

SIXTH DAY

Wednesday 30 May 2018

DRAFT HANSARD

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
CORRECTIONS TO DAILY DRAFT HANSARD

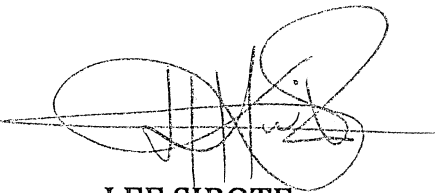
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Corrections maybe marked on a photocopy of the Daily Draft Hansard and lodged at the Office of the Principal Parliamentary Reporter, A1 - 23 (next to the Security Control Room).

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 read 'LEE SIROTE', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with large loops and vertical strokes.

LEE SIROTE

Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

SIXTH DAY

Wednesday 30 May 2018

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

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

Sitting suspended.

The Speaker again took the Chair at 10.50 a.m., and invited the Member for Rigo, **Honourable Lekwa Gure**, to say Prayers:

‘God our Heavenly Father, we bow before your holy throne and we give you glory, honour and praise because you are our God.

We embrace your Spirit in this honourable House of Parliament. Father we asked you to bless our Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and all our State Ministers. We also ask you to bless our Opposition Leader, Deputy Opposition Leader and all the Shadow Ministers, all the Governors and all the Members of Parliament. We also ask you to bless our people right throughout PNG. Father, we ask you to give us your wisdom and direction as we discuss and deliberate on matters of national importance. Father, we bring our prayer in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who taught us to say the Lord’s Prayer, Amen.’

BANNING OF CAMERAS AND MOBILE PHONES – STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Mr SPEAKER – The Chair wishes to make this announcement to the general public who are seated in the Public Gallery observing today’s Sitting of Parliament as well as to media personnel that the use of cameras and mobile phones to take pictures inside this Chamber is not allowed.

The only media personnel which the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings has allowed to film and broadcast are from *EMTV*, *National Broadcasting Corporation* (NBC) and *TVWAN*.

The Chair also would like to remind all honourable members that Question Time is only 45 minutes, therefore, I want all members to take less time in prefacing their questions and go directly into asking questions.

QUESTIONS

Facebook Ban

Mr ALLAN BIRD – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I direct my questions to the Minister for Communication, Information Technology and Energy

Mr Speaker, I am troubled to see that we are starting to limit the freedom of speech which is guaranteed by our *Constitution*. With that, I have noted that the Minister is trying to shut down *Facebook* for one month.

I have noticed that in the last five years, the Minister himself has been the champion of *Facebook* but since the day before yesterday, the situation has changed.

My concern is that a reputable institution such as NRI - one of the most outstanding research institute in PNG - will also be involved in this investigation which the Minister is taking the lead on.

Mr Speaker, my questions are as follows:

(1) How can an organisation like NRI agree to something that is in effect a curb on freedom of speech by our citizens?

02/06

(2) Does NRI have the technology, the capacity or the expertise to carry out such a complex task?

(3) Why does the platform need to be shut down?

(4) Why can't the research be done while the platform is still fully operational?

(5) Is there a technical requirement to shut it down so that the research can be carried out?

Our country has been ranked as one of the most corrupt countries on the planet. Corruption is carried out so blatantly yet we have almost no mechanisms to deal with it.

(6) Why is *Facebook* suddenly a much higher priority of Government than corruption? When did the focus of the Minister suddenly change from fighting corruption to fighting free speech?

(7) With APEC not so far away and many of the countries attending are in fact champions of free speech and free media, why is the Government now suddenly interested in shutting down the very democratic and media freedom that those countries support?

Mr SAM BASIL – Mr Speaker, I thank the Governor of East Sepik for his questions. Firstly, let me clarify the media report by *Post-Courier* yesterday. The report that was made by *Post-Courier* did not come from my press release. I released a statement on Tuesday 17 of April, 2018, and that statement still stands. I will make a personal explanation after Question Time today so that all Members of Parliament will be very well informed of what is happening.

However, I will answer some of the questions that the Honourable Governor has raised.

In my statement that I delivered, I stated clearly that NICTA and my department have tasked several agencies. They have approached not only NRI but the Censorship Board including NICTA itself to come up with some findings that they will bring back to my office and department for us to elaborate on. It will not only be my decision but I will take a collective government decision to make the final decision.

I am not sure about the date that has been pinpointed by *Post-Courier* to shut down *Facebook* during APEC for one month. I think Gorethy Kenneth and *Post-Courier* have chosen that date by themselves. It is not from a printed statement that I have delivered but as I have indicated –

(Members interjecting)

Mr SAM BASIL – But as I said on 17 April, 2018, if we go down that path, I am not afraid to put an indefinite ban. I will explain my reasons in my personal explanation after Question Time. We understand the *Facebook* medium is very good and all Papua New Guineans are using it, even the small businesses.

Mr Speaker, there are cyber-crimes that people have breached and I will give you one example. A couple of weeks ago, a staff that is employed by Brian Kramer by the name of Vincent Moses posted something about a Cabinet scuffle between the Prime Minister and the Education Minister. That was wrong because I was there and there was no fight. That is fake news and false information.

There were other issues like the one stating the honourable Governor of –

(Members interjecting)

Mr Brian Kramer – Point of Order! The Minister makes reference to cyber-crime and then takes issue of a public comment in relation to questioning whether there was a scuffle within the NEC. If there are any allegations of disagreements in NEC then that is not a cyber-crime. And for him to make reference to persons raising news of questions of disputes in NEC as a cyber-crime is incorrect.

