

THIRD DAY

Thursday 8 February 2018

DRAFT HANSARD

Subject:

Page No.:

QUESTIONS	1
Regular Housing Rental Rates	1
Supermarkets on Residential Land - Lae	3
Police - Organisational Structure.....	4
Air Niugini Flight Disruptions.....	6
Confirm Status of New Generators.....	8
Teachers' Salaries and Entitlements	8
Kokoda Track Authority.....	10
 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS -	
EXTENDED TIME FOR QUESTIONS.....	13
Morobe- National Scholarship Program Fees.....	18
 SUPREME COURT & NATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE -	
JUDGES, ANNUAL REPORT, 2016 - PAPER -	
MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER.....	20
 MOTION BY LEAVE	21
 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS -	
REARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS	21
 ADDRESS-IN-REPLY TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH.....	21
 ADJOURNMENT	25

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
CORRECTIONS TO DAILY DRAFT HANSARD

The Draft Hansard is uncorrected. It is also privileged. Members have one week from the date of this issue of Draft Hansard in which to make corrections to their speeches. Until the expiration of this one week period, Draft Hansard must not be quoted as final and accurate report of the debates of the National Parliament.

Corrections maybe marked on a photocopy of the Daily Draft Hansard and lodged at the Office of the Principal Parliamentary Reporter, A1 - 23 (next to the Security Control Room).

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

Amendments cannot be accepted over the phone.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LEE SIROTE', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat illegible due to the cursive nature of the writing.

LEE SIROTE

Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

THIRD DAY

Thursday 8 February 2018

The Speaker (**Mr Job Pomat**) took the Chair at 10 a.m..

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

Sitting suspended.

The Speaker again took the Chair at 10:40 a.m., and invited the Member for North Bougainville, **Honourable William Nakin** to say Prayers:

“God our Father, you are holy indeed and are the fountain of all holiness. We praise you and exalt your Holy Name. You are the creator of all things, seen and unseen. Bless us and our country Papua New Guinea. Send your Holy Spirit to guide us and give us wisdom knowledge and understanding to share in this Parliament. Lord we acknowledge your presence, love and care and we thank you through the prayer your son Jesus taught us; Amen.”

QUESTIONS

Regular Housing Rental Rates

Mr JOE SUNGI – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Police Minister but since he just walked out; I will reserve my right.

Mr RENBO PAITA – My question is directed to the Minister for Housing.

There is a lot of housing or rather accommodation problems that our people face especially in the major urban centres of our country, especially in the high cost of housing rentals. The issue has become so bad that even the public servants are forced to stay in houses that are very expensive and in areas that that not safe. I understand that we have issues in terms of funding.

Do we have any policies in place to regulate rentals rates in the country?

Mr JOHN KAUPA –Thank you, Member for Finchhafen. I am happy to reply to your question. Housing is a major problem that we face in urban areas in the country. As a government we must ensure that all our citizens are happy.

02/03

The National Housing Corporation stands to provide affordable housing for every citizen of this country in the private and public sector. I would like to inform this Parliament and the member for Finschhafen that the housing policy has ceiling for rental rates. The ceiling was there since colonial days ranging from K7.50 to almost K200 and this is not enough to maintain and sustain all our existing properties with the National Housing Corporation so that we can provide decent accommodation for our citizens to live in.

After seven months in the office, I have identified many problems within the Housing Corporation. That's why I have established a team called Housing Reform Policy Team where we are looking at overhauling the current Housing Corporations policies. For the last twenty four years, the old colonial policy is still there. Every tenants who has lived in the Housing Corporations properties over the years knows that there is a ceiling.

When I tried to raise the ceiling, they objected claiming they know the rental ceiling and Housing Corporation is not a business entity. Housing Corporation is an entity that provides affordable houses for every citizens of this country. Therefore, we are not happy with the current rental because the country is moving and we must also be competitive on the price level. So the Housing Reform Team will look at the policy alone so by June parliament meeting, I will bring in the policy for the endorsement of the parliament so that we can establish new rates, at least over the K200 ceiling. This is for us to make enough money to maintain the properties throughout the country so the every citizen of this country can live in a decent and affordable house.

So we are doing the policy overhaul in order to establish the price. By June, I will bring the policy for the parliament's endorsement to make it become law to enable the new rate under the new housing policy so that we can provide decent, affordable and convenient homes for every citizen of this country to live in.

There are also many problems with the Housing Corporation so I will provide that in my ministerial statement by next week so you can see how we are running the Housing Corporation. Within the seven months I've been the Minister, I will provide the details of where the Housing Corporate is now and at what stage and how we can beat the pathway and rectify this and how to make Housing Corporation become the regulating body so that it can regulate

the rates. We will consult with the ICCC so that we can regulate in a way that also deals with the real estates in the country to make it affordable for all citizens. However, we won't jump quickly into this as yet because of procedures and processes involved where we must follow so that we can come to the end where we can regulate.

We are working on that and we will come up with a solution so that one day all public servants will have a decent house.

03/03

Supplementary Question

Supermarkets on Residential Land - Lae

Mr THOMAS PELIKA – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Through you, I would like to ask a simple question to the Minister for Housing.

