

SECOND DAY

Wednesday 29 May 2019

DRAFT HANSARD

Subject

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

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HARRY MOMOS

Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

## SECOND DAY

Wednesday 29 May 2019

The Speaker (**Mr Job Pomat**) took the Chair at 10.30 a.m., and invited the Member for Kikori and Minister for Community Development, **Honourable Soroi Eoe**, to say Prayers:

‘Let us all pray. God and our Father in Heaven, we thank you and praise you for who you are. You are God above all gods and King above all kings because you are the creator of our sustainable lives. We thank you and worship you O God.

You are God Almighty and we are answerable to you in all that we do. We come before you just as we are. We are sinners and we therefore seek your forgiveness for things that we have done wrong, said wrong and thought wrong.

Father God through your son Jesus Christ who died on the cross we are assured of your forgiveness. We want to thank you and praise you.

Father, we want to thank you for the many blessings that you have blessed this country. Above all I want to thank you O God, for this beautiful country that you have given to us with so much resources. We are so rich and above all we thank you for the people that have played roles in managing the resources of this country.

We want to thank each and every child, father and mother throughout Papua New Guinea. As we meet today, let us be mindful of those people out there who are still suffering. We also thank you for giving us the opportunity to shoulder the problems of those people out there.

We also thank you for the Government that you have placed. We thank you for the Prime Minister, the Opposition Leader, the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and all the honourable Members of Parliament. Loving Father, I ask you of your Holy Spirit to be amongst us as we deliberate on issues of importance to our country and people. It is only through you that we can get wisdom and strength to make the tough decisions. Loving Father, I want to thank you for the promise that whoever meet in my name, no matter how small they are, I will be in their midst.

O God, I commit this Parliament and all its deliberations unto your hands. Once again I praise you and glorify your name. In Jesus name. Amen.’

### MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE – STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, I have to inform Parliament that at 10.20 a.m. today, the Chair received the Notice on the Motion of No Confidence. At lunch time today,

the Committee will deliberate on it and after processing it, will appear on tomorrow's Notice Paper.

02/02

**BROADCASTING OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS –  
STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, I have to inform the Parliament that the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Broadcasting of Parliamentary proceedings met today and resolved that:

(a) *National Broadcasting Corporation, NBC* Television and Radio will be allowed to telecast and broadcast live during Question Time.

(b) *EMTV* and *TV WAN* will also be allowed to telecast live, Question Time for news purposes for the duration of the meeting.

**MATTER OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE –  
RESIGNATION OF THE PRIME MINISTER–  
STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER**

**Mr PETER O'NEILL** (Ialibu-Pangia -Prime Minister) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank you for the opportunity to make a few remarks this morning.

Mr Speaker, I am also pleased to note that the Opposition has lodged the Motion of No-Confidence against myself and the Government, and that is much welcomed.

But I want to inform this Honourable House that at 9.45 a.m. this morning, I delivered to his Excellency the Grand Chief Sir Robert Dadae the Governor-General of Papua New Guinea, my letter of resignation so we can deal with this matter once and for all.

Mr Speaker, it has been my greatest honour to serve and lead this nation over almost eight years. We have delivered some profound accomplishments during our term in Government through a policy agenda that has almost transformed the nation. These important achievements are issues that continue to improve the lives of millions of children, women and men of our country.

Mr Speaker, more importantly something that is close to my heart is, we have been able to educate more than a million children, enabling them to attend schools right throughout the country through a free-education program, most of all, our female students, our girls right throughout the country.

We have also expanded our universal health care, trying to improve the standards of living for our people and investments right throughout our rural areas and districts, improving the presence of Government and delivering vital services.

Mr Speaker, we have also delivered more infrastructure than any time in the history of our country, particularly in the most rural and remote areas through our DSIP and PSIP program.

We have constructed many teachers colleges and nursing colleges, new airports, new jetties, wharves and roads right across the country. These are some things that we are very proud of as this has enabled freedom for our people and improved opportunities for our people to travel and do business. It had also attracted billions of kina of new investment both domestic and international, creating more jobs for our people. And that is the country that is now in transformation.

We have been able to improve our global image; we have always been known for the wrong reasons and have done that by strengthening our bilateral relations with our traditional partners and by making new friends.

Mr Speaker, five years ago we said that we will host the APEC Leaders Meeting in our country. The people thought that we will never deliver but we have certainly proved them all wrong.

Today, I can say that there are more investment opportunities in our country, particularly in our economy and many sectors of agriculture and tourism which will continue to provide employment opportunities and improve standards of living for our people right across the country.

