

EIGHTH DAY

Friday 16 February 2018

DRAFT HANSARD

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
CORRECTIONS TO DAILY DRAFT HANSARD

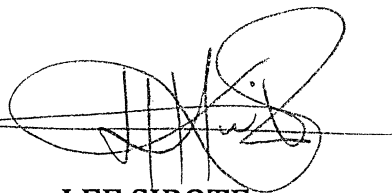
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Corrections maybe marked on a photocopy of the Daily Draft Hansard and lodged at the Office of the Principal Parliamentary Reporter, A1 - 23 (next to the Security Control Room).

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.

LEE SIROTE

Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

EIGHT DAY

Friday 16 February 2018

The Speaker (**Mr Job Pomat**) took the Chair at 10.05 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 Deputy Speaker took the Chair at 10.30 a.m, and invited the Member for Samarai-Murua, **Honourable Isi Henry Leonard**, to say Prayers:

‘Our Heavenly Father, mipela exaltim nem bilong yu na givim yu preis na honor bikos yu reign supreme insait long dispela kantri na insait long dispela Palamen.

Mipela tenkim yu bikos ol pipel bilong yu i makim mipela long kam na representim ol insait long dispela Haus.

This morning mipela askim yu that yu blesim mipela wanwan as mipela go insait long order na business bilong dispela sitting this morning.

Mipela askim yu long go pas na yu directim mipela na givim mipela gutpela tingting na strong that wanem samting mipela discussim na reisim long dispela Floor bilong Haus, mighty God, em bai helpim ol pipel bilong yu na at the same time exaltim nem bilong yu.

This morning mipela pray long Prime Minister bilong mipela that yu blesim em na helpim em as em dischargim duty bilong yu na bilong em insait long dispela kantri long lidim dispela wonderful nation long bihanim gutpela pasin na lo bilong yu. Mipela askim gen that yu blesim tu husait man i go pas long dispela Chair this morning, may yu helpim em long gaidim na directim dispela miting so that gutpela samting bai kam aut long dispela miting. And eventually mighty God, nem bilong yu tu bai go antap na pipel bilong yu tu bai bless.

Mipela askim Holi Spirit bilong yu long guidim na directim mipela as mipela go insait long dispela discussion insait long dispela miting today, Amen.’

QUESTIONS

Signing of MOA for Jacksons International Airport

Dr ALLAN MARAT – Thankyou Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to direct my questions to the Prime Minister and I want the Minister for Civil Aviation to take note.

Mr Deputy Speaker, on 19 November, 2014 an MOA was signed between the Government and the Tubara- Indiabana Land Group, in relation to a piece of land at Jacksons International Airport.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the MOA expired on 19 of November, 2017. In that MOA the Government was supposed to have paid the landowners a sum of K115 million within three years, the landowners own portion 1229 and is approximately 651 hectares.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there was a letter written recently on 26 January, 2018 in the most strongest terms possible expressing the landowners bitter disappointment, frustration and anger at the failure by the National Airport Corporation in not honouring its commitments under the MOA.

(1) When exactly will the Prime Minister and the Civil Aviation Minister honour this commitment under the MOA?

According to the MOA the landowners were supposed to participate in small business activities which have never been honoured to date.

(2) When will the Prime Minister and the Civil Aviation Minister honour that commitment to the landowners?

02/08

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Port Moresby Jackson's International Airport has been there for more than half a century, yet the National Government has not made a serious effort to settle the traditional landowner's grievances in any satisfactory manner.

According to the letter that was written last month, the traditional landowners are ready to do anything.

(3) What will the Government do if the landowners take these matters into their own hands as they have threatened in last month's letter to the Government?

Mr PETER O'NEILL – Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank the Member for Rabaul for his question. I am not aware of the MOU that the Member is referring to and it has certainly not been brought to the attention of Cabinet or NEC. This is quite a large sum of money in K115 million. It is not small money where agencies of Government can go in and sign MOU's and

MOA's at will. Nobody is authorised to make commitments on behalf of the Government for such amounts of money. It has to be cleared properly at Treasury and the Attorney General's Office for Cabinet to endorse and we can try our very best to honour.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I will get the Minister for Civil Aviation and his Department to look into this MOA that the Member is referring to.

Let me say this, it is becoming a norm that lands, that was acquired by Government some 50-60 years ago and we note that there are more claims coming in for compensation of payment.

Certainly, those lands were acquired at a fair value at that time and after many years, with some improvements on the land, the landowners come back and ask for more money. There has got to be some balance somewhere. Whilst trying to make sure that traditional landowners get a fair value they have to be also reasonable.

These services are not for the benefit of one person but for the whole country. It is infrastructure that will serve our people for many generations. Therefore a fair value is something they need to be also reasonable about.

Mr Deputy Speaker, these continuous threats of taking matters into their own hands must not be imagined. I urge that common sense should prevail. Once one ventures into these kinds of threats and blackmailing it is deemed to take the law into their own hands. Which means the full force of the government and the law will take its own course.

Mr Deputy Speaker, let us try and avoid such confrontations and work together. We will look into the MOA and make sure that if it's not properly done we will sit down with the landowners and have a good look at it.

I will direct the Minister for Civil Aviation to have a good look at it.

Mr NAKIKUS KONGA – Mr Deputy Speaker, I direct my questions to the Minister for Education and ask the Prime Minister to take note.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in relation to the Minister's press release titled 'Schools warned not to charge any other form of fees as a condition of enrolment', in our daily newspaper, *Post Courier* dated 9 February, 2018.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in East New Britain from elementary to primary, high schools, secondary schools and TVET centres the Provincial Executive Council in September last year approved project fees upper limits for all our provincial institutions.

These upper limits are being approved by the PEC in accordance with the *East New Britain Provincial Education Act 1998, Section 58, clause 1, 2 and 3*. The Act empowers the PEC to approve minimum fee which are seen to be affordable by parents.

These project fees are being charged to sustain the operations of the schools in the province in new infrastructure development, infrastructure maintenance and administrative costs.

We continue to receive declining TFF funding in all the levels of education in the province since 2014 up to last year, 2017. The national government still owes a total of K11 million for schools in my province.

Mr Deputy Speaker, when will the government pay this outstanding K11 million in TFF to the schools in my province?

To solve these discrepancies in TFF in the province, can the TFF funds be paid to a provincial trust account for transparency, accountability and efficiency?

Currently all schools throughout the country are not acquitting their TFF funds. There are not enough monitoring policies by the government to ensure that these funds are used efficiently and effectively.

The East New Britain Provincial Government is prepared to supervise and monitor the use of TFFE funds if channelled to our provincial trust account. All schools are now having school learning improvement plans which have been endorsed and approved by the DDA board of each districts.

Schools census forms. All schools are to submit all their schools statistics to the provincial education office for correct disbursement of TFF funds.

Acquittals of TFF funds. All schools are to submit their acquittals to the education office after spending their TFF funds.

Auditing. The provincial auditors will check and ensure that the funds are being used according to the acquittals.

Mr NICK KUMAN – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker and thank you to the Governor of East New Britain for the series of questions relating to TFF.

Yes, I am fully aware of your provincial education board decision under the decentralised functions that we have given to all the provinces right throughout the country to make certain determinations in so far as the administration of schools is concerned.

In so doing, the decision by the East New Britain Provincial Education Board was made known to me in the later part of last year.

I want to inform your provincial government and all the provincial governments who are agencies of the Education Department throughout the country that as part of the decentralisation of the funds to the sub-national level the Department of Education still has oversighting powers through the executive government to make decisions and it is within the National Education Laws that you have to abide by those decisions.

In 2015 the NEC made a deliberate decision to put a moratorium on all projects fees and any other forms of fees to be collected by the schools if they are part of the TFF programme.

04/08

Since 2012 the Government has paid the school fees for all our children in this country and I expect all the schools in the country to conform to the decision of the NEC and that moratorium continue to exist today. Unless your school decides otherwise, my announcement to the country is the position of the Cabinet and will remain that way so long as we continue to honour the Government's commitment in paying the school fees. It is not fair to the parents and it is not fair to the students.

The alarming part that we experienced in the last couple of years including this year, is that project fees or any other forms of fees are used as a condition in which you enrol your students into our education institutions throughout the country. That should not have happened. So long as your school is a recipient of TFF, we expect you to allow your students to enter those schools without any condition whatsoever. I am not going to deny the fact that the parents have a responsibility. If your government sees fit that a school wants not do a project like a classroom or teachers houses in your respective schools, they must submit to the provincial education board and seek approval and the parents can contribute to the education of our children in this country.