In Lae at Bumbu Compound some foreigners who were invited by our friends have built a supermarket in the residential area and at Dauset Place, the Housing Corporation area there is another supermarket. I do not want to call names because like you have said we have to protect our country.

That is why I asked if you could shut your mouths and listen! A lot of you have made many mistakes already, listen! You have sold our gas and oil and it has no effect in Papua New Guinea, so listen! And now we have allowed them to come and acquire land which is supposed to be residential area and have built a supermarket on it.

How did they acquire this land? Where did they get approval to build their supermarkets?

As for me, when the Chairman of Law and Order, Physical Planning Board in Lae, give me a response, I will get a bulldozer and chase them out. When I do this, I need support from all of you in the House. If you have friends who are doing this you must put a stop to this and support me.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr JOHN KAUPA – Thank you, Mr Speaker and the honourable Member for Menyamya.

I think your question was not structured well but I understand what you are trying to ask so I can answer you.

(Laughing-in-the-Chamber)

Mr JOHN KAUPA – We have Housing Corporation area used for residential areas and we have commercial lease area where business can be conducted. I think I just answered the last question raised by the Member for Markham. There are people with vested interest. The transaction happen up top with the Managing Directors and then goes down to the operations. This is when we realise that a Property of Housing Corporation was sold.

The City Council must look into this and rectify this problem because we have divisions in the city where you can build houses, run a business, agriculture or look after livestock et cetera.

So, coming back to your question, I know there is problem with property in Lae. I also cannot move into the office in Lae as there are problems to sort out before I do. However, I am I am not aware of this particular issue and I thank you for bringing it up and I will send a team down to investigate. We will work with the new city authority and the Member for Lae, who helps me when I have problems in Lae.

I thank the Member for Menyamya for his question and he must inform the Member for Lae, so I can work with him to rectify this problem and the city authority will look at it.

Otherwise, there is another interested party who is behind the eviction exercise which our office is not aware of that is why I would like to ask the Members of this Parliament, if there is anything that you see is not right you must report it to Housing Corporation so that our legal team will intervene into to protect our ordinary citizens and tenants of Housing Corporation.

Thank you.

Mr Thomas Pelika – Point of Order! I just want to say that, are our eyes for seeing or just for decoration! There are Housing Corporation officers in Lae, so why can't they see what is happening?

Mr SPEAKER -- Honourable, that is not a point of order.

Police – Organisational Structure

Mr JOE SUNGI – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister for Police.

Before, I ask my questions I would like to provide some background. The Police as we all know is a national function because it has its own laws –

04/03

Mr Speaker, in reality, most of the police manpower is structured and positioned in Port Moresby and Lae and when it comes to supporting the well fare of officers with accommodation most of these houses are built in Port Moresby for policemen and women.

Mr Speaker, to date we do not know the structure of the Police Department that should reflect the number of policemen and women for each district in this country. We are now very good at establishing task forces, mobile squads and all kinds of operations without really supporting the districts and the rural areas of this country.

Mr Questions to the Minister are as follows:

(1) Can the Minister outline to this Parliament and the people of this country on the Police structure, stipulating and providing the number of Police personnel that should be present in each district Police Stations?

(2) What is the Budget that has been allocated to each district through the police Budget every year?

Mr Speaker as we all know, the Police Department receives the third largest Budget slice every year.

(3) As for my district, I would like to know what is the manpower ceiling in terms of the funding that funds each positions starting with the station commander and down the line?

Can the Minister provide that information in Parliament for all the districts in the country to know exactly what is the manpower ceiling in each district?

Mr Speaker, with that manpower ceiling than they must also have housing, because why should the National Capital District have all that access and getting borrowed money and donor money to building police houses only in Port Moresby which only has 600 000 population in NCD while we have the rest of the country waiting for policemen?

Mr Speaker, can the Minister provide a full report of the funding including the structure and manpower ceiling for each district.

Mr JELTA WONG – Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Nuku for his questions and yes, we have a working police structure. But we haven't put it out yet because we are still trying to make it work. The structure will be available in the Next Parliament Meeting and I have my people going through the budget at the moment so we can put it to each district. I should have that in the next Parliament Meeting.

Mr Speaker, the reason why we are putting a lot of emphasis in Lae City and the Capital City is because they are major cities. We have major crimes where everybody wants to be in

the city but we cannot control the city. We have no capacity to control the influx. Also with the APEC coming this year we are on the international stage so we really need to put a lot of emphasis here by going it to it in the provinces and districts. I will have it to you by the next Parliament.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

05/03

Mr JOHN ROSSO – I direct my questions to the Minister for State Enterprise.

In the last two weeks, we had major disruptions to the power supply there. It has affected a lot of business and individuals in lae, causing a lot of damages.

(1) Can you please advise us on what PNG Power is doing to rectify the power situation in Lae and make it stable once and for all?

Air Niugini Flight Disruptions

If you are aware, we also had major disruptions to Air Niugini flight. To my understanding 15 National pilots have resigned from Air Niugini and it is affecting a lot of flights from Lae and other centres too.

(2) Can the Minister clarify this to me and the people of Lae?