Mr SAM BASIL – There was another news about the honourable Governor of Milne Bay that he was crippled and so is not fit to be governor, and there were rumours around Milne Bay that there will be a bi-election.

03/06

Mr Speaker, there are issues about pornography on social media, and issues about people using fake accounts to defame other people. We are not saying that we don't want anyone to use *Facebook*, there are genuine users but it's just a few who are promoting pornography and putting fake statements on social media. If I get the correct advice, I will not be afraid to shut down access to *Facebook* for an indefinite period to make sure that we put those things in order.

Now, sim card registration is another issue that we extended to July 31. Those who don't have identification are using the data from the sim card to access internet and create false accounts which they use to tarnish people's images.

Mr Speaker, I will provide a statement after Question Time and I am sure that the Members of Parliament will be well informed. Thank you.

(Mr Kerenga Kua interjecting!)

Supplementary Question

Clarify Extent of Ban

Mr GARRY JUFFA – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Just going through what the Minister has mentioned. These types of activities are also common in mainstream media. For instance, your own situation, where you were reported by *Post-Courier* saying something you claim you didn't say - so should we also ban *Post-Courier*?

Are we going to extend this to other social media platforms?

For instance, *LinkedIn*, *Twitter* and *Instagram* are social media platforms, and if we are use this type of approach, are we going to extend it and also ban or curb the access to these media platforms as well?

We are just curious and the people of Papua New Guinea who are avid users of social media would like to know.

Thank you.

Mr SAM BASIL – Mr Speaker, *Post-Courier* is a registered company and is located in one particular place where we can find them easily. We can search the company record and if they are responsible, they can also be taken to Court.

Mr Garry Juffa – Point of Order! Mr Speaker, with appropriate technology you can identify the people who are perpetrating fake news. It is not hard, it can be done. You need that. You already have the laws under NICTA to be able to do that so that is not a valid argument.

Mr SAM BASIL – Thank you, Mr Speaker, after the registration of sim cards after July 31, we will be able to identify them. We cannot do that now because many *Facebook* accounts use pseudonyms and these are usually those using unregistered sim cards so after July 31 everything should be okay.

Fix Chimbu Section – Highlands Highway

Mr KERENGA KUA – My questions are directed to the Minister for Works.

I planned on asking these questions yesterday but he was absent so I will do so today.

The Minister has done a lot of road maintenance work along the Highlands highway as far as Mangiro at the border of Chimbu and Eastern Highlands provinces and also at Ganige at the border of Jiwaka and Chimbu. Meanwhile Chimbu roads have been left unmaintained for some years.

My questions are:

- (1) Does the Minister have any personal grudge against the people of Chimbu?
- (2) If not, then when exactly will the Minister begin repairs and maintenance work on the 70 kilometres of Highlands highway in the Chimbu province?

Mr MICHAEL NALI – Thank you Mr Speaker. I want to thank the Member for Sinasina-Yonggamugl for asking very good questions.

Mr Speaker, I want to clarify that this particular section of the road you mentioned falls under the major section that needs rehabilitation from Lae to Nadzab and ends at Kagamuga.

Mr Speaker, as I speak, our officers from the Department of Works and ADB officials are meeting on this and by tomorrow they will finalise the reports on tender evaluation committee to upgrade this section of the road.

For the Member to say that we do not attend that section of the road between his electorate and Kundiawa would be wrong.

Mr Kerenga Kua – Point of Order! I meant the entire Chimbu section, 70 kilometres of road.

04/06

Mr MICHAEL NALI – The Chimbu section usually starts from the border of Watabung and Chuave and finishes at Miunde. That section is always being attended to.

Mr Speaker, many of these questions were raised by the Member for Karimui-Nomane, particularly on that section of the highway so Chimbu has always been attended to.

Mr Speaker, as you know, land in that area used to move a lot as a cause of nature and we have spent a lot of money there. It's not your fault or my fault, it's the nature. The Chimbu section of the road has always been attended to because it is part of the Highlands highway.

I think many of the questions will end soon once the Highlands Highway rehabilitation project begins.

Hopefully by the end of July, contracts should be awarded and construction work should start, but if there is any section of that highway that is in a very bad state, Mr Speaker we are slowly attending to those including those in many parts of the country that are also in very bad state as well. If there is anything that is really a major problem, do let me know, otherwise basic maintenance is going on for every road in the country.

Supplementary Question

Awarding of Road Contracts

Mr KONI IGUAN – I am happy that maintenance work has been taking place from Lae and going up that way. I used to drive many times along that highway.

Mr Speaker, what criteria are used by Works or whoever to award contracts to people who carry out maintenance work on our highway?

Huge trucks carrying heavy loads drive along that highway every day. The bitumen used on the roads will tear up within one or two weeks. I have seen on the highway that some of those contractors do not have machines needed to carry out proper maintenance work on the road. They use crowbars to break the roads because they don't have machine to break the bitumen. There is no machine to load gravel to fill the roads and are using shovels. There is no machine to compact the bitumen so they use their feet. There is no proper machine to pour the tar. They light fires next to the road to boil the tar in a 44 gallon drum and pour the tar on to the bitumen without no proper broom to sweep and spread the tar evenly. They use kunai grass as brooms to sweep the surface. So after two weeks the road will wear and tear again. This is fact as I travel the highway and have witnessed this.