For the second question regarding the K11 million, I am not aware. As far as the Government is concerned, since 2012 up until last year, every single fund intended for TFF are all retired right throughout the schools, meaning that when we retire the Budget at the end of every fiscal year, we also retire the TFF.

All schools are paid what is due, the Department of Education does not keep the money at Waigani. It comes from Treasury with the warrant, it goes to Finance, then Finance writes the cheque and it goes to Central Bank, based on the enrolments that we receive right throughout the country. It is then prepared and sent straight to the commercial bank and they remit the required amount of money straight into the school accounts. I don't know where the

Governor got his facts from because I do know that the money doesn't go to the provincial government and not to the DDA, it goes directly to the schools.

On the other point, yes, I do that TFF must be rolled out to the provinces or to the districts. I will go to the Cabinet and we will make a decision and I will announce that decision in the April Meeting so that you take responsibility of any issues with regards to TFF. I can only make sure that the TFF money is warranted and goes to the province and I also agree that there will be an oversight body in the province to ensure that those TFF moneys must go to the schools. No administration fee must be held back and no other forms of fees must be held back at the provincial level or DDA level. Every amount of money that needs to go to the school must go to the school. Those money are intend to educate our young people in this country. I will make sure that TFF funds will be sent to the provinces, whether it will be down to the DDA or to the provinces. One thing I want to assure you is this, by doing that, I want to see greater oversight responsibility to see that those money will go down. You will see that some responsibility within the provinces will be removed and given back to the national level to make sure that the visibility is clear so that money for the schools must go to the schools.

Finally, I totally agree with the last question, that is why we decentralised those funds into the provincial level to ensure that you manage the schools in the province. We have so many schools right throughout the country and so many layers of bureaucrats from the provincial level to the district level down to the local level.

05/08

We all have to take responsibility, including the schools themselves. They must make sure that moneys received for the schools must be accounted for. You must acquit those moneys. It is not free money that goes to the school where you can write a cheque and go to the tucker-shop and do whatever you want to do. These are intended to educate our young people in this country.

Take some responsibility; when the TFF is rolled out to the provinces, I expect some good leadership at all levels of government.

Mr Speaker, I think, this is a really good question and I want to make sure, we work together. I want to ensure that there is enough money in the schools. If the TFF is slow, we as leaders must take the responsibility and look after the schools in our electorates.

Supplementary Question
Conduct Audits on TFF Funds

Mr ALLAN BIRD – My supplementary question to the Minister is in relation to the discussion today on TFF and how it is managed.

- (1) In terms of the oversight that my good Minister just mentioned, are there any actual audits conducted on the TFF?
- (2) If not, who is responsible for doing that?

Officers from Department of Education and the Teaching Services Commission were flown over to East Sepik to investigate similar issues in my province.

Mr Speaker, based on your officials who are investigating in my province, the TFF cheques are remitted directly to the schools. I have 400 schools in my province but as far as I know there is no accountability. But the Minister just stated that he will take the responsibility back to Port Moresby where he will have accountability mechanism in place in Port Moresby.

Mr Speaker, that is the arrangement right now but it is not working. Thank you.

Mr NICK KUMAN – Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Governor of East Sepik. We had some problems before the school started but your teachers are back now. The teachers in your province need to take responsibility and manage the affairs of education in your province.

In relation to audits, we have reflecting system in our process. The reflecting system did inform us that accounts, for instance in Karamui where the transactions were done in Goroka, we know that school is a suspect school.

When we know there is a problem, we send officers to go and check their books but it is public money and we expect all schools to take responsibility by acquitting the money that they received for the previous year.

Mr Speaker, they must acquit back to the department. We have been saying this every year, however, the provincial governments are not taking responsibility so you will note that there are TFF Coordinators in each provinces. They are there to check every school. If the management of the school account is not consistent with what we thought it should be, then the TFF coordinators are sent to that particular school to check the books.

It will be good if the Governor makes sure that the headmasters and the principal of the school must be accountable for the moneys they receive. I think that is the best way to do it. We must make sure that we have at least 22 new TFF officers, who were tasked two years ago, are now in the province to do the job.

Mr MANASE MAKIBA – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I direct my series of questions to the Minister for Works and Implementation.

06/08

Mr Speaker, my questions relates to certain important roads in my district, which are also beneficial to some of the neighbouring provinces. But before I start let me congratulate the honourable Minister for a fantastic job he is doing in addressing road issues across the nation, particularly his no-nonsense and direct approach to these issues.

My first question relates to the road from Magarima to Kandep. This section of the road is an existing one and it was constructed some years back and over the years it has deteriorated because no maintenance work was done on it. This road is the only connection from Hela to Enga Province.

The Provincial Government has made some commitment to fully upgrade the road in the passing of its budget. My district also allocated some funds as well for the maintenance of this road.

We believe that this section of the road is very important for the two provinces because the Pogera Gold mine has sustained our country for more than two decades.

And it's only fair that this road be fully upgraded and sealed for the benefit of both provinces. We would like the National Government to give serious consideration and allocate some counterpart funding for this road.

(1) Do you have any plans to fully upgrade and seal this road?

My second question is in relation to Magarima to Mendi road, this section of the road is currently being upgraded and it's considered as the shortest route. I have travelled this part of the road and many people are currently using this road because the Highlands Highway from Mendi to Tari is not in a good condition.

When you drive on this road it takes only hour from Mendi to Tari and this road also connects your people with my people.

(2) Does the Department of Works and Implementation have any plans to fully upgrade and seal this road?

My third question relations to the Highlands Highway starting from Mendi to Kapiago. It seems to me that the Highlands Highway stops only at Mount Hagen, and that could be the reason why this section of the highway hasn't been upgraded.

We understand that most of the natural resources such as oil, gas and gold have been sustaining this country were from the provinces of Southern Highlands, Enga and Hela. But we fail to understand why this road has not been upgraded for many years.

(3) Does the Department of Works and Implementation has any plans to seal this section of the Highlands Highway?

My fourth question is in relation to Kutubu to Poroma road sealing. This section of the road is located within the Kutubu project area and it should have been sealed a long time ago because Kutubu has been sustaining this country for many years and we fail to understand why this section of the road has not been sealed.

I am concerned with this road because my people from the Moran area and parts of Herwine and Fasu use this road.

(4) Does the Department of Works and Implementation have any plans to seal this section of the road?

The fifth question is in relation to the road from Tari to Kutubu. This section of the road connects the Moran projects and the Hides and it follows the LNG pipeline, and given the two important projects within those areas, the LNG project and the Moran projects which are two important projects in those areas, these roads should have been given priority but that has not happened.

07/08

I believe the Provincial Government has given serious commitment to upgrade this section of the road.

(5) Does the Department have any plans to seriously look into these roads?

The last question is about the roads from Bosavi to Kutubu and Komo. Bosavi is the last frontier in this country not linked by road. We have about 14 ward councils where part of it is in Southern Highlands and part of it is in Hela Province. Bosavi may be small as it is but it has placed Papua New Guinea on the world map. Recently in 2009, expert scientists around the world have gone into that place and discovered about 80 different animal species which never discovered before including giant rodent or rat, frogs and many other specials.. Many world scientists now have interest in that place.

Very important discoveries were found in a dormant volcanic crater which erupted more than 200 000 years ago. The Department of Environment and Conservation can also take note of this because this is an important area that needs to be conserved and the roads need to

be linked to the people of this district. I think my district has to link that part of that district with the main district because the area has some national significance.

(5) I asked whether your Government has any serious commitments to assist the District and the Province to connect this part of the district with the rest of the provinces?

Mr MICHAEL NALI – I would like to thank the Member for Komo-Magarima for asking those good questions relating to infrastructure along the borders of Enga to Hela, Hela to Southern Highlands, and noting some of the districts and sub-districts that played some major roles for the benefit of the country as a whole.

Mr Speaker, to answer the questions that the honourable Member has asked, those roads have people living on them; it is not just open jungle. I have travelled to many of these places.

The road from Magarima to Kandep has connected two districts and two provinces as well; Hela and Enga. This road also benefits the travelling public coming and going to Mendi town.

Mr Speaker, the Department of Works is aware of this road situation and the Member for Kandep has put a lot of emphasis on this road because this road also goes through his electorate. In order to cross from Magarima side to Kandep, you have to drive across the popular Kandep swamp. When it rains, it's very difficult so the Member for Kandep is also talking to us, the district and his Provincial Government to look at ways to put up a floating bridge which we are already talking about.

Yes, we are aware of this very important road but, unfortunately, likewise in all parts of Papua New Guinea, every Member here has concerns to build roads in their areas also. But in this case, the department is aware and we are talking about this important road at the moment.