Mr WILLIAM DUMA – I thank the Member for Lae for his two questions.

Firstly, Mr Speaker, in relation to the disruptions in power supply in Lae, I must admit that it is not only in Lae, these disruptions are occurring right across the Highlands region.

Mr Speaker, due to a number of factors, no one paid attention to the deteriorating power generation system at Yonki and we are 10 years late in terms of maintenance and refit of the turbines and the generating capacity in Yonki, and that is why is occurring.

I take this opportunity to announce to Parliament that Cabinet has given approval in principle, for the new Ramu II Project which hopefully will rehabilitate and help restore some of the energy needs that we have.

Mr Speaker, it is a long overdue requirement that over the years we have ignored to our detriment and I admit that not only Lae but all our centres across Highlands and Madang are experiencing power shortage. In the electorate that I come from, we experienced power blackout for two to three weeks. This is unacceptable and I have instructed the incoming Acting Managing Director as well as the board to take immediate steps. About a year ago, that problem become apparent to us.

Mr Speaker, this is a sort of situation where you ignore those important services and then pay the price and that is happening. PNG Power has entered into a lease arrangement with a Korean company with backup service to Lae but again it is not working as we had problems with generation capacity. So, Mr Speaker, I must assure the good Member for Lae, that we are not ignoring it, we are taking necessary steps to rehabilitate and ensure that we have reliable power supply to our important city, Lae.

Mr Speaker, the Member knows that because of PNG Power's inability to provide reliable power supply to that city, most of the major businesses in Lae city have resorted to providing their own power supply but that again is unacceptable and even the generators that are being used by the companies have reached the stage where they can't continue producing power. We are working hard to look into that issue and I can assure the Member that I have given it my personal attention. Over the next couple of months, I expect that we will see improvements in power supply not only to Lae but the majority of the Highlands region.

I must also point out that even in the case of Pawunda Power Station on the border of Western Highlands and Southern Highlands, only one turbine has been operating for the last 10 years. We are looking at bringing in two more turbines to rehabilitate that power station. It is an ongoing exercise. It also goes to other centres that are relying on PNG Power to provide that energy need.

In relation to the airline services provided by Air Niugini, it's not something that has popped up recently. We have had ongoing issues with the management and that was compounded when Air Niugini management had to make an unpleasant decision to let go of a number of very senior pilots as a result of their involvement in politics in the country last year.

So, Air Niugini has tried its best to attract, recruit and retain competent and qualified pilots but there is competition and that Air Niugini itself is in a position that is not something that we can be proud of. However, it is a working progress and I am fully aware of that.

06/03

This problem came to my notice before Christmas and we made it our duty to ensure that during that period, there were no unnecessary flight cancellations and delays.

I can proudly say that for the first time in many years, Air Niugini was able to step up and provide uninterrupted services during that peak period. That is something we can be proud of but it's an ongoing exercise and the management has been asked to give this matter its urgent attention. It is not only affecting flights to Lae but also to Mt Hagen which is the third busiest airport in the country and other centres as well.

I can assure the Member as well as our people that we have those two very important state-owned entities who are in need of support and understanding from us but I can assure you that it is being done now.

Confirm Status of New Generators

Mr JOHN SIMON – Mr Speaker, I wish to ask about the generator sets that the government bought. The reason was to support power in two major cities, Lae and Port Moresby and by now, I think the two cities shouldn't have problems with power if those reliable generator sets were in the country. We were told that they were the most reliable generator sets.

Can the Minister let us know if they are reliable or not and where they are in the country now?

Mr WILLIAM DUMA – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Member for Maprik for his very important questions.

Yes, those two generator sets were badly needed and they were purchased and are being put into very good use. Unfortunately, they are not able to provide full answers to our energy needs. We need more of them.

Teachers' Salaries and Entitlements

Dr LINO TOM – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister for Education and they relate to salaries and entitlements of almost 60 000 teachers throughout Papua New Guinea.

It is common knowledge that teachers are the frontline officers in educating the nation and the next generation. Because of the very critical role that they perform to educate the nation's future parents, workforce and leaders, their welfare and wellbeing is paramount and an important prerequisite to their performance and productivity level. Simply put, if teachers are not looked after properly, their classroom teaching and other related activities will be greatly affected.

Last Friday, there was a news article in the media headlined, PNG's Single Largest Public Sector Union, the PNG Teachers Association put the Government on notice to pay or face the consequences.

My questions are simple and straightforward, and I demand honest and specific answers.

(1) Is it true that the government has breached its three-year wage fixation agreement with the PNG Teachers Association for 2019 to 2019?

(2) If so, can the Minister truthfully explain exactly why the government has failed to honour its agreement signed in 2016 with the PNG Teachers Association to pay increases in teachers' base salary by three per cent in 2017?

(3) Can the Minister admit that he as Minister responsible failed miserably to ensure by directing the Department of Education in 2017 to budget for money to be allocated in the 2018 Budget to pay the outstanding increments?

(4) Can the Minister give a definite date as to when the outstanding three per cent for old teachers and new graduates who entered in 2017 and 2018 will be paid?