I am grateful that the Government is carrying out maintenance so I'm asking the Minister what criteria are used to award contracts. If there is none, inspections must be done so we know the money is well spent. They must do a complete job so that people can see that Government is attending to the job and that the contractors are not cheating us and getting the money for nothing. Therefore, I'm asking the Minister if there are certain criteria and whether regular inspections are done.

Mr MICHAEL NALI- Mr Speaker, the job of the Works Department in awarding contracts to contractors that conduct maintenance on our major roads and provincial roads has followed usual process.

05/06

So it is difficult to comprehend the audacity of the Member for Markham in asking a question about people using kunai grass to sweep dust of surfaces prior to spraying asphalt or coal tar.

We do not give away jobs to people who are inexperienced. We have our works managers and regional works managers who are not mere employees; they have degrees in civil engineering. These are engineers.

Unless he has a company that he can name in his claim as a paper company or a kunai grass company then I can look into it but, Mr Speaker, a lot of taxpayers' money comes out from the Department of Works to do repair work on our roads.

Mr Speaker, I am coming from a point where I cannot believe that the contractors working on the roads are unqualified and by what standards. The standards are imprinted in the brains of our experts.

You will notice that in some areas we are doing cut and paste work, cut and paste meaning that in some areas the coal tar is broken so we have to cut it. It does not take big machines to cut it out. In some instances you will notice that we are using axes to cut it out. At other times you will see that we are using proper saws to cut out those sections properly. We then put in gravel and allow the gravel to settle in properly and in some areas you will see that we have to heat the coal tar. When we heat the coal tar and mix it with gravel it then becomes asphalt. You do not need to take a big sealing truck to go and seal a one metre pothole from Lae all the way to Watarais in Markham.

So, sometimes it is true that our contractors are being innovative and doing things that you think are not proper. But as I said previously, because of government decisions to close Department of Works Base Camps we do not have the set ups to carry out work in all the national highways and provincial highways. So when it comes to minor maintenance, yes, we do some patch-up work, and we cannot deny that but to be fair to everyone the Department of Works does not entertain substandard work.

So, Mr Speaker, unless the Member has some specific maintenance programmes which he witnessed the Works Department personnel doing, as he claimed, then he should inform me so I can find out properly and inform him in detail. Otherwise, I am satisfied that we do some little maintenance work here and there but it is still up to standard.

Baiyer to Madang Road

Mr JONNY ANANIA ALONK – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister for Works, and for the ministers for National Planning and Defence to take note.

Some nine, 10 years ago the Government gave approval to the PNG Defence Force Engineering Battalion to construct a road from Baiyer in Western Highlands to Madang where there are missing links and maintenance work to be done on existing roads.

During the last eight or nine months I have not heard anything on that and that is why I am asking him. You engaged the PNG Defence Force Engineering Battalion to do this work from Baiyer to Madang.

- (1) Can the Minister update us on the current status of the project?
- (2) Is the work completed or not?
- (3) Where has the funding come from over the last nine years?

(4) Can he also inform the Parliament whether or not this road will be continued?

06/06

Mr Speaker, roads play a big part in the development of the country likewise the port services and the flight services.

Mr Speaker, when this country links up roads it brings development to the rural places and also basic services to our people.

So, can ask the Minister tell this Parliament and my people of Ramu, Madang and the Highlands Regions whether this road is still going to be worked on?

Mr MICHAEL NALI – Mr Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for his question on the section of the Madang-Baiyer Road and it is an on-going project. Yes, the Defence Force Engineering Battalion were trying to do some work on this road and I flew over to see how much was done. I have to inform you that they are not on the ground at the moment.

Government funds were exhausted so they had to withdraw and for quite a while the Defence Engineering Battalion has not been present.

Mr Speaker, in regards to whether that road project is still part of the Government's drawing board plans, let me inform the Member and this Parliament that NEC approved and allocated close to K60 million, which is a huge portion of what the Indian Government granted as loan to the Madang-Baiyer Road section.

As soon as the procurement process along with the designs come through then work is expected to start out there.

Operational Status – Air Niugini

Mr WALTER SHNAUBELT – Mr Speaker, I direct my questions to the Minister for Civil Aviation, and I ask that the Prime Minister, the Minister for State-owned Enterprises and the Police Minister to take note.

Mr Speaker, my questions are in relation to the operation status of the National Flag Carrier, Air Niugini.

Mr Speaker, the ongoing problem of daily, weekly and monthly flight cancellations and delays and the enormous hotel accommodation costs for the inconvenienced of passengers, and not to mention the very bad image, and reputation the airline and the country suffers, are the first tell-tale signs of problems and pending crisis.

We are reliably informed that there are a series of issues regarding operational safety of our national carrier Air Niugini comprising of:

(1) Operational Safety Standards.

We are informed that Japan flights are so critical with fuel on the 737 that the return flights are quite often operated without destination alternates. For example, in this Chamber if the designated return destination was to be to the Speaker's Chair, the Flight Captain is not to certain so he will have to land where the Clerk's table is. So the Fuel allocation will have to go to the Clerk's table not to the designated destiny, the Speaker's Chair. So the destination alternative for the Japan route is in Nadzab, not Jacksons.

Whether or not this is legal and can be argued, this is another example of lowering safety standards that have never been there before.

Mr Speaker, we have been advised that the Philippines CASA has now told Air Niugini that it can no longer depart Philippines without a destination alternative. Other countries will no doubt follow through the embarrassment of Air Niugini.

07/06

(2) The shortage of pilots leading to overwork and fatigue.