When you asked this very important question, it will be good for these three provinces, Enga, Hela and Southern Highlands with you all the Members of the districts and myself as the Minister for Works

08/08

We have to sit down and discuss on how best we can combine our limited resources to construct this road.

Mr Deputy Speaker we are fortunate enough because we have this opportunity which we can get assistance from Tax Credit Scheme from Pogera and likewise from Hela and Southern Highland.

Mr Speaker, it's good that he asked this question and as we all know both of us are landowners of oil and gas but our living standard has not improved at all.

To answer your first question, yes, we are aware of the roads from Magarima to Kandep. And from Margarima to Lai is an important section of the road and also it's a short cut road to Hiri Turn-Off. This section of the road has already gone into construction by Hipwence Construction Company. And I actually drove through this section of the road and saw that major road construction has been done by bulldozing big mountains and virgin forest. Right now as we speak, our people are using this road as their short-cut road from Hela to Mendi. In the 2018 National Budget, K8 million has been allocated and it will be used to do some work on it. And we can also ask ExxonMobil and Oil Search to help through the Tax Credit Scheme to construct this section of the road. As for the Department of Works I really cannot promise to allocate some funds but we will surely consider it as well.

In relation to Highlands Highway, it starts from Lae all the way to Mount Hagen and from Mount Hagen to Togoba junction. The other road leads to Enga and Pogera and the other to Mendi, Ialibu-Pangia, and Kagua-Erave and all the way to Nipa-Kutubu, Tari-Pori and further to Kopiago and, therefore, Highlands Highway doesn't stop at Mount Hagen. And under the ADB program, tenders will be open towards the end of this month for maintenance and rehabilitation to start. Our road conditions starting from Togoba turn-off all the way to Wara Kagul is in good condition because maintenance work was done three years ago. But the section from Wara Kagul to Wallume has deteriorated and it's on tender for maintenance work. The tender notice is out and so contracts should be awarded for work to commence and it will continue to Nipa. But the road condition from Nipa to Tari is worse and it's at a bad stage and even roads in other provinces as well.

And so when I say we all face the same problem, the Opposition Members do not agree with that. So what does that mean? Are their roads in good condition? No, we all have the same problem. It doesn't mean that you come from a rich province with oil and gas and your road conditions are better.

09/08

Mr Deputy Speaker, we are talking to Oil Search and ExxonMobil to bring forth the programs under the tax credit scheme so that we can upgrade the Hela roads and people can use them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Oil and Gas is found in Kutubu and as we speak the road in Kutubu from Poroma to Kutubu still remains the way it was when the project started. There has not

been any development on that and we would love to upgrade and seal that section of the road by way of saying thank you to our people in Kutubu. But as I speak I must say that Kutubu has not been forgotten and we appreciate the amount of contribution Kutubu has given to the country. But like it is everywhere in this country, we are under only one money plan and we are all aware of the availability of cash and as soon as cash flow improves and all our deals fall through with our developing partners, hopefully, we can upgrade that part of the road from Poroma-Kutubu.

Mr Deputy Speaker in regards to the last question on Mt Bosavi, from Kutubu to Mt Bosavi, I am aware that the Southern Highlands Provincial Government has allocated some money to construct a road to Mt Bosavi. There is no road access from Kutubu to Mt Bosavi and they have been living that way since pre independence. The only access is through airstrips and MAF Plants go in like once or twice a week.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in concluding, all the answers I must say here that the Department of Works has not forgotten all the districts and provinces and road networks throughout the country that we have people who care for all of us, our biggest problem is geography.

we are scattered all over the country and we not like Australia, or New Zealand or Canada where the Government owns all the land and builds accommodation and their Governments are able to meet their needs, own the land.

It is a very tough and challenging task and I share the same sentiments as the Member has and I assure the Member that the Works Department will do its very best with whatever resources that is available and if there is any opportunity arising I will inform the good Member.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER – EXTENDED TIME FOR QUESTIONS

Motion (by Mr John Simon) – put

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the time for questions without notice this day be extended by 15 minutes.

There being no absolute majority, motion not carried.

10/08

Mr JOHN SIMON – Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I won't be like some of the Members, I'll go straight to the point.

Mr Deputy Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Health. Mr Deputy Speaker, public outcry by many citizens of this country in relation to many deaths occurring in the private hospitals in Papua New Guinea, especially PIH. More recently the death of a prominent Papua New Guinean international Rugby League player, late Kato Otio leave many unanswered questions. Many prominent Papua New Guineans have also died in that hospital.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I had my own father also passing away at a private hospital. I admitted him at one of the private hospitals, paid the many fees that they required and the doctor that was going to attend to him was attending to other patients at the same time. It was as if the doctors were consulting in two or three different hospitals at the same time. I don't know why private hospitals were set up when they don't have their own doctors attending to that particular hospital only.

I also had an instance where one of my in-laws, a prominent public servant in East Sepik pass away at the Port Moresby General Hospital, this is a public hospital. After being admitted to Gerehu Hospital he lied on the bed for more than 24 hours so I had to go there and plead to them but they said we are not going to listen to you, you listen to us. Eventually he got admitted to Port Moresby General Hospital where he lied at the main outpatient and when I went there the next day he had not being attended to by the doctors there.

There were trainee doctors attending to him and I asked the question, why were the doctors not attending to him? He answered, I am watching them. I am giving them the opportunity to train. You can't train on human lives.

Having said that, we understand that on the Late Kato Otio's case an investigation was conducted to find out the cause of death of the athlete but there is a total silence and ignorance of public complaints regarding irregularities at PIH by the Medical Board of Papua New Guinea. And this brings up a lot of questions.

We also understand that the Medical Board of PNG is the regulatory body in the country and most of my questions are based on that, my questions are:

(1) Can the Minister confirm or deny if there are any associations by the Medical Board of PNG, including the Chairman, with PIH?

(2) Can the Minister confirm or deny that the appointment of the current Chairman of the Medical Board of PNG was not a collective decision of the members of the entire board but he was appointed after he was hand-picked and recommended to the former Minister by a former chairman who is also associated with PIH?

(3) Can the Minister also confirm or deny that such recommendations on appointments was done to protect PIH?

(4) Can the Minister confirm that the Chairman of the Medical Board of Papua New Guinea does more consulting jobs at PIH as a consultant than Port Moresby General Hospital?

(5) Can the Minister also confirm that the Medical Registration Act requires that the Registrar of the Medical Board maintain a register of the registered practitioners and also have the register gazetted and published annually to that the public may know which doctors they may go to seek medical attention, especially the private doctors? We have situations where many private doctors are consulting to so many private hospitals.

The behaviour of the board in these decisions is very questionable in both the private hospitals and the private hospitals.

(6) Mr Deputy Speaker, if these questions are true, can the board be investigated by the Minister setting up an inquiry?

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Dr PUKA TEMU – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker and I thank the Member for Maprik for his series of questions regarding some of the concerns that he himself is raising now on the Floor of Parliament and others which he alleged that the public has been raising.

11/08

The assurance that I can give this parliament in answering the honourable Member is that the Medical Standards Board ensures that all practitioners that come to our country whether they be employed by private companies, private hospitals or the public system, are expected to be registered by the Medical Standards Board. And so the medical board ensures that anybody that comes to us meets the qualifications and therefore I can assure the honourable House and our nation that that registration process is guarded very well.

Lately, there were some instances which I was made aware of where, some practitioners going to private organisations or NGO's are not going through the proper registration process. So I have instructed the Medical Standards Board that anybody who does not comply with the registration law that the board is administering, they should not be registered and of late you may have heard that a certain organisation with doctors from Australia had been given notice because they have not been complying. I can assure the honourable House that on the main, the board is doing a very good job.

Secondly, with regard to the specific allegations, inbuilt in any public or private hospital is a quality assurance programme called death audit. These are part of the quality assurance that practitioners normally would do. So every facility, especially the big hospitals, if the management is very strong, they have to make sure that every death goes through a death audit process because then that can highlight the weakness and management and care of the patient. I am assured that PIH for example goes through that process.

On the specific issue of our esteemed young rugby league champion, the post mortem has been done and there is a process of consultation between the relatives because some of these are confidential information that we cannot disclose. The issue with regard to that rugby player was that after that issue on the fourth day, he ended up at Gerehu Hospital. Sometime lapsed before he was brought to PIH and that period that lapsed is very critical because five minutes of being unconscious or not breathing is trouble. For five minutes the patient could not breathe and the transit from Gerehu Hospital to PIH, it took a long time for the late rugby player to arrive. Although they managed to resuscitate him, his organs failed. The organ failure resulted from the five minute failure to resuscitate him earlier on and not much could be done. I am awaiting the post mortem report because some public complaints have been coming and hopefully with concurrence from the relatives we can disclose the post mortem report.