**03/02**

We are further improving electricity through the partnership with Japan, Australia, United States and New Zealand by making sure that we would try and connect almost 8 million people right throughout the country.

Mr Speaker, these are some of the very few accomplishments that our Government can reflect on as we elect a new Prime Minister of our country on the Floor of this Parliament.

The Peoples National Congress was mandated by the people in the 2017 National Elections with 29 seats and it was mandated to form the Government. But unfortunately politics in PNG plays out this way. We will allow this for the interest of the ongoing political stability and to ensure that we create confidence in the business community and the economy so that we can continue to have social unity in our country. Therefore, it is important that I vacate the seat so that we can be able to move on and that is why it's my honour to say thank you to the people of PNG in serving them.

God bless our country, thank you.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** (Tari-Pori) – Mr Speaker, let me firstly pass my greatest respect through you, Mr Speaker, and commendation to the Member for Ialibu-Pangia for what not too many politicians can do in rising to the occasion by hearing the cries of our people and the fact that 67 Members of Parliament are now seated behind the Opposition Leader. We can make comments and pass judgments but it only takes few real men to admit mistakes and come out in public and accept that these sort of decisions can be made and he is making that call today and so I pass my respect to you, the Member for Ialibu-Pangia.

I resigned as your Minister of Cabinet on 11 April, 2019, at 2 p.m. at *Vulupundi Haus*. And I did so because of some commitments that were left unfulfilled; commitments for the district I represent and the province that I am part of but more importantly my view that some key interventions at the highest level especially in the resource sectors were not seriously embraced by not only yourself, but the system that was operating in Government.

Mr Prime Minister, by your resignation today you have beat and outclassed many of us who have held the view that you were power-hungry. But today you showed that you still have the heart to listen to the call and cry of our people.

*(Applause in the Chamber)*

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – It's not easy to make this call, Mr Speaker. A historic call. Correct me if I am wrong, but I don't recall another occasion as such. We have had seven Prime Ministers to date and you are the seventh Prime Minister. You have served from 2012, but today you are making this call to step down in the House of the people of this country, which you have led for the last eight years.

04/02

As a former Minister who worked with you from 2012 up till today, I have witnessed the many challenges that we faced over the years.

In 2012 when we were structuring the 2013 Budget we had oversights and proposed a deliberate deficit budget. But at the same time we were slow in amending some laws that could come at the backend of that term or later into this term to ensure that our economic base is extended.

Sir, you did your best but at the same time there were systematic and individual mistakes that we made collectively. Being a part of your Cabinet right throughout, I accept the responsibility. I for one will accept all these mistakes for we are human beings and we make mistakes along the way but we must not allow systematic and dishonest mistakes amongst us.

Prime Minister, you have proved beyond doubt that you are a man of a warm heart and you have responded to the cries of your people and stepped down.

Mr Prime Minister, you know politics is not good. Four weeks ago I stepped away from the Ministry. I did it not because I wanted to be the Prime Minister but because I wanted to take a break.

In 2017, when you came for my election rally in Tari, I made one statement in front of my own people. I said by the end of 2018, if no sealed road is delivered from Mendi to Komo where the Hides Gas is and the Kutubu Oil fields and if the 4.27 per cent is not deterred and given to the Central and Gulf Provincial Governments and its landowners, Western, Southern Highlands and Hela Provincial Governments and its landowners, I would step down in whatever capacity I am in by the end of 2018.

Mr Speaker, the Prime Minister, not all who have moved with me to this side has had personal issues with you but more on matters of how the country was collectively run as a Government. I resigned on simple principles and today if there is anytime I can restore my belief and the value in your leadership and your resignation today earns my trust.

On behalf of my people of Tari-Pori, my sincerest apologies to the people of Ialibu-Pangia, Mrs O'Neill and the children. Thank you, Sir, and you earn my greatest respect.

**Mr SPEAKER** –The Chair will not entertain the question and will allow the Members to make their statements.

**Mr PATRICK PRUAITCH** (Aitape-Lumi–Leader of Opposition) Mr Speaker, today I stand here on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, the Opposition side of the House and also on

behalf of my people of Aitape-Lumi and my family to acknowledge the Honourable Peter O'Neill.

I also take this opportunity on behalf of the seven Members of Parliament, including the Prime Minister, Honourable Dr Marat, Honourable Sir Puka Temu, Honourable Roy Biyama, Honourable Benny Allan, Honourable William Duma and myself, who came into Government in 2002.

I take this time to acknowledge the contribution of the Prime Minister who has run this country for almost eight years.