The F100 operations has so few pilots and in the current block there are 70 flights where no crews are available to operate. The operations is so stretched that all the crews are expected to work maximum hours every day, continuously, daily, weekly and monthly. These brings in a level of stress and fatigue.

Would you like to be flown by a pilot who did not have enough rest and flew through bad weather? This is happening right now. There is also poor planning and aircraft maintenance. The 767 operations has been plagued with maintenance problems and delays with no forward planning or contingencies being done to cover extended maintenance lay-ups with lease aircrafts, to the disappointment and the disruption of the travelling public. Most flights operate with two captains together, but there is now severe shortage of first-officers; this is another example of poor planning and management.

The National Weather safety problems: The ongoing neglect of the National Weather Service and its industrial problems has resulted in withdrawals of weather reports for various airports leading to Air Niugini management instructions to flight crews to petition those airports to provide weather reports themselves for those ports. How ridiculous is this instruction? This is something that is not included in the job description as pilots.

Illegal heavy crews on the 737 flights: Heavy crewing on the 737 is considered illegal in its current form by PNGCASA due to inadequate rest facilities that do not meet minimum requirements. However, PX is rostering heavy crewing on the Bali Flights, PX 394 and the return flight PX395. This flight operates four times a month. The list goes on and in all these examples one thing is common. A significant lowering of the safety standards in Air Niugini and if left unchecked can only lead to disaster.

Mr Speaker, history has shown that a combination of events or shortcomings will eventually lead to catastrophe and Air Niugini has checked all these shortcomings. And it appears that all the holes have lined up, so it won't be long before a disaster happens. In fact, Air Niugini is a perfect example of a planned catastrophe by inept and poor judgement on the part of management, the board and even the Government.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Member, would you like to make a statement or are going to ask your questions?

Mr WALTER SCHNAUBELT – The travelling public deserve to be told the truth and be assured that they are traveling safely.

(1) Can the Minister confirm whether or not the safety compromises and operational difficulties of the national airline that I have pointed out are true?

(2) Can the Minister advise Parliament, the traveling public and the citizens of this Nation that their safety and that of those travelling on Air Niugini is still guaranteed inspite of these problems?

(3) Can the Minister advise Parliament what the Government is doing to address the deteriorated state of operations of our national carrier, Air Niugini?

08/06

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Member, your questions were directed to the Minister for Civil Aviation, however, the content of your questions relate more to operations and management of Air Niugini so the Chair will allow the Minister for Public Enterprises and State Investment to answer your questions.

Mr Patrick Pruaitch – Point of Order! His questions relate to the operations of Air Niugini, but more so on the safety aspect of it, therefore, it is appropriate for the Minister for Civil Aviation to respond.

Mr SPEAKER – The Minister for Civil Aviation can take note of the questions and the Minister for Public Enterprises and State Investment will answer the questions.

Mr Walter Schnaubelt – Point of Order! I directed the questions to the Minister for Civil Aviation because it's a safety issue and if they are doing the check and balances then they would discover this as an issue. And I want the Minister for Public Enterprises and State Investment to take note because it's a government company.

Mr SPEAKER – I will allow the Minister for Civil Aviation to respond and if the Honourable Member is not satisfied with the answer then he can later seek more information.

Mr ALFRED MANASE – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I believe the answers from either of us will be the same.

I thank the Member for Namatanai. Some of his question relate to the operational aspect of the company which I cannot answer but on safety and security of the plane, I will answer.

Mr Speaker, the airline's safety is an important part of operation in any country, and so in this country we subscribe to the international requirements on airline safety and PNG is one of those countries which is trying its best to comply with the safety standards imposed by International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). And as part of that process, recently, ICAO has done a report on the airlines safety aspect of PNG.

In fact, our rating in terms of effective implementation of those kinds of safety aspects have improved greatly thanks to the Governments modernisation program that has embarked in the last couple of years, under the leadership of the former minister and it's still continuing. Previously, our effective implementation scores were 59 per cent but now after the recent implementation review done by ICAO it has lifted our ratings up to 61 which is the regional average and we as the government is proud of that achievement by the Civil Aviation Safety System in this country.

So that's in fact an important achievement for PNG and that indicates that Air Niugini in terms of safety is meeting to the required standards.

And that is a testimony as a result of that validation mission that been happening in the scores which we have achieved in March this year.

There may be some issues in relation to planning which are operational matters and it rests with the management of the company but if it impacts on safety then it will concern myself and the civil aviation system.

In answer to your questions, yes, the safety standards of Air Niugini is non-compromising and it is of high standard and it has maintained it.

09/06

Mr Walter Schnaubelt – Point of Order! I would like to the Minister for Civil Aviation to just answer my question. I am bringing to your attention that something is happening to the management. Can you check it? At the moment he is saying that everything belongs to the management of Air Niugini so I am bringing it to your attention. Can you check it? It is as simple as that.

Mr SPEAKER – Your point of order is out of order. As I said the right person to answer your question is the Minister for Public Enterprise. The Minister for Civil Aviation is answering your question as he is responsible for the safety of our planes but with the operations then it would be the Minister for Public Enterprise.

Mr Minister, you can continue.

Mr ALFRED MANASE – As I said, safety cannot be compromised and that is the responsibility that I have as minister responsible to ensure that safety will not be compromised. If there are aspects of the operations of Air Niugini that are related to compromising issues then some of the explanations that you have provided are a matter of concern and I will take them up with the relevant authorities. Safety is paramount for all especially the traveling public and so where there is evidence that safety of Air Niugini has been compromised then that is a matter of concern.