For the issues of the Medical Standards Board, the current Chairman of the Board is one of our public health specialist that practices in PMGH, Dr Liko Theo. He is an urologist, a surgeon and he is the only doctor available in the country so he spends a lot of time with a lot of patients in PMGH. With the doctor's industrial awards, they are allowed to do some private practice in other hospitals outside either PIH or private medical setups that Port Moresby has. They are allowed to do that. But, I can assure you that the chairman is a real professional. He is level headed I have met with the board three times since my appointment as the Minister and I can assure the honourable House, the people and the honourable Member that we have a very good board Chairman right now. As for the transition from Professor Mathias Sapuri who was at PIH to Dr Liko, those are issues that the Board deals with and he was appointed before I came in. However, I can look at those issues because the Member has raised them.

I want to assure the House that the current Papua New Guinea Medical Board chairman is a very good chairman. Right now he has not allowed YWAM ship to leave because of the issues of registering the volunteers in YWAM and that is just how strict he is. And I have been talking to him and other political leaders have asked me to fast track it, but the chairman is adamant that they comply with the law.

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In terms of the politics of this appointment and his linkage with the Pacific International Hospital, I cannot say that is true. I believe he was appointed on merit and I could not ask for a better medical board chairman.

With regards to the *Medical Registration Act*, Mr Deputy Speaker, I hope that in the April sitting of Parliament with the clearance from the State Solicitor, I will be able to bring the fully amended *Medical Registration Act*, as one of my hundred days commitment which is well overdue. Because in PNG today, there are many practitioners coming in.

Mines are inviting their own doctors to look after them and they need to be registered. A completely new medical dynamic is approaching as well as issues relating to medical defence.

People are now taking doctors to Court as in America like never before. So we have to make sure that new medical registration bill that we have worked on is now finally vetted by myself and it is on my desk at the moment. We have to make sure that it aligns very well with the 21st century medical practise both private and public so that I can bring it to the Floor of Parliament. I can assure the honourable leader that it's being worked on.

I think the Pacific International Hospital is here at the right time. Many of our citizens make full use of a private hospital that has some international services for example; many of you with heart attack will be going to Singapore, Manila and Australia for a coronary artery bypass surgery – big opening in the chest and many hours of operation. But we can do it here at the Pacific International Hospital at much reduced costs.

The renal dialysis is a very expensive exercise – the most expensive service in the world and PIH has it. Unfortunately, our problem is, we are yet to develop a health insurance law. So everybody is paying out of pocket which is very risky.

Mr Deputy Speaker, some of you have experienced your relatives who have had the dialysis and one cycle is about three to five thousand kina. We will be taking that service to Port Moresby General Hospital. There is an NGO group that has established a kidney dialysis foundation which I will be opening on March 8 which is the World Kidney Day. The dialysis services can be accessible.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there will be many other specialist services. They are already designing a major cancer facility. They also have the ability to recruit experts in Cancer treatment. For example, the radiation therapy – we have already signed up a contract with one of the specialist. So the radiation gynaecologist will now be serving our Lae unit. We will be upgrading that as well.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as per one of my policy directives, we need to increase the space for a private health sector to expand because at the moment it is at two per cent. So the government is carrying all the health services for everybody including the private citizens – those working in the private companies.

In many countries, private sector provides close to 30 per cent of health services but it is at 2 per cent here in PNG.

So in response to these very important questions, I am now inviting those who want to establish private health services in Papua New Guinea, and I will create a policy matrix in order of provide incentives to them.

They can bring in their investment and if they are bringing in expensive equipment I am looking at bringing in depreciation tax so that they can spend it but the government can participate through the depreciation tax system that can be managed through IRC.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I defend PIH because it is bringing in alternatives but the challenge is, I have to work hard to bring in an insurance policy to cover our citizens.

13/08

I am already looking at those who are employed, like our public servants or the private sector, I will be asking them for a health cover so that there can be deductions going through to what I will call a national health fund. When we create a national health fund then we can remove the risk from the patient.

I support the work of Pacific International Hospital. They are here at the right time but I can assure the honourable Member that I will make sure that a death audit is undertaken on a regular basis and I will instruct the Medical Board to oversee that.

ANSWERS TO PREVIOUS QUESTIONS

Mr PATRICK BASSA (Kabwum – Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources) – I ask leave of the Chair to answer questions raised by the Governor for East Sepik in the previous sitting.

Leave granted.

Mr PATRICK BASSA – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, prior to proceeding with answers to the questions raised by the Governor of East Sepik regarding the observer program which is a big concern to many citizens whose relatives are observers on our vessels on the ocean.

I wish to thank the people of Kabwum for electing me to this Parliament. It is my first time as a Member and since I came here there has not been any disputes. Nobody is challenging my election in court unlike many of you. I also wish to thank the Prime Minister for selecting me to occupy this chair as Minister for Fisheries.

I wish to provide the response to the questions raised to the Prime Minister by the Governor of East Sepik who alluded to the number of fisheries observers missing at sea and what the government is doing to address this issue.

I think it is appropriate that as the Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources I should address the concerns raised by the good Governor of East Sepik.

Mr Speaker, it is important that this honourable House and the people of our great nation or country, PNG, are informed about the purpose and functions of the Fisheries Observer Programme and the training that observers undertake together with the safeguards that NFA has in place for our observers.

The Papua New Guinea national observer programme was first established in 1996 and it is legally mandated under the *Fisheries (Management) Act 1998* as amended.

As well as being a required programme for the fisheries monitoring in our region, the observer programme is one of the five units under the monitoring, compliance and surveillance division of PNG National Fisheries Authority.

Today we have a total number of 272 fisheries observers of which one is a female. Our national observer programme is one of the largest in the world.

The main purpose of having an observer programme is to collect and report on all the reliable and accurate information on size, management and compliance purposes.

All observers have to undergo and pass prerequisite training in order for them to be considered and appointed by the Managing Director of NFA to perform these responsibilities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the safety, welfare and the insurance of fisheries observers are covered under *Section 53* of the *Fisheries (Management) Act 1998* as they perform all their mandated functions while on duty on board any fishing vessel.

Before an observer is placed on board any fishing vessel, a notice is given to the fishing vessel by NFA Managing Director to the observer programme for an observer to be placed on their fishing vessel.

Whilst an observer is on board a fishing vessel and is found to be intimidated, harassed, prevented or obstructed to perform all his duties, he is covered under *Section 55* of the *Fisheries (Management) Act 1998*.

To sum this up the provisions under the *Fisheries (Management) Act 1998* provides the mandated for their protection and safety and that's where the observer's safety as well as duties are bound to be not adhered to the appropriate sanctions under the fisheries laws are applied including, also, sanctions under the *Criminal Code* if warranted.

Mr Speaker, the Fisheries Observer Programme is managed by a team of dedicated officers based in Port Moresby, headed by a programme manager, his assistants and other five coordinators as well as support from core port coordinators.

The main function of the manager and his team of officers is to manage the welfare of all the observers, their allowances, trip allocations, training of observers, including other tasks based on the programme's standard operating procedure guidelines.

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Training of our fisheries officers is one of the best in the region and meets international standards. It is delivered at our National Fisheries College in Kavieng for full length of eleven weeks unlike all other programs in this region which runs for only 5 weeks.

Our fisheries observer training has two components.

(1) Basic Seamanship. This training captures training in basic navigation, self-floating, and survival at sea, firefighting, rescue operation, basic first aid, rope work, basic food handling techniques and radio communication. (2) To do with their work.

Mr Speaker, in terms of the observers safety, the NFA program has equipped all fisheries observers with a personal life saving beacon, personal floating devise or life jacket and in reach to send message to the fisheries headquarters management system operated by NFA on a real time basis with all the officers being connected to this network 24 hours, seven days a week to receive alert messages with a tablet attached with this inbuilt devise. Observers are now monitored through the fisheries monitoring system once they are deployed out at sea.

Mr Speaker, the issue of the observer safety is not only of concern to the PNG Government and NFA. This is also a regional issue and is addressed by the Western Central Pacific Fisheries Commission through the commission measurement measured of 2016/03.

Some key aspects of the management measures are as follows;

(1) In the event that an observer dies, is missing or presumed fallen overboard the state to which the fishing vessel is pledged shall ensure that the fishing vessel is immediately ceased of all its operations,

(2) Immediately commence search and rescue if the observer is missing or presumed fallen over board and search for at least 72 hours, unless the observer is found sooner or unless instructed by the flag state to dis continue searching.