(5) And finally, the most pressing issue that is facing all of us in this country, can the Minister simply tell this Parliament if Free Education is truly free?

Mr NICK KUMAN – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Member for Wabag.

Let me respond to the series of questions which relate to salaries and wages. I think the fixation agreement that was signed in 2016 is correct. We were not able to meet that obligation in 2017 because of the cash flow problem.

07/03

The Cabinet made a decision in the later part of 2017 that the government will honour that commitment in 2018. I am fully aware that the good Member for Sinasina-Yonggamugl made an assumption in the paper that it was not in the Budget and we will not meet the obligation for teachers of this country.

The Government has taken actions in the last couple of weeks just to ensure that we fix that problem and we are going to stack those payments in 2018 over time.

The Department of Personnel Management is taking the responsibility including the Union of PNG Teachers Association and all other union in the public sector to ensure that we honour that commitment in 2018.

So you will not see any full lump sum payment but the payments will be segmented through 2018.

If there is improvements in the cash flow from 2019 onwards, you will see those improvement and how we meet those outstanding.

Secondly, this is a budget, a government bill that we pay for salaries and wages in this country. Being a leader, you should be fully aware that we paid a lot of bills in the public sector.

That is why, the Public Service Minister came to the Floor of Parliament in the last sitting and explained the need for us to do an overall reform in the public sector. We have to do it as a responsible government to reduce the bills. But this requires a bi-partisan approach so that the bill must be reduced.

That is serious in every sector of the Government that we have throughout the country so I want the Unions to be responsible as well.

We are not operating in another world and our Union Leaders are not operating elsewhere. They are talking about our Public Servants who work so hard like the teachers and the nurses.

They are the front-liners of the public servants in the country. I am fully aware of this so as the government and I appreciate this conditions but we will only pay when we have the money.

We are talking about paying TFF fees beginning of this year but we only have the warrant for K100 million this week. So those are some of the problems that we have. I am pretty sure that the honourable Minister will have to appreciate that what has been discussed does not necessarily mean that we are not doing our bit to ensure that we pay what is due.

In terms of free education, we can define it. We pick up the parents component to ensure that our children must go to school. They must be enrolled and attend school in this country.

We pick up the responsibility to make sure that the children go to school in this country that is the reason why in the last five years, we have seen huge amounts of growth in terms of student enrolment right throughout the country.

At least if the government cannot come good with TFF on time, we have a responsibility as leaders to also assist where we can. I am really grateful that some Members are doing that also at the higher education.

We all know that it is a huge demand in this country. I am pretty sure that we can all work together to ensure that these things work. We do not have to fight amongst ourselves on the Floor of Parliament.

Kokoda Track Authority

Mr HENRY AMULI – Thank you Mr Speaker. My series of questions are directed to the Minister for Inter-Government Relations. I urge the Ministers for Culture and Tourism and Environment and Conservation to take note.

08/03

My questions are;

(1) What steps has the Government taken to review the Kokoda Track Authority since I raised the issue, in December last year?

(2) How will the people have their say in the review?

(3) How will the review of the Kokoda Track Authority affect the people of my review?

(4) How much money does the trekking industry earn for the people in the Kokoda region?

(5) How much funding does the Kokoda Track Authority receive currently to operate its business?

(6) What does the Kokoda Track Authority do with the fund it receives from the trekking industry?

(7) What benefit has the Kokoda Initiative achieved for the people of the region along the Kokoda Track?

Mr KEVIN ISIFU – Thank you Mr Speaker, and also the Member for his questions. As you know the, Kokoda Track Authority is the initiative of the people of the affected areas of Kokoda, Sohe and the Sogeri area. I want to clarify here that the current Government under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Peter O’Neill is supporting a full independent review of the Kokoda Track Authority. This is in relation to calls made by the Open Members of the Province, the Governor, and the communities along the track; including the CEO of the Authority.

To respond to your questions, I would say in regards to your first question, the procurement of an independent consultant is being worked on and I expect the review to commence sometime in early March. In the meantime we are encouraging the communities along the track to get their thoughts together on the outcomes and what they want from the review. This is to ensure that they are properly considered under the review.

Honourable Member; on how well the people will have their say in the review. I would say that the communities along the track will have discussions organised and facilitated by the local leaders themselves on how they see the Kokoda Track Authority operating in the future. The review is now in place we are in the process of gathering views from the people and hold discussions with the review team. If need the review team will also have stakeholder meetings at selected sites in the region.

Mr Speaker in relation to his third question; I want to inform him that the review will inform the Government to reform the Kokoda Track Authority and make it more efficient and effective, so we are now working on the review and a fully effective authority can be formed to stimulate and support the growth of the track through tourism.

09/03

As we all are aware tourism is the most effective and sustainable program in the region that provide employment opportunities for communities now and the future generation.

I wish to advise the Member for Sohe that trekking industry has injected so much money into the communities through employment of potters and guides and payment of fees to the guest houses. It is estimated that in 2017, the people within the region earned about K6.5 million from the trekking industry.

I have also been informed that since 2007, about K17 million has been earned directly by the people from the region and this is money paid directly by tour operators to the people. This represents a more significant employment opportunity and the successful tourism industry in the region.