Some explanations that you have provided appears to show that some aspects of the safety maybe compromised and, therefore, if it is so then I will raise them with the relevant agencies to have a look at and ensure safety. If there has been any compromise then safety measures will be taken.

Overall Air Niugini standard is very high, it has always been so and this is one of the reasons why we have increased our effective implementation scores up to over 61 per cent. That is good for the country because that will allow other countries to fly into our country without any concern for safety. Perhaps you can raise those issues with me so I can have CASA check and give us a proper response to those concerns.

Where it relates to operational matters and management issues, those are matters that I am not privy to so my colleague will deal with them.

In relation to safety standards, Air Niugini, as I have said, maintains a very high standard and I am pretty sure they are taking steps to make sure that if there are issues of compromise then they will address accordingly.

Finally, in relation to your comments on the National Weather Service, this is one service that is under the Civil Aviation System but what we have done over the last couple of years is that there are always back-up systems that are put into place when they go on strike. When our National Weather Service officers go on strike, we have alternate systems that kick in and so things like the PNG Air Services takes control of the weather services aspects. The Australians also help us to pinpoint areas so that our planes can continue to fly safely under those circumstances.

Mr Speaker, steps have been taken in the light of those emergencies during the times when the National Weather Service employees go on strike.

10/06

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – EXTENDED TIME FOR QUESTIONS

Motion (by **Mr Ginson Saonu**) agreed to –

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent Question Time this day being extended by 20 minutes.

Reserve Alluvial Mining for People

Mr GINSON SAONU – Mr Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Mining but since he is not present, I ask to the Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, I am in receipt of a letter from the Morobe Gold Field Small Scale Miners Association, on behalf of the mining tenement holders, landowner miners and interested miners in Wau-Bulolo region. The copy of the letter is also with the Minister for Communication, Information Technology and Energy.

This letter is requesting the Minister's office to refuse the application for exploration licence ELA 2544 and 2554 by applicant Wabu Alluvial Limited and Harmony Gold Exploration Limited over the Bulolo-Wau valley.

Mr Speaker, my government is in support of that letter and we do not want big mining companies or foreigners to mine or explore alluvial mining in that area of Wau-Bulolo plain. Alluvial deposit in Wau-Bulolo valley generally is considered as suitable for small scale local alluvial miners who depend entirely on a daily basis to sustain their livelihood.

Alluvial mining is another source of income for most locals in Bulolo district, especially those mining along creeks and river beds. Small scale mining activities will not finish or be exhausted after large scale operations cease. Small mining sector in the country, if allowed to continue, will save and serve our people who depend entirely on alluvial mining.

My question to the Prime Minister, in the absence of the Minister, is: -

Can the Minister not endorse the application for an exploration license from Wabu Alluvial Limited and Harmony Gold Exploration Limited?

My reason being those big companies must explore mountains and creeks where there is no human activity instead of coming to a river where people, especially small license holders, are involved in activities to sustain their lives.

So, can the Prime Minister inform the people of Bulolo who rely heavily on alluvial mining for their livelihood?

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

Mr Speaker, I am not privy to the letter that the Governor is referring to but I will instruct the Mining Department to look into this matter and respond to him in writing so that his concerns and our people's concerns are being addressed properly.

However, Mr Speaker, generally, I support the call by the Governor and the people about alluvial mining. It should be reserved for our people and not necessarily for large international companies to come and engage in alluvial mining in our country.

11/06

Mr Speaker, I understand Harmony and the other companies have applied for an exploration licence which is quite different from alluvial mining. But in any case, I will get the Department to respond to him but I support his call that any of the big companies must not be engaged in alluvial mining in our country, thank you Mr Speaker.

Contain Spread of Disease

Mr TONY WOUWOU- Thank you, Mr Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister for Agriculture, and the Minister for Health can take note.

My province is right at the border and we never know, anything can happen. Right now there's a disease outbreak from Bewani to Green River and now into Nuku and not long will reach Dreikir, Maprik and into Wewak.

The disease is found in many animals and maybe fish along the Sepik River and reptiles too.

The disease is like a worm, about four centimetres long, and lays many eggs.

(1) Can the Minister, maybe with the assistance of the Minister for Health, address this issue?

(2) Can the Minister for Agriculture send his officers to investigate this disease?

Not long, it will reach Wewak and then Madang and all the way to Port Moresby. This disease is suspected in human beings and is alarming and scary, thank you Mr Speaker.

Mr BENNY ALLAN – Mr Speaker, through you, I would like to thank the Governor of West Sepik for raising these questions.

I have not received any brief from my department through NAQIA but what the Governor has raised is very frightening. Just before we entered the Chamber, he showed me some photos of this disease found in chickens and some domestic animals raised by the people so this is very frightening.

I have not received any brief as yet from NAQIA but I assure the Governor that I will discuss this with the officers at NAQIA to go in and inspect our areas in Sandaun where this disease is seen to be spreading and affecting lives of animals and our people at Sandaun. Currently, we have five officers at the Wutung border post and because of the seriousness of the issue, I will raise the matter with the officers concerned and advise by tomorrow after Question Time on what action NAQIA will take, thank you, Mr Speaker.

Protect Timber Royalties

Mr JOSEPH LELANG – Mr Speaker, I want to raise these questions to the Minister for Finance. Not so long ago, Government made decision to move all trust account money kept by agencies of Government in commercial banks to the oversight of the Department of Finance. I have no objection with that, however, through that exercise, whether knowingly or unknowingly, Government has also taken moneys that do not belong to the State. Some of these trust accounts hold moneys that belong to our people who are awaiting payment.