(3) Immediately alert other vessels in the vicinity by using all available means of communication,

(4) Cooperate fully in any search and rescue operation fishing vessel or whether or not a search is successful, return the vessel for further investigation in the nearest port as agreed by the flag state and the observer provider. The fishing vessel provide a report to the observer provider or any appropriate authorities on the incident.

In the event that there are reasonable grounds to believe that an observer has been assaulted, intimidated, threatened or harassed, such that their health or safety is endangered and the observer or the observer provider indicate to the state to which a fishing vessel is pledged and they wish for the observer to be removed from the fishing vessel, the state to which the fishing vessel is pledged shall ensure the fishing vessel immediately take action to protect the safety of the observer and mitigate to resolve the situation on board or the fishing vessel notify the flag state or the observer provider of the situation including the location of the observer as soon as possible.

Mr Speaker, as Minister responsible, I have tasked the NFA to continue to upgrade these systems to address all these fisheries observer issues in regard to all the observer safety measures under the requirement of the Commissions regional observer program.

I have also tasked NFA to explore other venues that can be used to monitor observers including issuance of monitoring devices in the form of wristbands or even implants. In addition, I'll be directing the NFA to also consider imposing alcohol ban on the fishing vessels.

Mr Speaker, to this date we have records of only four observers missing, not 18 as indicated yesterday in the media.

Mr Alan Bird- Point of Order! My statement in relation to this particular issue is quite clear. I did say, according to the reports I had, I'm confident of four. I did say that I stand to be corrected on the 18.

On another matter, I just heard all the fanciest laws you can think of, mentioned by the Minister in his statement, which wasn't a personal response.

15/08

And the very fancy law that we just heard about which is very elaborate and exciting still doesn't answer the question.

How do you protect those men and women who are alone right in the middle of the sea hanging on to whatever he or she can hold on to? Do we have a patrol boat out there? Do we have a drone with missiles so we can go and check this ship? No, you have a fancy set of laws that we can sit in the comfort of this Parliament and talk about.

It doesn't answer the question and if you cannot do that you don't come here and cheapen the loss of one of my citizens in this Parliament. If you cannot answer the question than simply shut your mouth and sit down. A life has been lost!

Mr PATRICK BASA – Mr Deputy Speaker, I am trying to answer his question to prove how many people have died so if he can shut up but if he has any queries, I am always available for us to discuss and come up with a solution.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I also lost a family member of mine doing this duty as an observer on the vessel. I won't hide anything regarding the death or program that National Fisheries Authority has in place to curb such issues.

So far from the records kept by National Fisheries Authority, there were four confirmed death on the vessels.

The first one declared missing was on a RD Tuna fishing vessel in 2008. The second one was missing on a Japanese fishing vessel in 2010. The third one declared missing on a Taiwanese's Tuna long-line vessel in 2015, and the fourth one was on a Taiwanese fishing vessel in 2017.

Mr Deputy Speaker, investigations were carried out for each of these incidents; three of these incidents were under investigations by both fisheries and police and was subject to normal coroner's court. After compensation issues were made, only one matter was taken to court, however, it was dismissed for insufficient evidence.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the latest incident was in 2017, and it happened in the waters of Nauru and it was investigated for any foul play by authorities in Nauru. And the NFA noting the seriousness of this issue called the vessel into Rabaul last year for a further inquiry into the incident by our Royal PNG Constabulary.

The inquiry has been concluded and currently this case is before the coroner's court. All these matters are investigated firstly by fisheries investigators and then separately by the police and if foul play is found then it will be treated as a criminal offence under our laws.

I, therefore, call upon all the leaders of this honourable Parliament to refer any matters or allegations relating to the mistreatment or conduct of fisheries observers to my office or NFA.

In conclusion, fisheries observers do a tremendous job of course out on the vessels day in day out to ensure that we have the best information and data to make right decisions containing our fisheries resources.

And to lose an observer for that matter is a tragedy not only to the families and relatives but the organisation and country as a whole.

But, I assure this Parliament that I will work closely with NFA to address this issue of observer safety and welfare in the country and region as well.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

Question proposed –

That grievances be noted.

Mr ELIAS KAPAVORE (Pomio – Minister for Public Service) – Thankyou Mr Deputy Speaker I also want to contribute in the debate this morning.

In the past couple of days, I was in Dubai attending the World Government Summit. It is a global platform dedicated to shaping the future government worldwide.

Each year they submit a set the agenda for next generation and government with focus on how they can harness innovation and technology and dissolve universal challenges facing humanity

It is a knowledge exchange centre at the intersection of government, futurism, technology and innovation.

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Its function has a short leadership platform and networking hub of policy makers, experts, pioneers and in human development.

I will be presenting a full report to NEC later and will present to this Parliament in due course.

Mr Deputy Speaker, for my debate this morning I would like to focus on two things and that is harnessing inclusive ICT or infrastructure and communication and technology services and how we can improve poverty in our country.

Mr Kerenga Kua – Point of Order! Mr Deputy Speaker, can you clarify the procedure here. Are we in grievance debate already or is the Minister reading a Ministerial Statement here. There is no Ministerial Statement here.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Your point of order is out of order. The Minister is starting the debate.

Mr ELIAS KAPAVORE Mr Deputy Speaker, at this juncture let me acknowledge the PNG APEC 2018 Secretariat under the leadership of the Honourable Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea.

The theme, ‘Creating Inclusive Opportunities and Embracing the Digital Future’, is appropriate considering the policy imperatives driving the APEC economies.

While taking into account the diversity of APEC Member countries it is aimed at enabling fumeless flows of trade and investment in the region and the urgent need for inclusive social and economic development.

It is stated that the significance of APEC will greatly contribute to national development goals in accordance with Vision 2050 and other government policy directives.

People may have views and opinions, however the world is going through a rapid technology shift and as a government we must aspire or inspire and orchestrate the change that is needed.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I call on the leading public servants to provide the necessary awareness and support the government as we prepare to host the 2018 APEC.

My statement elaborates on the fundamental need to inclusive social and economic development that will come about as a result of improved physical barriers and that is improving ICT to remote PNG must be taken seriously.

We must connect to reconnect with the bulk of our people in the rural communities. Over 80 percent of our people live in the rural areas where socio- economic indicators are high

and roads and infrastructure has been much talked about. There is an urgent need to address the lack of communication issues in rural PNG.

It is stated that access to ICT infrastructure and services in PNG is amongst the lowest in the world, particularly in the rural or remote areas.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the inclusion of Digicel in 2010 has somewhat improved the communication coverage to many of our rural population. However the operators continue to roll out 2 generation or 2G mobile services and that is basic voice and texting in rural areas rather than 3 G or higher capacity network that offer faster data services.

It is estimated a fixed broadband is still slow. About one percent of the population remains far below the affordability of the average citizens and small business. These are related cost of international connectivity due to capacity constraints.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the concern we can ask as a government is how many people have access to communication?

We need to have a data on the citizens that have 2G connectivity, 3G connectivity and those that are above all of these or those that have none at all. Do we have all this in place or not?

There is an urgent need to reduce the divide between the urban and the rural PNG. We must connect to reconnect with our people. This needs the Public Private Partnership approach to realise our dream as we advance into the digital age.

Mr Deputy Speaker, without communication nothing happens. We cannot underestimate the power of communication. SME, Health, Education and all have access to communication on external and internal communication on appropriate ICT.

There are some wards in my districts or a lot of our districts in the country that have no mobile connectivity even to this date.

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My district headquarter which has a secondary school, rural hospital, BSP rural branch still has 2G connectivity.

Most part of the rural communities still struggle and so surveys must be done to establish the ICT shortfall and come up the public-private partnership approach to aggressively roll-out the ICT infrastructure in our country. And this will probably make a lot of sense to our remote communities through improved accessible ICT.

Mr Deputy Speaker, let me now talk about improving poverty in our country. Poverty today is the number one on the list from the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

In the past we had this millennium development goals 2000 to 2015, PNG and many nations failed to meet their millennium development goals. In 2015, 193 members of United Nations signed to commit themselves to meeting the sustainable development goals 2013, the theme is transforming our world and leaving no one behind. The leaders gathered in New York, and signed this document and PNG aid as well.

What is poverty? Since the publication of human development report in 1997, the United Nations has defined poverty as 'denial of choices and opportunities most basic to human development to live long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a good standard of living.

In economic terms someone who is living below one dollar 90 cent which is about K3 to K4 or who doesn't have this kind of money and can't meet his or her basic needs lives under poverty.

Today as we speak about 22,000 children die every year, due to poverty and that's according to UNICEF's report.

