said; we never missed a sitting due to lack of quorum. The only time we missed was last week Tuesday, when we had to attend the Leaders' Summit. All in all 259 laws were passed, 240 Acts of parliament, 12 constitutional amendments, seven organic laws, 182 Ministerial Statements and reports and re-rectified 12 international treaties. This Parliament goes down as the busiest, most attended and successful parliament in our nation's history.

And for this let me take time having the highest privilege of serving as Leader of Government Business; let e thank each Member on both sides of this House. Some times on policy matters we may differ in our opinions but we chose to assemble as leaders of this House; rising beyond personal differences, clash of politics and daily when parliament was called to be in session, we provided the numbers and allowed government and parliament business to continue.

I wish to thank each one in this House and place on record on behalf of my People's National Congress Party; the wishes of the party for every member in this House that may your people measure your contribution to the country and your electorate and may God's will be done. I wish each one best wishes and success as we go and face our electors, the people of this country for the coming elections.

On this note thank you to everyone who supported us for running parliament for the last five years and I wish everyone success.

On this note, may I now move that the parliament at its rising adjourned until such time to be fixed by the head of state or the Speaker.

## ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament do now adjourn

The Parliament adjourned at 1:45 p.m. to the time and date which will be fixed by the Head of State for the Tenth Parliament.