Mr Speaker, I'm referring to the royalty money kept in the trust account by the PNG National Forest Authority to be paid to the head clans of the integrated land groups and landowners within the timber concession areas under various timber agreements.

For our information, royalty money is paid to the head clans and are calculated per cubic meter on timber harvested from the trees on their land. As such, royalty moneys belong to our people and should not be centralised in this particular exercise.

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My questions are as follows:-

(1) Will the Minister acknowledge that timber royalty trust account moneys do not belong to the National Government?

(2) Can the Minister reassure our forest resource landowners that their royalty moneys will be transferred back to the National Forest Authority to manage and disbursed to them under the various agreements?

(3) Can the Minister also look into other trust account moneys like plantation levies that are used for reforestation purposes?

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me thank the Member for Kandrian-Gloucester for asking these questions.

Lately there has been confusion in as far as our government's effort to consolidate many of our statutory bodies, State-owned enterprises and many of our State agencies in the manner in which they are doing their work out there.

From the start, let me go straight to the question. Let me assure the Member and all our landowners in as far as forestry project is concerned that all royalty payments will not be touched by the government. It is their entitlement as defined and pronounced by law. As we speak the Department of Finance, Department of Treasury and all the agencies of State which are affected are rounding off of all these excess funds and going through them.

All funds that have been transferred insofar as implementing the laws are concerned are simply pooled into a mere reserve account. And we are going through a comprehensive detailed revision with all the agencies of State to ascertain funds that are meant for running the organisations are not to be touched. Funds that are meant for landowners, whether it is royalty or development levies are not to be touched and those funds will continue to be disbursed to those legitimate beneficiaries of those funds.

May I assure the House through the questions from the Member and all our landowners in the forestry business, and likewise let me take this opportunity also to announce to other sectors like the fisheries sector and many organisations who come within the scrutiny of this new law, that their operations will not be affected.

Whilst teething issues and ensuring that as we try to embrace the full intention of law is causing a little bit of stress the intention is simple, we're not there to stop the operations. In fact the excess funds, if there are any, are the ones that we will enter into that 90/10 ration split. All the operational funds are to remain with them. All funds that are meant for log levies or royalties are quarantined by law and will be remitted in the normal manner in which such remittances take place in as far as such benefits are concerned.

Agriculture – Appoint New Secretary

Mr JEFFERY KAMA – I wish to direct my questions to the Minister for Agriculture, and ask the Public Service Minister to take note.

Before I ask my questions, I wish to give a brief on my electorate. I come from an electorate that is teeming with agriculture.

The Government has made a commitment to promote agriculture and I am happily anticipating whether I will get help or not. I understand that the Secretary for Agriculture has been slapped with 29 charges and in yesterday's paper it was reported that another nine charges have been added.

I understand that to expedite or further the work of Agriculture and pay out funds that many of us have parked in that sector, the Minister is not the financial delegate where he can make these things happen. The secretary is the mandated person in this sector and this secretary has been further charged and it seems that it will continue and drag on without having the work done.

(1) Can the Minister appoint another person to provide leadership in that area or not?

(2) Can he appoint another person or a replacement secretary to go in and take charge of this work because if he doesn't then our people of Karimui or Sepik Plains may miss out on this opportunity?

13/06

Mr BENNY ALLAN – Thank you, Mr Speaker, let me also thank the Member for Karimui-Nomane for asking this question.

Mr Speaker, with regards to the Secretary of DAL currently going through all kinds of charges, I would look at the charge as civil cases, outside of the normal government processes that we have.

Mr SPEAKER – Minister, let me stop you first. Whose mobile phone is ringing right now? Switch this mobile phone off please. Minister, you may continue.

Mr BENNY ALLAN – Thank you, Mr Speaker. We have a section in the department and in has been an ongoing issue. Some of the officers who have been suspended or terminated from the department have decided to take the matter to police and police has been charging the Secretary for different offences.

So, to answer the question of the good Member, where he comes from has a big potential in agriculture. They are at the moment into cocoa.

The contract of the Secretary will lapse next month so what we will be doing this week is, through the Minister for Public Service, advertised the position. I have written to him and he has prepared instruments for advertisement and I've just handed over a cheque to pay for the advertisement.

The position will be advertised this week and those interest parties or applicants can apply through the normal process. Thank you, Member for your concern.

The charges that the Secretary has been charged with are now in the hands of police who will continue to investigate and let the court decide the outcome of those charges. But as far as my department is concerned, we are working with the Public Service Minister on the advertisement of the position. It will be advertised this week and those interested will apply.

But let me also state here that because the government has made agriculture a priority, we will have the best man for the job appointed. So those who are willing to apply must know that the appointment will be done on merits.

So, once again, thank you Member and thank you Mr Speaker.

Appoint OPIC Board and Review Act

Mr FRANCIS MANEKE – Thank you, Mr Speaker for acknowledging the people of Talasea district. Mr Speaker, I have two questions to ask regarding the Oil Palm Industry. I wish to direct my two questions to the Minister for Agriculture and Livestock. May I also ask the Minister for Public Service and the Prime Minister to take note of the questions?

Mr Speaker, as you know the Oil Palm Industry is a world class agriculture operation and is PNG's leading export revenue earner in the agriculture sector. The industry has had no appointment to the board since 2015 when the terms of office of the three oil Palm Smallholder Growers representatives and alternatives lapsed.

14/06

I understand that many approaches were taken and a submission was prepared for a ministerial executive appointment committee.