Mr Deputy Speaker, according to world population 2017, PNG is amongst the world's fastest growing economies but 40 percent of the population still live in poverty or don't have the capacity to have one dollar 25 cent in a day.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this is alarming, we have an estimate population of 8.3 million and if we are to use this figure it's about 2.4 million of our people are living in poverty. We really need reliable data but we don't have data to actually support this than we may have to depend on UNDP data supplied.

Now, what is Australia doing about poverty, it has a population of about 24 million and 2.9 or 13.3 percent of people are living in poverty. But they have a very strong Australian Council of Social Services that actually look at this data and provide statistics to the National Government on a timely basis for them to do something.

Mr Deputy Speaker, China has a successful story and they have a population of about 1.3 billion, but they have actually reduced it from 88 percent to 6.5 percent and that's about 81 percent improvement in the last 31 years. They have aimed to improve 10 million population live out of poverty every year and this is what China is doing. And according to Standard Southern Bank, China will replace US as the largest economy in 2020, and it will become the global super power with increasing overseas investments and influence.

Mr Deputy Speaker, one of the notable facts about China is its success story in achieving all the targeted millennium development goals in 2015, despite the fact that it has the largest population and met all the millennium development goals. According to report

China's success in achieving specified MTDGs and performing overall can be attributed to three related factors.

Mr Deputy Speaker, rapid economic expansion coupled with scheduled reforms, development and inclusive orientated government, in particular domestic and social democratic context.

Mr Deputy Speaker, what about PNG today, our current rates from 2010 to 2017, is usually 37 to 40 percent people living in poverty.

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We need the commitment to improving all the poverty data in our country. It is not about resources or lack of resources that make our country rich, it is about commitment, being responsible and being accountable to the resources that we have in making sure that we have appropriate policies and commitment to the policies that we have thus we can improve and change some of these indicators.

Mr JOE SUNGI (Nuku) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I would like to debate on the education system and more importantly focusing on the importance of making sure that our teachers are taken care of.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we are faced by this challenge of taking care of the welfare of our teachers. Education as we know is not reversible. When a child starts education from elementary prep, the child continues schooling until he completes his education in grade 12 and eventually university. But my focus is on the primary level of education because that is where most of the students are right now. And at the same time the foundation for the secondary up to the tertiary starts at the primary level.

The big issue is, throughout successive governments and ministerial appointments with numerous education advisors and various education strategies since independence, we have not improved the way in which we manage our teachers in terms of their postings, resumptions and their leave fares. We seem to wrap up each year with more problems. I am not saying that this government is at fault, I am trying to point out here as a responsible Member of this Parliament that we need to make some change. We need to make some improvement so that next year, come January, our teachers must go on leave without hassle. They should not be lining up at the provincial education office waiting for their leave pay. Their leave fare must be prepared in advance and be ready for pick up so that the teachers can have their holiday on time and be prepared to receive their postings come the New Year. We have had this problem for many

years. Can we make it stop and can the Education Department make some changes and change this routine or system? The Department should come up with a creative and innovative way of solving this problem. This is a chronic problem that affects our education system in this country. We are talking about standards dropping - why? You can have a very good classroom and you can have all the teaching facilities but if you do not have the teacher, you will not get it right.

We talk about big agendas but we forget the very basics of setting up a proper government system for the two most important sectors of our country, health and education. The human development index measures those indicators only. We can build up everything from infrastructure but it boils down to these two indicators. How we perform relative to the world standards in those two sectors. I want to speak more on the education of our children.

As we were recently made aware, the UPNG School of Medicine and Health Science was unable to accept first year students into studying medicine as they did not meet the required standard. They could not pass the mark. It all starts down there. Where it matters most is when they start at the primary level.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like the education system of this country now to concentrate on the welfare of our teachers and their salary too. I have information that our health workers are well looked after. They are paid more than the teachers. The teachers have no choice because the students are already in the classrooms waiting for them. Health workers will have to wait for patients to come. That is the two different situations you must see. When the school year starts, the teacher is expected to be there. Our government's responsibility is to make sure that our teacher's welfare is taken care of. We must now make sure to change the way we look at our public servants and focus more on the welfare of our teachers because the future of our country depends on how well our children are being educated. Who makes the difference?

19/08

Teachers make a difference for our children so let us show some responsibility this year. Can we make sure the teachers get their leave tickets on time and their payments are ready as well so that they can also spend their vacation in their villages? Can we make that change for our teachers to go on break?

They should already know their next posting and when they are posted their travel must be facilitated so that they fill in the resumption form when they are in the classroom and not somewhere else like at the provincial education office.

So can we start with this basic arrangement to ensure the teachers are on site to teach our children?

Mr Deputy Speaker, this has been a continuous issue each year because teachers front up at the education office or to the provincial administrator or the Governor asking for their leave fares. What is the Department of Education and the Teaching Service Commission doing? This is supposed to be a national function. They should look after them and make sure the teachers take their leave and at the same time their posting should be in order.

If you check, the most remote schools in the country, are the ones that are suffering because teachers are not there. Most of the teachers are currently teaching in the urban schools.

However, remote Papua New Guinea have no teachers in their schools. You only have one teacher teaching 3 to 4 grades. You can prove this in your own remote electorates. When you go by LLG, you will find out that the most remote LLG will still struggle for a teacher and none of their students will end up in universities.

I have four LLGs and I know this. One of my electorate had only three students who made it to the university. The front LLGs are the ones closer to the station or the district head quarter and are connected by roads and et cetera.

So my concern during this grievance debate is that, we as a government must look at resolving this problem affecting our teachers because we are responsible for them. In terms of the TFF we are pushing more students into the schools, but at the same time we must address the teacher's issues because they are on the ground to teach our children.

I urge all Members of Parliament to take greater responsibility in taking care of our teachers in our respective electorates and provinces. Let us ensure teachers are ready to teach when our children walk into that classroom.

I would like the Department of Education and the Teaching Service Commission to pay more attention to the teachers' welfare so that their leave fares are on time even to the provincial education office. The posting must be announced early as well as their ticket to the posting destination so that teachers can also organise themselves and be on time to teach on the commencement of the school year. Thank you.

Mr SAM BASIL (Bulolo – Minister for Communication and Information Technology)

– Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I would like to talk a little on communication. I have responded to some questions earlier on participation of district, local level governments and provincial governments including the landowners, who have money to start businesses in the villages.

20/08

I have given instruction to Nicta to create individual geographical location maps for the each district and province to clearly show each Member of Parliament so that if they want to connect their own power and work with Telikom they are welcome.

Yes, Nicta is doing away with 2G, we are encouraging the current operators to migrate away from 2G to 3G and 4G but in the next five years 5G will come into place so Nicta is on standby to make sure that whatever requirement we have to be in par with the international standards they will do it. So, I have shared what the Minister for Public Service has shared and there has been talk about the network system that we Papua New Guinea must go in and we must be on par with the outside world.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I would like to go back on observer were the Minister for Fisheries spoke about. I was engaged with these line in my past life and I was involved with this kind of operation. The Minister mentioned that there are some men or our children that were working on the boat or young people who have gone missing already, with the latest one in 2017.

Mr Speaker, these observers that NFA put on the boat are exposed to many things. The boats that are operating have license conditions which determine what type of species of fish they are allowed to catch and how they operate and tranship, all these law is there.

Mr Speaker, I hear about it and I know it happens. Sometimes the boats anchor out at sea and if they catch a bi-catch, which is catching other fish species that is not in their license condition, sometimes they do transhipment in the middle of the seas. Sometimes they turn the Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) machine which is on the boat and sends a beacon back to NFA Headquarter showing the location of the ship and when the cargo hold is full the boat must return to the nearest port to have a transhipment to the mother ship so that it can be thoroughly monitored by NFA. Sometimes the monitoring device is removed and put on the small vessel and the big boats cross across to our territorial waters if it is a domestic boat and they transfer the fish to the bigger fishing vessel while the small boat will be in our waters sending a false signal to our monitoring station. I know that this act happens a lot.

Mr Speaker, when we put our national observers on board to go and join with different nationalities, if it is Philippines boat than there will be many Filipinos on board, if it is a Taiwan boat than there will be many Taiwanese on board so if there is one Papua New Guinean who is on board he must do his work but he must also think of his safety. Sometimes these transhipment that they conduct, when you look at 1000 metric tonne of tuna we are talking about three to four thousand million kina worth and if they make two that is about almost six

or seven million kinas worth, and when they are doing illegal activities it is a matter of some million dollars against that one NFA official but if it is a patriotic person he will report these matters. I am not saying that it is happening but from my own understanding when people go missing at sea if he comes back to the NFA Headquarters and submits his report these fishing vessels can lose a lot of money, they will be penalised, even their licenses will be stopped and they will lose revenue.