Mr Speaker, to answer question 5, all I know is that KTA receives funding from three sources at the moment which are; Australian Government, PNG Government and the Licence Tour Operators.

Australian Government has continued to generously supported KTA since the beginning of the Kokoda initiative and supporting operational cost, staffing and works to ensure Kokoda track remain safe and accessible.

Mr Speaker, at this stage, it is very difficult to establish how KTA uses the funds it receives from the trekking industry because there has been no proper reports to my office since the Government made the proclamation to move the operations to the Department of Environmental Protection Authority so it's quite difficult for me to provide you the exact information on the financial reports for you and the Sohe peoples benefit.

Mr Speaker, I would like to say that, through the Kokoda Initiative, Australia and PNG Government have given more benefits to the people from the region, especially the people's welfare under many support programs such as education, health, upgrading of the tracks facilities and various other activities such as sports and other sectors within the community. So in general, both Australia and PNG Government have given some benefits back to the community.

Mr Speaker, I thank the Member for Sohe for raising these questions and I think the way forward now as a Government is to revisit and review the Kokoda Track Authority because under the current arrangements. There is still much confusion as to the responsibilities and management of the Authority.

10/03

In the meantime, we are looking at talking to all the stakeholders in the Australian Government, Papua New Guinea Government and the respective industry partners to make sure we properly review the Kokoda Track Authority so that it can serve its purpose and provide good benefits for the people of that region.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – EXTENDED TIME FOR QUESTIONS

Motion (by **Mr Walter Schnaubelt**) agreed to –

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent time for Questions Without Notice this day being extended by 20 minutes.

Mr WALTER SCHNAUBELT – Thank you, Mr Speaker and I would also like to thank all those who stood up in agreeing with me to extend question time.

Mr Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Inter-Government Relations. Yesterday he said that there was a letter from the former Minister for Inter-Government Relations and Deputy Prime Minister explaining why the presidents who contested for the elections are not eligible to continue as presidents after the elections.

Yesterday, when you were making your speech you did not quote the *Constitution* or the *Organic Law* to confirm your stand, so please can you law quote the exact law that you are referring to?

There was no exact quoted in the letter from last year, thank you.

Mr KEVIN ISIFU – Thank you, Mr Speaker and thank the Member for Namatanai for asking this question and I am glad to answer all the questions that are being asked. Today is my day to answer questions.

Mr Speaker, to answer the question for our good Member for Namatanai, I would like to say that quoting of the *Constitution* and Standing Order is done by the Government, I am not a lawyer so I can't tell you exactly but that is the decision of the Government.

Mr Speaker, before the elections we issued the instruction and I would like to make it clear so that this question is not asked again. All you members here must know that many of your presidents are breaking the laws so we must not defend them here on the Floor. –

Mr Walter Schnaubelt – Point of Order! Mr Minister, can you please just answer the question, what section of the Organic Law were you referring to? If you do not know just tell us and sit down because time is running and the clock is ticking. I am sure there others who want to ask questions.

Thank you.

Mr KEVIN ISIFU – I must answer it properly so that you understand –

Mr SEAKER – There is another Point of Order!

11/03

Mr Westly Nukundj -- Point of Order! The Standing Order states clearly that any matter which is before the courts is not allowed to be asked on this Floor of Parliament.

(Members interjecting)

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Member your point of order is out of order. He is not asking for legal opinion which the Standing Order allows for legal opinion from the Minister.

But the Member is right in wanting to know the particular section of the law that makes reference to it and honourable Minister is answering it so continue.

Mr KEVIN ISIFU – Thank you Mr Speaker, I won't go in-depth in answering this question because the Member doesn't want me to do so.

But for any circulars to be distributed it must be stipulated by the Organic Law before it's distributed otherwise it's unlawfully to do that.

Mr Walter Schnaubelt – Point of Order! Both the Minister and Electoral Commissioner were circulating around the same circular, so which circular are we following.

The Electoral Commissioner also mentioned that there is no specific law that stops the presidents from contesting the election and later go back and resume their duties as president.

Let's not confuse ourselves and the country as a whole, if you are going to make reference to certain section of the law then can you specify here for us all which one are you making reference to?

You can't just make reference to a letter that only talks about someone else's opinion. Please if you don't know than say so and I will be more than happy to get an answer from you in the next session.

Mr KEVIN ISIFU – Mr Speaker, for the benefit of the Parliament and the people of Namatanai, I will reply to his question in writing in the next meeting.

Mr ALLAN BIRD – Thankyou Mr Speaker, I direct my question to the Prime Minister and I want the Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology and Minister for Education to take note.

Mr Speaker, on January 29 2018, the NBC quoted the Acting Vice-Chancellor of UPNG as saying that certain failing rate has been set for all the faculties.

Before I ask my question let me give few background information for all the schools failing rates set; as for Social Science its 18 percent, Law 23 percent and Science 43 percent.

The much talked about issue was that since the establishment of the School of Medicine in 1971 after 47 years, every year the main campus sends 60 students to study Medicine. But as for this year and its history for PNG, none of the students have met the required standard to be accepted to study medicine at the School of Medicine.