(1) Can the Minister tell this Parliament and the oil palm growers, when the full Oil Palm Industry Corporation (OPIC) board will be appointed?

(2) Can he also tell us if the *OPIC Act* will also be reviewed?

There is an urgency that requires the review of the current *OPIC Act*. It is more than 42 years old and the industry has drastically grown over the last ten years and brought about many issues affecting the environment and the local content participation in the industry.

The need to legislate RSPO round table sustainable oil palm requirements must be done to protect our international reputation for policy alone is not enough. We are a country that is signatory to many international and environmental protocols & conventions. Therefore, it is important that the current *OPIC Act* be reviewed to catch up on these changes.

Mr BENNY ALLAN –Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to thank the Member for Talasea for his questions. He is one of the Members who is passionate about the industry and he has been following up.

We have finalised the names of the board and the submission is ready but we just need to consult a number of stakeholders before I bring that to Cabinet.

I wish to inform the Member that we have the submission for the OPIC and the Cocoa board ready and those two submissions will be coming to Cabinet after we consult with some of our stakeholders.

With regards to the review on the *OPIC Act*. It is the next thing that we will do after the appointment of the board. Some of the boards that we have are interim boards. So we are trying to fast track the process in appointing all our interim boards. One of them is OPIC, cocoa and rubber. Once we have the boards in place then the next thing we will do is review the outdated Acts that we have. I agree with the Member that many of the commodity acts are very old.

Mr PETER YAMA –Thank you, Mr Speaker. My questions are directed to the Minister for Communications, Information Technology and Energy.

As you are aware, perception can be influenced in many ways in this day and age. This is due to the addiction to the internet and the social networks. I do not partake in social media mainly because of the many ill factors associated with. It is a dangerous platform for our people in the country and a lot of our people take advantage and produce vice defamatory to people and families. And many times misleading comments about leaders and influencing their lives and families. And most of the comments they make are baseless.

Mr Speaker, recently, five articles were written about me and posted by a website named *PNG One*. This is somebody by the name of Kali, either in Australia or someone whom I do not know.

15/06

And I am very disappointed at the kind of information shared to the public. The information is degrading, defamatory, biased and was made not in consultation with myself or any attorney or even people in this country. He has no knowledge or even little knowledge about Peter Yama, and it is unprofessional reporting and baseless, damaging my reputation and credibility as a leader of this country.

This seems to be work of opportunists, people who have conflict of interest, people who want to destroy good leaders in this country.

Mr Speaker, many of our honourable members, including the Prime Minister, ministers and everybody has been damaged one or another. We leaders can defend ourselves here, but how will our families feel when seeing these insulting information about their father? These sort of information really hurt our families. I was a businessman for 38 years and some of who became businessmen just yesterday. Now you tell me which of you members of Parliament has been a businessman for 38 years, raise your hands.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Governor, the Chair has all the right to direct you to ask your question.

Mr PETER YAMA – I am getting there now. My only question relates to cyber-crime. I totally support the Minister for his work and so don't worry about whatever criticism made in the daily newspaper. Their only concern is about APEC which is only for a few days.

Therefore, I fully support what you are doing, so continue with it. Most Papua New Guineans don't use *Facebook* which is about 98 per cent who don't have a fair idea of this social media. Their daily usage of the phone is to call and text their family members, friends and business use only.

It's about time you start tracking these people and charge and lock them at Boroko Police Station or where ever. I am not only talking about *Facebook*, but other online mediums which operate similar to *Facebook*. I am not familiar with all these but Member for Madang is specialised in it.

Can you charge these people so that will teach others a lesson not to practice this?

Mr SAM BASIL – Mr Speaker, I thank the Governor of Madang for his questions. I will be brief with my answers and will ask the Chair to allow me to present my personal explanatory.

Yes, *Cyber Crime Act* is there which protects most of these breaches. We have the Defamatory Publication Law and whoever breaches it will be charged for it. Others include Identity Tag, Data Interference, Pornography, Child Pornography, Child online grooming, Cyber bullying, Cyber Harassment, Cyber Exposing, Unlawful Disclosure, Cyber Attack, On line copy right, Unlawful Advertisement, Electronic Gambling, Lottery by under age children, Animal pornography, Illegal Devices and Unauthorised Hacking.

Mr Speaker, this same question was asked in the beginning of this meeting and most part of it relates back to users who are not identified or use unregistered SIM cards.

16/06

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr SAM BASIL (Bulolo – Minister for Communications, Information Technology and Energy) – Mr Speaker, this question was raised during Question Time. Many of these issues relate back to users who do not have identities. It also goes back to unregistered sim cards.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave of the Chair to make my personal explanation.

Mr SPEAKER – Do you claim to have being misrepresented?

Mr SAM BASIL – Yes, Sir!

Mr SPEAKER – Go ahead, leave is granted.

Mr SAM BASIL - Mr Speaker, since my first press release which was made on April 17, my position as the Minister responsible for Communications, Information and Technology and Energy on *Facebook* has not changed.

I have directed my ICT line agencies to research and advise me on an appropriate course of action to protect privacy of the many *Facebook* and other social network users in Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, I gave this directive to the Department of Information and Communication and the National Information Communication Technology Authority (NICTA) in mid-April 2018. This was in the wake of the United States class action Court hearing to ascertain whether Facebook Incorporation fails to protect the privacy of *Facebook* users in United States and also in United Kingdom. As many of you are aware, Papua New Guinea *Facebook* users have their personal data, chat, pictures and contact details on the Facebook Incorporation Database. As a responsible Government, the O'Neill-Abel Government from which I am the Minister, must consider carefully the exposure of these PNG *Facebook* users, as well as the benefits of *Facebook* as a social platform network for communication and naturally the dangers it presents as well.