Mr Speaker, I had a chance of meeting three of them during my time of engagement and some of them are very patriotic and they can really stand for what's right, some of them the captain of the ship will make them drunk and give them some US dollars and they participate and are happy.

Mr Speaker, the other thing that we have to address is corruption in the high seas. Corruption in the high seas is when the Captain of the Ship bribes the observers and he does and under report different species, give them women, enjoy the sea and when they come back with extra cash, they don't produce the right reports expected by NFA. This will result in PNG losing so much money in this area.

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Mr Deputy Speaker, regarding the missing observers, they could be patriotic and are dying out at sea so I think their safety is paramount and we must emphasis on wearing safety device. But I suggest there must be two observers provided with computer systems that link with the satellite so that daily activities are reported. If they are holding onto the reports on papers and coming onshore a month later to report is not good enough. If anything happens to them they need computer link with satellite to send reports on a daily bases otherwise this will continue while many of our people will continue to go missing at sea. I agree with the Minister's statement including comments from the Governor of East Sepik where this House must know what is going on at the high seas in the country.

Corruptions at the high seas must also be considered by NFA because many times when observers come and produce very good reports all the time is something we must not take for granted. Who knows if they have been given favours or bribes or being threatened to do that? These can happen because it's out at the sea away from us. This also includes female observers and their safety where some boats do not have female staff on board. Many boats out there at sea have mostly male staff so how can we protect our female officers on such boats? Many boats have karaoke machines for party and drinking on board the ship where the crews always

have fun. So we must consider the safety of our officers on those boats doing our observer programs.

Mr POWES PARKOP (National Capital District) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to talk during this grievance debate. I have three points; two are grievances and one is to thank the Prime Minister and our MSG leaders.

Firstly, I want to take on the issue the Minister for Works spoke on this morning. I understand his problems are everywhere in the country, people want roads to be built which is big challenge for him. Money is also a problem now where the Government is making every effort to provide him with but we have DSIP and PSIP funds so we must also try and help him.

But one issue raised by the Member for Nipa-Kutubu is what we must be concerned about. There are oil and gas companies there while some have mining and forestry as well.

Mr James Marape – Point of Order! Correction, it's not the Member for Nipa-Kutubu but the Member for Laigap-Porgera.

Mr POWES PARKOP- My apologies to the Deputy Speaker and the Member for Komo-Magarima. Oil and gas have been extracted from his district for a long while now and I think we are too lenient; too much concession on these mining and gas. Some are not paying GST here in Port Moresby such as ExxonMobil because we exempted them from the GST. They don't have the responsibilities to go downstream or fulfil our domestic market requirements. We are allowing them to export only. In the case of ExxonMobil, they have pipelines running all the way from Southern Highlands and Hela down where they were small sizes before and we agreed for exports only. But they have expanded to bigger pipes now carrying more gas and oil down to meet domestic markets. But we have not taken them to task to meet the domestic market.

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Mr Deputy Speaker, honourable Members and the public, if you roam the streets of Port Moresby nowadays you will notice that all the streets lights and traffic lights at times go off. And you may think that it's the NCDC people who are not fixing those lights, but no it's because of the inadequate supply of power.

In addition to what the Minister for Works has mentioned regarding the roads and bridges infrastructure in the country, it must be taken care of by those oil, and gas and mining

companies. But we are giving them too much concession and even allowing them to keep their accounts offshore. With this freedom the Prime Minister and Minister for Treasury are having difficulties in trying to deal with the foreign exchange issue.

Mr Deputy Speaker and honourable Members in Cabinet, it's an artificial problem created by us all, not this government, but the previous governments. We gave them too much concessions in allowing them to keep their accounts offshore, probably 50 percent. And now we are faced with shortage of money. Yet we are exporting oil, gas and timber and other natural resources. Where is the money? Why can't the Minister for Works fix all the roads?

Here in Central Province, if you travel to Kairuku-Hiri, Porebada, Papa Lealea or Kouderika their road condition is terrible.

We have to seriously consider this because it's a very big problem. There must be fair agreement put in place for us to benefit more from oil, gold and gas mining companies instead of giving too many concessions. And yet we are finding it very hard to meet some expectations of our people. I think we should extend this tax credit scheme so that we can benefit more from them than what they are giving to us. I know ExxonMobil can meet this GST and pay for it but previous governments allowed them for free. If you calculate it, it's not much but look at the amount they are getting. And so that's my first grievance debate.

My second issue is in relation to Kumul Consolidated Holdings. They have given green light for a Philippines company to relocate the main wharf in downtown to Motukea which we all are happy about. The Government has invested a lot in it.

That will clear some of the congested sea fronts in downtown area and all these heavy stevedoring work will be relocated to the other side away from the city.

The sea front area used to be congested with big heavy vehicles and also that portion of the road deteriorates very fast.

For the first time the sea front area will be available for both recreational and commercial activities such as restaurants opened for families to dine out. And other night sight-seeing activities for families to enjoy.

But as for the big investment at Motukea, the sub construction should be equally distributed to the local landowners first. But the Kumul Consolidated Holdings and PNG ports have engaged this Philippines company and they will commence work on 1 April, 2018, and I hope it's not real because 1 April is a 'fool's day'.

But if it's for real then why not engage the local companies to take up sub construct work. Because we don't want the huge money to be paid to this foreign company.

I hope the minister responsible plus the Government will consider this avenue for local people to benefit. There is a local company called Tabudubu who have done stevedoring work. And also a local company called Port Services Limited and it's owned by PNG Ports. These two local companies will definitely lose business and when that happens the 200 plus construction employees will lose their job and that will definitely affect their daily living

The Motu-Koitabu Assembly was not created by the Government but Parliament voted for it but so far no funds have been allocated to them.

They have been offloaded to NCDC to cater for and we have allocated funds for them. And NCDC helped them by setting up a local company called Tabudubu to assist with stevedoring.

Now we are saying it will benefit landowners but the principal landowners of Motukea will miss out big time. The construction employees will be laid off and will be unable to feed their families.

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They have been given deadline to stop work at the old wharf without any plans for re-engagement at Motukea. This is the biggest grievances we have here in Port Moresby.

I think the Minister Honourable William Duma has the power, otherwise somebody should override Kumul Consolidated Holding who has become an operator on their own and is dictating things but is not sensitive to these issues that we can manage at the political level. The Minister or the Prime Minister should manage this.

We are talking about people trying to take laws into their own hands which are very simple, not rocket science but we get it wrong and then we have to recover again.

This is my grievances I wanted to raise regarding the engagement of the Philippine company but I'm not clear whether there are Papua New Guinean company or any others who can be engaged. How did Kumul Consolidated Holdings went ahead to make such decision to engage this Philippine company? But at least, give a chance to PNG local company, local people who have been there doing their part and have not failed anything. There is no guarantee that they will be sub-contracted to this new company from Philippines.

Mr Deputy Speaker, on this juncture I wanted to thank the leaders from the MSG and our Prime Minister which I noticed they have made recommendation for West Papua to be granted full membership of MSG. I wish to thank the Prime Minister on his leadership as this is not easy. Indonesia is our neighbour, a big country with about 250 million population, big

standing in army, navy, air force. We fear them before therefore our relationship with them is not very robust and good. So it's not very easy to make this type of decision.

I wish to thank the Prime Minister and the MSG leaders that it's about time we make this decision. It's a brave decision, it's a decision that must be made because we campaign on this issue also. These people are our people with same language, same culture, God gave us this land and did not forget these people. But we kept quiet on it and did not listen to their cries for long and by doing that we have condemned them to become just a story.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I went to Jayapura in 2016 and the people there including the Governor there said to me, don't forget us. You are only our hope. If nothing happens, we will just become a story. This is very sad where we will be telling it like a legend. It will become like a myth or a legend that some people like us from our own ancestral background used to exist.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I just want to put this issue of West Papua in this perspective so that we can understand. Whatever Indonesia talk or whatever spin they say but this is the fact and the facts are sometimes hard to accept but it's a fact.

In 1962, when Indonesia invaded West Papua, their population was around one million 56 years later, territory of Papua New Guinea which become Papua New Guinea in 1962 was about two million and now we are almost 10 million in 56 years. On the other side, they are still about 1.2 million. Something is terribly wrong there. No matter what Indonesia may say, but something is terribly wrong, that's why the decision the Prime Minister has made in taking the leadership on this issue is commendable

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I am pleased with him and I am sure most of you are too. We need to make this decision and stand up for what is right and that is what is going to happen. Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker and honourable Members.