12/03

Mr Speaker, I am really concern about this and many of us are aware that many of us have acknowledged that education is a problem. My concern is that we have been in Parliament for almost four days and yet, no one raised this serious issue. If we are to achieve the intentions of Vision 2050, the Strategy for Reasonable Sustainable Development, we must have smart young Papua New Guineans who are good in mathematics and science.

This data from the University of Papua New Guinea tells us that our young people have failed miserably in the areas of mathematics and science.

When we provide low quality education to our children and we are happy to provide low quality education to our children then any basis of a decent future for our country is just being thrown away.

I am concerned about this and I believe most parents are also concerned. I want to ask two questions about this.

(1) I want to know what the government is going to do about this problem and what are we going to do about getting high quality education and making it available for the young people of this country?

(2) If this issue is serious enough for the country, could I get an undertaking for the honourable Prime Minister, if he is interested in putting together a bi-partisan parliamentary committee so that we can take a look at this entire fiasco that is now resulting in low quality Papua New Guineans coming out of our educational institutions and I would like that report to be presented in Parliament as soon as possible. If need be, I would be honoured to represent the people of East Sepik to assist the government in this venture?

Mr PETER O'NEILL – Thank you, Mr Speaker and thank you Governor of East Sepik for your questions.

I am happy that he asked those questions because quality of education in the country is something that we should all take seriously.

Certainly there were some debates, especially during the elections. The message from our people was very clear. Whilst they appreciated our Free Education Policy they also wanted quality education.

So, the comments from the Vice-Chancellor of the university is a positive comment. He is telling us what the reality is in the delivering of education, especially at the University of Papua New Guinea.

It's good that they are maintaining standards so that we can continue to uphold the quality of graduates that are coming out from the universities and other tertiary institutions right throughout the country.

I particular, maths and science is an area where we have noticed that there is a lack in the number of teachers that have graduated out of colleges and universities to teach in secondary and high school levels.

Mr Speaker, there are many reasons to this. Partly, our government is at fault. It has allowed Goroka Teachers College that was focused solely on teaching high school teachers to become a university.

It is now embarking on introducing other faculties within the university trying to create a standalone university just like the University of Technology or the University of Papua New Guinea.

As a result the number of teachers coming out of that university are not going directly to teaching. They are not going to high schools and secondary schools.

That is why we have a drop in the number of teachers teaching maths and science at high schools and secondary schools.

In recent years, our government has given instructions to the Education Department to recruit foreign teachers to come and teach maths and science. We have started recruiting some from India and in fact, some of them have already arrived in the country and have begun taking up positions but we are going to increase the numbers.

I agree that we need to address this.

13/03

Next week, the Minister for Education will be presenting a Ministerial statement addressing some of these issues including all the other challenges that we have in the education sector.

Mr Speaker, we are concerned particularly about training of doctors at the Medical Faculty. Last year I made a commitment that we will have a standalone university for medical doctors and the medical profession in the country. Simply because it is a specialist profession that needs special attention to deliver the health specialist that is demanded right throughout the country. As the good governor has stated, we are only producing about 60 or less doctors every year when the demand is over 200. So there is a huge gap and that is why we are falling behind all the time. We cannot afford to do that. The Minister for Health and myself have been driving this agenda to try and establish a standalone University, so that we can concentrate on the production of doctors and other medical specialist for the country. But somehow, I don't why but the University has taken the Government to court to stop this process. I just can't believe this. If we are going to educate our children, why can't we work together? I am certain that common sense will prevail and that this precedence be withdrawn so that we can immediately start planning so that next year we can have a standalone university at the Medical Faculty and the increase the number of students who are going to study to be medical specialist to increase their manpower.

The good Governor of East Sepik, is willing to contribute in these discussions but let me assure you that on top of that we are going to recruit Maths and Science specialist teachers to

come in and fill in the gaps right throughout the country while we are going to address the issue in Goroka University. We want to revert to teaching educational specialist in that university alone so that they can train teachers with Bachelors that are going to go directly into secondary and high schools throughout the country. So they can specialise and become maths, teacher or science, English or social science teachers. They specialise rather than becoming a general practitioner in all fields. Mr Speaker that is the aim of government and the Minister for Education will make a statement next week, thank you.

Supplementary Question

Morobe- National Scholarship Program Fees

Mr GINSON SOANU – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is directed to the Education Minister but if he is unavailable, can the Prime Minister take note. We have the national scholarship program which falls under three different categories. When school starts, students must register. The scholarship also has the parental component. The students will register according to the scholarship category awarded by the Department of Higher Education Research, Science and Technology.

(1) So will the students register as per the scholarship category awarded to them or according to the parental component?

For my province Morobe, we have taken on board the parent's component for the last few years and the last two days I was not present because I had to address this scholarship issue in my province. While the rest of Papua New Guinea students are settled in their intuitions, Morobe students are in Lae.

14/03

They also asked for the provincial government's component on behalf of the parents. I dealt with this issue before coming down here.

Mr Speaker, because of the budget waiting process at the provincial government, I cannot meet the parent's component. The registration deadline was supposed to be last week and next week.