Mr Speaker, *Facebook* as a social network came into Papua New Guinea riding on the infrastructure of telecommunication and IT service providers. Successive national governments swept along by ICT globalisation never really had the chance to ascertain the advantage or disadvantage and even educate and provide guidance on the use of social network like *Facebook* for PNG users.

As the Minister responsible, I need to take informed and appropriate action on behalf of PNG citizens and residents using *Facebook* and other IT social networks. The decision must be collectively supported by the Cabinet. I am aware that the *Facebook* usage in PNG is not limited to personal chats and blogs. It is also used as a forum for advertising for individuals, organisations, both public and private sector to post and download public notices, position vacancies, job searches, real estate and other commercial activities as well.

Mr Speaker, my directive to the line agencies is to provide me with a brief covering both the advantage and the disadvantages of the use of *Facebook*. The exposures includes not just the protection of data but wider social issues like security and safety of users, the time consumption and the productivity of users especially school aged children, employees and of course the wider issue of cyber security and crime. I also want to know what other countries

have done in relation to *Facebook* and other social networks and the consequential effects or impacts.

Mr Speaker, the brief I require will also include issue of unidentified *Facebook* users using false IDs to commit cybercrimes including defamation, fake news, pornography and other illicit activities. This, Mr Speaker, is behind the sim registration. Based on this brief from my agencies and the regulatory powers based on the relevant laws of ICT, I will consider relevant and responsible Government action.

This information will form the basis of an NEC submission which will be tabled for Cabinet to consider and we will make a decision. Only then, and I repeat, only then, there will be an official position of the Government through me as the Minister responsible on *Facebook* and other social networks.

Any release of information on *Facebook* at this state is premature and I urge all to take note of what I just delivered and of course for the two Members of Parliament who have asked me the question, I hope that this will clear the air.

17/06

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr MICHAEL NALI (Mendi – Minister for Works) – I ask leave of the Chair to make a personal explanation.

Mr SPEAKER – Do you claim to have being misrepresented?

Mr MICHAEL NALI – Yes, Sir!

Mr SPEAKER – Go ahead, leave is granted.

Mr MICHAEL NALI -Thank you, Mr Speaker. Last week during Question Time, the Deputy Leader of Opposition asked me a supplementary question regarding funding from China Harbour. But the media reported him referring to China Railway. So if I mis-heard the question and mentioned China Harbour in my response thinking that was the company named then I am sorry that I did not give the appropriate response.

However, the way it was reported is that apart from the names of the two companies, *The National* newspaper reported today on page seven and I quote, '*this example goes to show that*

Government ministers are failing their parliamentary duties by not providing accurate answers to questions about projects and programs at the national and provincial level because they are not doing their homework before attending Parliament sessions. Masiu pointed out that other Members were disappointed with the half-baked answers from Government ministers who are mostly not aware of the answers and most questions because they were either ill-prepared or totally ignorant of what was happening within their ministries and departments. He said provinces and electorates mentioned in the road projects were anxious to know the update of the deal. The Works Department and the Government should provide an update in Parliament'.

Mr Speaker, I think the question raised by the Deputy Leader of Opposition was in relation to an MOU signed between China Railway, the Governors and myself as the Minister representing the Department of Works.

Mr Speaker, that is an MOU only. It is not an MOA where we committed the State or received confirmed funding from China Railway Company to upgrade or build roads in the country. It is only an MOU and after that signing it is up to our officials with China Railway to see if it's possible to come with a package to upgrade and build our roads in the country. But, frankly, there is no MOA that ties the State into an agreement. So there was no deal or confirmation that we would receive some funding from that company.

But, Mr Speaker, for *The National* newspaper to report that we Ministers are not doing our job or don't seem to know what we are doing and that we are responding with half-baked answers, I have a lot of time for the media because whatever statements made here or in the world, it is only through the Media that we will communicate that message out to the people for their consumption and right throughout the world. But for *The National* newspaper to report that I have not done my homework is totally unacceptable.

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Mr Speaker, I want to tell Parliament that I do my homework, I read my briefs, and when I produce my report to Parliament, I try to give the answers that I know and in the event that I do not have answers to one of the issues, I have the privilege to tell the Parliament that I will respond to that question at a later date in writing, which means that I will have to go back to the department to get the answers properly and answer those questions.

Mr Speaker, I wish to advise that while I always give time to *The National* and *Post-Courier* and the media outlets, this type of reporting is not good. Our media people must learn to report properly and correctly, and if they are in doubt, they have to contact the department or the particular Member or Minister so that you provide a fair media coverage.

Mr Speaker, I also made a statement last week about giving out emergency equipment in response to the questions raised by the Governor of West Sepik Province which was also reported on page 13 of *The National*.

Mr Speaker, I want to announce that from those emergency equipment, East Sepik province got 12 pieces, Morobe got 12 pieces to cater for Madang and Morobe and while I am speaking, Vanimo, Sandaun already has eight pieces on the ground and operating and two more equipment are on their way to Sandaun province.

Mr Speaker, I wanted to clarify this misunderstanding which I feel wasn't good at all because I have been branded as not doing my homework which I always try my best not to lie.

For the *The National* to report that I have lied to the people of Papua New Guinea is totally irresponsible.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 12.20 p.m..