Mr LEKWA GURE (Rigo) – Thank you Mr Deputy Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this Grievance Debate today. My debate is in relation to civil aviation in Papua New Guinea. First of all, I want to thank our good Minister for Civil aviation honourable Alfred Manase for presenting the Civil Aviation Report for 2014 and his Ministerial Statement relevant to that. My grievance debate is not with the report itself it is more in general for civil aviation in Papua New Guinea. Civil Aviation started off as the department of civil aviation and then became the office of civil aviation within the Department of Transport. In

2000 with the passing of the *Civil Aviation Act*, that is when the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) as we know it today was established and then associated civil aviation rules in 2004.

What that did was, with the establishment of the civil aviation rules that brought civil aviation rules in Papua New Guinea up to par with world standards. It was actually based on civil aviation rules of New Zealand. It is also on par with federal civil aviation rules of the USA and civil aviation rules of the International Air and Shipping Association (IASA) countries in European jurisdictions. What it did with the establishment of CASA came the separation of powers establishing CASA as the regulator with the other four service providers namely National Airports Corporation, Rural Airports Agency and we also have PNG Air Services Limited, which is responsible for communication navigation and airspace management in PNG, and We have the Accident Investigation Commission and god forbid that any of us will be involved in any accident that this body will have to investigate. What CASA does as the regulator, it makes sure that not only the service providers comply with the applicable rules but they also conform to their in-house rules and regulations, as well as making sure that the airlines that operate within Air Niugini and any other foreign airlines that come to Papua New Guinea air space also are complying and conforming to their own in-house rules as well. With the establishment of CASA, they work user pay policy. Whatever activities are done within the industry, the industry pays for the services they provide. Now my Grievance Debate today is, in today's session, the Minister talked about all the difficulties to maintain the roads with the land transport or we also know the difficulties associated with sea transport, I want to take us back to our big sea accident in 2014 in the Huon Gulf and I am sure there are many sea transport accidents within the PNG waters. Relatively speaking, air transport worldwide is the safest mode of transport. When you have a big aeroplane crash, about two to three hundred people die but over a year when you take into account road transports death as well as sea transport deaths air transport still is the first mode of transport.

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Air transport in Papua New Guinea is a very important economic and social link. It joins many of our provinces together by air link. Let's not knock the rocks as they say, the big Owen Stanley Range that divides the North and Southern parts of our main island. Being a very important economic and social link, the point of my grievance debate is, to put civil aviation back on the development agenda, just in case it goes below the radar. It is a really important link.

At this point in PNG's history, its social development is not at a stage where we can accommodate mass immigration of cultures and traditions. We know the ills that come with it when the immigrations of cultures happen too quickly, we have conflicts within different cultural groups. In a way our geography dividing different traditions and cultures is not a bad thing in itself and when we have physical development in terms of roads, sea transport and air transport, gradually we have the social; immigration coming in. In relation to other forms of transport we should make sure, I am sure the Government is doing its part in the issue that I am talking about. We should make sure that all the major provincial airports like Nadzab, Madang, Wewak, Mt Hagen, Goroka, Hoskins, Tokua, Kavieng, and Buka should be maintained to a good international standard. In many instances, many of those runways can barely support the Fokker 100 or the Fokker 70. So all our major provincial airports should be upgraded to a good standard where it can accommodate the aeroplanes that our major airline operators like Air Niugini and PNG Air operate in our country.

For facilities like terminal buildings, the Government is doing a wonderful job, upgrading terminal buildings. One of the biggest challenges within civil aviation in Papua New Guinea air space is the navigation and communication equipment especially for overflying flights all over Papua New Guinea. They have difficulty communicating with our ground station. Those sort of facilities should be upgraded through National Airports Corporation. I am sure they are trying their best but we need to improve those facilities to a standard that is acceptable to worldwide airline operators. Many of these provincial airports with the likes of the ones that are on the coastal ports like Madang, Wewak and Nadzab should be upgraded with night facilities where they can be used as alternatives in case flights going to their original destination are not able to land there for whatever reason, be it weather or any other reason. When we have night facility at those airports, it makes them more usable at night, and increases the usage of those facilities, even the rural airports.

In the 1970's and 1980's general aviation in Papua New Guinea was very vibrant. Indeed we had the biggest third level operator in the Southern Hemisphere in of Talair Today, general aviation in Papua New Guinea is almost non-existent mainly because many of those rural airstrips are closed so it's good to see that the rural airport agency was established to take care of this issue. That was from the regulatory point of view or from the service point of view.

I will finish of my grievance debate today from the airline or operators point of view. The economic conditions within the country and foreign exchange issues also affect airline operators as well mainly because we talk about fuel

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When the fuel cost is based on foreign currencies, you can imagine the difficulties that the airlines face when there is foreign exchange imbalance. Spare parts are also based on foreign currency rates as well.

In order to make the working conditions attractive for foreign pilots to fly in Papua New Guinea, they have to tie their salaries to some equitable foreign exchange so when kina goes below that rate, the airlines pay a lot more kina in order to retain the national pilots. So what I am trying to say here is that I am not defending the management of the operators, this is just some understanding why they are having difficulties in this difficult economic times. Thankyou Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr PILA NININGI (Imbonggu – Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology) – Thankyou Mr Speaker. I would like to make some contribution here regarding the Bible. I thank the Prime Minister and the past government for bringing the Bible into the Parliament.

This was an important decision and I believe the heavenly Father has blessed the Prime Minister because although there were lots of criticism he won the elections.

Mr Speaker, the Bible is here but we do not have a legislation in place to control the Bible. I think we should put in a legislation that will take cater for the movement of the Bible. For instance, if a cleaner is moving it to clean surface of the tables, this is a 400-year-old Bible, and it is bound to be damaged.

The Parliament should put in this law to protect the Bible. We must set up a committee. The committee must control the movement of the Bible. If renovations was to be carried out how can this Bible be moved and that kind of thing. In relation to the safe movement of the Bible, what kind of penalties should be imposed?

In Hindu, if a car ran over a cow, a ten-year imprisonment is imposed. Likewise, the Bible is the word of God, and God sits here. I am proud to protect this Bible. So like I said earlier, there must be a committee in place to control the Bible.

In future other prime ministers or speakers might want to remove the Bible from the Chamber and place it in the Parliament Library or in the prime minister's office.

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The Prime Minister's Office may also be deemed as Parliament but I am of the view that this is the most appropriate place for it to be placed. It must remain here and legislation

must be enacted to ensure that it is here as currently there is no law to control the movement of the Bible. We must make a law. Since we are a Christian country we must reinforce that by embracing the Bible to symbolise it.

We now have a special relationship with the US since their Vice-President authorised and formalised the movement of this Bible to this country. That is why we have that special attachment with them and this time if anybody goes there we must invite the Vice President of the USA to visit Papua New Guinea and see for himself the prominence given to the Bible which he sent to us.

I wish to conclude that we must have legislation in place to protect this Bible so that no one can move it around and damage it.

My other point of contention is for the Police Minister and police personnel to take note of. It is about motor vehicle accidents around the country.

You will see that straight after an accident the next thing to happen is that people will burn the vehicle involved. Is it an asset of the country or what? The vehicle that I am in possession of is not my own, it is Papua New Guinea's asset. If you own a vehicle or whatever it is not your but it belongs to Papua New Guinea and is protected by Papua New Guinea laws.

Why do we see vehicles being burnt after they are in an accident? And then we also see police neglecting their responsibility to protect that vehicle. Motorist are hurt in the accidents and get taken to hospitals but the next thing to happen is the vehicle getting burnt.

I think we must take remedial action on this because I have seen many vehicles getting burnt after accidents. People spend money on those things. If the accident is caused by drinking and driving, despite that it is an accident. We must not let it go.

I have witnessed this minor crime in many instances. Why is it happening? There are laws against arson, so why is order not there? Because enforcement agencies are not imposing the law.

The main thing is that our police is not working. They do not take action on minor crimes like this. When a vehicle is involved in an accident the police must tow it to the station and when the owners recover they can come and take it back. But the next thing we see is allowing by-standers to go and pour petrol and burn the vehicle.

Sadly the police does not take any action on the people who burn vehicles and the arsonist gets away with their actions.

When can we take action? Police Minister, please take note. We must take appropriate action on the perpetrators of these crimes who destroy the country's assets.

Motion – That grievances be noted – agreed to.

MOTION BY LEAVE

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

Leave granted.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE – Mr STEVEN DAVIES – MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY-GENEAL

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

That leave of absence be granted to Mr Steven Davies, Minister for Justice and Attorney-General to attend to his National Court hearing of his election petition scheduled in Alotau.

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SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament at its rising, adjourned until Tuesday 3 April 2018 at 2 p.m..

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 1 p.m..