(2) Can the Minister inform the House that he will permit the respective institutions to allow the Morobe Students to have late registration?

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Member, is your question directed to the Minister for Higher Education or Minister for Education.

Mr GINSON SAONU – I directed it to the Minister for Higher Education

Mr SPEAKER – You asked a supplementary question so the Prime Minister will respond to your question.

Mr PETER O'NEILL – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Governor of Morobe for his question.

I am not familiar with the real details of the issue of Morobe Students. Why is it that there were offered scholarship but did not resume classes. I will communicate with the Minister and the Secretary Department of Education so that they can both collectively address this issue.

I also want to assure you that all our institutions need to be flexible. They should not impose tougher penalties that may displace our children. Allow them to go into class while we organise ourselves to sort out school fees and etc. We are here to stay. We cannot escape. Just allow them to go into classes. It is important that they are not starting late because it may become a problem later on trying to catch up.

Mr Speaker, I think the administrators of the universities and technical colleges must be flexible. This are our institutions and we are here to make sure that our children receive that education.

Mr KONI IGUAN – Thank you Mr Speaker. I direct my question to the Minister for Police.

I dreamt of becoming a policeman when I was a child because of their uniform and the cleanliness of their outlook. I would follow my grandfather around. He was a policeman based at Konedobu. So, I was named after Konedobu, Koni for short because I was a short person.

I was actually interviewed to become a policeman after completing my education but I was not successful as I was too short to be a policeman.

Mr Speaker, I made that statement because Papua New Guinea Constabulary once at that time was very admirable in their uniform and standard of cleanliness, performance and well disciplined.

We also have respect for the policemen today as a saying that goes in Morobe “we remain safe because of policemen.” It would be great to see these code of cleanliness and standards restored because Mr Speaker, the APEC Summit is approaching and many expatriates will soon come to our country.

But today at the road blocks, many policemen are not properly attired and their mouths are filled with betel nuts. There is no sense of cleanliness.

15/03

My question is:

Does your department have plans to look into this before the APEC summit here in the country? This is not only about the APEC gathering, this is so to bring back the admirable traits that the Police Force once enjoyed.

Mr JELTA WONG – Thank you, Member for your good question. It is true that in the past, Police were respected and admired. The younger generation looked up to them and wanted to become officers when they grew up. But today, there is a lot of undisciplined officers.

The first day that I walked into the Office as Minister responsible, I decided to work on that and that is one of the first things that I am doing. We have cut down from five different sets of uniforms to just one. We are in progress talking with everybody to have just one. The field uniform will no longer be used because of the confusion it cause among people.

I can assure you that before APEC we will have something in place and you will see that the uniforms of our policemen and women will come back as number one.

**SUPREME COURT & NATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE –
JUDGES, ANNUAL REPORT, 2016 – PAPER –
MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER**

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Members pursuant to statute, I present the Judges Annual Report 2016.

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

That Parliament take note of the annual report and the debate on this report be made an Order of the day for subsequent sittings.

Debate adjourned

MOTION BY LEAVE

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari-Pori-Minister Minister for Finance & Rural Development)

– I ask leave of the Parliament to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – REARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

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

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent Notice No.1 of Government Business being called on forthwith, especially on the request that **Sir Julius Chan** makes a statement, in support to the Governor -General's statement.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S SPEECH

Debate resumed from 22 August 2017 (see page)

Sir JULIUS CHAN (New Ireland) – Mr Speaker, as you know the inaugural address by his Excellency the Governor-General is traditionally honoured with colourful responses from Members of the Parliament and although this may be a little bit obsolete, the address was made on the August 22, 2017.

I would like to take this opportunity to first of all say to Parliament that it was a privilege to have listened to His Excellency on the August 22, 2017, outlining the new Government plans and strategies for the nation during the life of this tenth Parliament. As Governor of New Ireland and as privileged to be a co-founder of this nation it gives me greater pleasure to rise to response to the address by His Excellency, the Governor-General to this hallow Chamber.

16/03

And, I hope all the new members will take this opportunity to make your maiden speech and outline your policies for the rest of your term in Parliament.

Mr Speaker, His Excellency's wise word to this Chamber and the people of Papua New Guinea should remind us all the real reason why we all assemble here united in one purpose. We are here because the people have chosen us to represent them. And in the spirit of His Excellency's address, I ask all my colleagues in Parliament both in Government and Opposition to remember that in our democracy, the final power is the power of the people. We are here for one reason only, to serve the people.

We all know that we are facing some very difficult economic trials. The Prime Minister has been honest in acknowledging some miss judgement in policy. Mr Speaker, it's a healthy step in addressing the problems, recognising that we have high debt level, the need to deal without shortage of foreign exchange and take hard and bold step now.

Today in response to His Excellency's address, I want to take a wider view of challenges that we face. Although we have some short term problems to tackle, I fear that there are greater problems looming over us.

Today, I want to encourage every one of us, Opposition and the Government to think seriously about the future. We need to plot a new course, we need to navigate the ship of State through some treacherous waters in the next five to ten years. The future of Papua New Guinea depends on what we do today. But together, assuming that the world around us reflects the similar agenda of peace, prosperity and growth.