**05/02**

He has done many good things but within politics and leadership, there is always criticism. As Papua New Guineans, a lot of us usually let our emotions take control of things, so we must be reasonable and observe the contributions of the leaders of our Nation.

Prime Minister, you have taken a decision I think our country will be proud of. Given that in recent times when the country has called for you to vacate your seat as Prime Minister and a change in Government, I think you have responded and demonstrated leadership in so far as to satisfy the thoughts of the people. I am sure your relationship with me will continue as friends despite the political issues that we have but I can assure you, our friendship remains. Let me place on record that as a Prime Minister in our generation you have done us proud in terms of demonstrating leadership as Prime Minister.

On behalf of the people of Aitape-Lumi and my family, I salute you, Sir, and I am really grateful that you have responded according to the wishes of our country.

Thank you, Sir.

**Mr Bryan Kramer** – Point of Order! Thank you Mr Speaker. While acknowledging the Prime Minister's resignation, there is a process to follow.

The process states that, he will write to the Governor General, who then informs you whereby you will confirm the resignation and make an announcement on the Floor. I haven't heard the confirmation of the resignation yet, that is why I am asking you.



**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, I will be receiving the letter from the Governor General, but the Prime Minister has already given his statement followed by Members making their statements.

*(Mr Bryan Kramer interjecting!)*

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Member for Madang, I am trying to inform the House that I have acknowledged and received the letter from Governor General at 10:45 a.m. to inform-

*(Uproar in the Chamber)*

**Mr SPEAKER** – Order! Order! I am informing this Honourable House and the people of Papua New Guinea that I have already received the letter from the Governor General regarding the resignation of the Prime Minister. It is stated that as of today, the Prime Minister's position is officially vacant.

Honourable Members, I will only entertain two or three Members to speak.

I now call on the Honourable Member for Central Bougainville.

**Mr SAM AKOITAI** (Central Bougainville) – Mr Speaker, I stand here to represent my people of Central Bougainville, Bougainville, and also Papua New Guinea to thank and acknowledge the work you did as a Prime Minister since 2011. I was one of the many that were not happy about the way the Government was changed in Government in 2011 at the time and was one of the critics during that period. However, I have come to realise that since that change, the Government has taken Papua New Guinea out of the status quo that was maintained before that day. There has been a major shift in how Papua New Guinea has developed.

On behalf of my people I thank the Prime Minister for making a decision that not many of us can make. Not many of us would have been able to do what you done today. You have demonstrated the desire and heart for the people of Papua New Guinea and I hope today the people of Papua New Guinea can stand together with us to thank you and also to seek forgiveness.

I know I have been one of the critics of the past and I admit that you have proven me wrong on some issues.

Mr Speaker, the Bougainville peace process started with PNC and with the late Bill Skate. I know the people of Bougainville have a big respect for the person who started this process to stop the fighting between Bougainville and Papua New Guinea Defence Force, which resulted in many of our citizens dying. The government was out there to kill its own people.

I thank the people of Central Province for giving us the son who became the Prime Minister in 1997 and began the process in solving the Bougainville crisis.

At the time Honourable Peter O'Neill became Prime Minister he was in the same party that I was in with the Late Bill Skate, and so I took it upon myself to be a part of his Government in this Parliament as well as to ensure the Bougainville Peace Agreement was concluded.

Mr Prime Minister, you have done a lot in relation to Bougainville, especially on the progress and process of the referendum. There a number of important decisions you have made: (1) you agreed that referendum must occur; (2) you agreed on the date of referendum; (3) Both ABG and National Government have agreed on the date of referendum; and (4) the question to be put to the people of Bougainville. Those are fundamental issues that have been addressed and progressed by this Government together with the people of Bougainville, and I hope that whoever takes the seat that you are in will continue that process.

Mr Speaker, we owe it to the people of Bougainville because Bougainville sustained the economy of this country when there were no other projects around. This project was in Central Bougainville and I demand that importance be given to Central Bougainville.

**07/02**

I know the setback is due to funding but I hope that whoever the Parliament elects as Prime Minister must focus on according Bougainville its entitlements.

But let me take my hat off to the Prime Minister who has set the foundation in making sure that tangible developments have proceeded right throughout this country. This must be embraced and taken on by the incoming Government to develop our young country.

I congratulate the Prime Minister and thank him for all that he has done and it goes to show what a great man he is by stepping aside and vacating the Office of the Prime Minister.

**Sir JULIUS CHAN** (New Ireland) – Mr Speaker, when the question is put, you should not entertain any point of order. You should deal with the question that is put.

I am very shocked that individuals are demanding you to interpret the kind of *Standing Orders* that they want and to continue to divide this Parliament.