The next ten years will be the most important years in our country's history and the Prime Minister is taking the right step in that direction, I do not exaggerate because the truth is that we have survived our entire history largely on the revenues from the extractive industries, gold, copper and natural gas. But those resources will not last, they will be gone sooner than we expect, we must think beyond them.

Mr Speaker, we are a tremendously lucky country. We are bigger than Germany with one tenth of their population, we have resources small countries only dream of. All our people can be rich but we must also be smart enough to see that we are at the edge of the cliff, at the precipice of doom. If we do not prepare today, then our resources will run out and we will be ruined. We must take immediate steps and we must steps to prepare our country to strive into the distant future.

Mr Speaker, the immediate step that we must take is to ensure that the people of our country benefit as they should from the wealth that is flowing from their land. We must increase the benefits that are going to the people, we must increase the level of royalties from the present 2 per cent from mining project to 10 per cent. This is consistent with the international practice. We must do the same with the Special Support Grant and the Tax Credit Scheme.

Mr Speaker, we must ensure that not only the mining provinces benefit but we should establish a trust fund which mining provinces put a side 20 per cent of the revenues they receive and these funds should be used by non-mining provinces to invest in sustainable renewable resources that will generate income for their people far into the future.

In this way, Mr Speaker, we share today's wealth while ensuring financial stability beyond the life of the mine. This commitment to sharing the wealth of the mining should be reciprocal, meaning, it should be reversed but the other mining provinces when other mines take off in other provinces. So in one stroke of a government decision, we have made all provinces in Papua New Guinea become mining provinces.

We need to immediately revise the *Mining Act* of 1992, and the *Oil and Gas Act* of 1998 to return the ownership of the resources in the ground and the sea back to the people.

17/03

The people have owned those resources for almost 40 000 years and they should continue to own them and we have no right to take it away from the people.

So, Mr Speaker, we need to we need to introduce the Principle of Derivation to Mining, Oil and Gas Development.

Every province which such projects are implemented should receive an Annual Derivation Grant of 5 per cent of the value of the resources originating in that province. We also need to implement the *Alotau Accord 2* commitments to increase autonomy for provinces.

Those provinces that demonstrate the capacity to manage their own affairs should be given the power to do so. This Provinces should be given that administrative and financial autonomy. Where provinces show capacity they should be given autonomy over development of both non-renewable and renewable resources.

Mr Speaker, we in New Ireland have already prepared an Organic Law on New Ireland Autonomy as well as a Constitutional Amendment Act and those need to be enacted.

Mr Speaker those are the immediate steps we should take but as I said we face an even more serious challenge that challenge is to transform the economy of Papua New Guinea from a dependent of extractive industries to an economy that is based on renewable resources. We must use the short term revenues we have from gold, copper, gas and oil to build industries that will last forever like sustainable forestry, sustainable fisheries, tourism and manufacturing and we must start now.

That is why APEC may be that leading light in that direction today, if we do not our children will inherit a bleak country and we need to do this as a united team. I am sure every

Member of Parliament has no doubt that these challenges, the very faith of our country are bigger than any regional sectional interest and I am sure that no one will doubt that these challenges to the survival of our Nation are bigger than any petty political interests.

Mr Speaker, if we work and pull together the service of our country then our children and our children's children into the far future will celebrate us as saviours of Papua New Guinea but if we fail to work together, if we continue to play partisan politics, continue the name calling, shouting and criticisms our descendants will despise us. We will be remembered with shame as a generation so consumed in playing games for political and personal gains and that we failed to act together to save our country.

So, today, I say that all of us in this Chamber need to put aside our differences and I call on all the representatives for the people here today assembled to come together because to meet the challenges we are facing we do not need Engans or Tolais or Mekeos but we need Papua New Guineans.

I am the last man standing from the House of Assembly of 1968, nearly 50 years ago now and I say to all of you here today, that I have never known a time when our country was in greater peril.

18/03

I have never known a time when there was a greater need for co-operation for collective action on the part of all the leaders of this country. Just remember, we are not elected to boss our people but we are elected to represent our people in the Provincial Assemblies and in the National Parliament as servants of the people and not their masters.

We all need to face our people before we are PNC or NA or PPP or PANGU we are patriots. And as patriots the sons and daughters must join in common cause.

I hope that the presentation by His Excellency the Governor-General outlining the recovery plans of the O'Neill Government can serve as a beacon around which we can all rely. The higher the ideal the shining principle which His Excellency represents should be our inspiration to work together for the best interest of our country our people now and into the future.

Mr Speaker, I thank His Excellency the Governor-General for his guidance and common sense approach. His address as I hope has inspired us to take our responsibilities to our country and our people more seriously.

I thank His Excellency for reminding me and I hope all honourable Members that we are the custodians of the future of Papua New Guinea. If we fail the nation fails. If we succeed not only we succeed now but the future generation of Papua New Guineans succeed as well. So the choice is ours. I hope you will join me in saying that God will bless us and this Parliament and this Country.

Debate (on motion by **Mr James Marape**) adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

Parliament adjourned at 12.15 p.m..