My honourable friends, I just wanted to say a few words today. I have been part of politics of this country for more years than this country has existed. I have seen times of crisis, times of danger, times of peril but in more than 50 years of politics I have never seen the kind of hostility, division and I must use the word hatred in the past weeks.

**Mr Kerenga Kua** – I got the right to speak.

**Mr Peter Yama** – Please shut up and listen.

**Sir JULIUS CHAN** – Mr Speaker, that is why several days ago we the leaders supporting the PNC Party in Government went to see the Prime Minister and we talked frankly to him. We felt that the longer he tried to stay in office, the more this country would become divided. As a friend I suggested that the things that he could do at this time is to show his love for his country and he agreed to step aside.

I personally want to thank him, the Prime Minister for hearing the call. I am not quite sure whether it is the call of the people but it is a call.

I think we can learn from Peter O'Neill.

*(Uproar in the Chamber)*

**Sir JULIUS CHAN** – Let us put aside self-interest. Let us put aside greed.

*(Members interjecting)*

**Sir JULIUS CHAN** – Let us put away anger. You don't have to like what I say but I have a right to be heard in this Parliament.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Member for Sinasina-Yongomugl, can we show some order in this House.

Honourable Governor, please continue.

**Sir JULIUS CHAN** - Let us put away greed and anger because, honourable Members, we are not saints. We have fooled ourselves thinking that government and opposition are enemies. You know what; they are not! We have enemies but the enemies are those who would divide us, those who would attack and in doing so they prevent us from dealing with the real problem of our country and honourable Members, you do not have to like me and believe me but we have serious problems we all need to deal with.

Mr Speaker, a wise man once said, there is no sea more dangerous than the ocean of politics and it is when the wave rises to the highest that there is the greatest need of an experienced captain and sailors; a good crew of a single unfaltering purposes, so today let us act as adults and as honourable Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, today let us declare ourselves that this House is not a government of one party or three or four different parties. No! Today, let us declare our government is a union of Papua New Guinea patriots. Today let us agree that we will all work together, for myself indeed and for my people and for Papua New Guinea, which I have done so!

Today let us agree to work together as patriots of Papua New Guinea to take control of our country and to take our country back. Today we can take the first step and today we can work together. Together let us find the captain. Peter O'Neill has opened the door for us so let us walk through that door. Let us all agree and look for an experienced captain to pilot the ship of our State into a truly prosperous future and let us all serve as good crew, a united crew, a patriotic crew, and together we can do this as patriots and as Papua New Guineans.

Let us get to work!

**Mr SPEAKER** – The Chair will call on the Honourable Member for Hagen as our last speaker.

**Mr WILLIAM DUMA** (Hagen) – Mr Speaker, we all know that we live a life where all good things must come to an end and from there, good things begin.

The Honourable Peter O'Neill and I, together with five others, first entered this Parliament with high hopes, bright ideas and dreams.

**09/02**

I think between the seven of us we have achieved most of our dreams in contributing to the development our country. From the seven of us, one was able to reach the highest office

in this land. It was my brother and partner the Right Honourable Peter O'Neill and he is still my brother.

Together we served our founding father Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare as ministers. We learnt a lot from him and helped governed this country. In 2011 when our turn came, my brother Honourable Peter O'Neill became the Prime Minister. The URP Party, which I lead, became his grand coalition partner. Through the many ups and downs we remained loyal and committed to the Government led by him. Together we survived at least one Motion of No Confidence.

Unfortunately when you stay too long the resentment builds up even when you are a good Prime Minister. As many of you would recall when John Howard was the Prime Minister of Australia, the Western Alliance had just won the Gulf War and the Australian economy was sitting very comfortably at the top but the Australian people thought it was time for him to go. I must therefore remind all of us that even when things are working so well things can go wrong. In fact with the Government of Honourable Peter O'Neill, we achieved a lot of things and as he had said this country has gone forward. I do not need to repeat them but simply express the sentiments that he expressed in his statement.

As many of you are aware, after leaving him, I made a press statement and said no one is perfect and I can never blame Peter O'Neill because he tried his best. Those are my true feelings coming from my heart.

When his own members left him, I remained with him. I need to ask him whether he waited for me to leave so that he could make his decision. This is the only regret that I have. When he had noticed that most of his members had already left, I expected him to ask me what we needed to do but he did not, so I left. It was not because I had ill feelings or any other opinions, he knows where my loyalty and respect are. As they say all good things must come to an end. Leadership is about rising above all things and remaining focused in delivering what we promise our people back home.

Mr Speaker, you still have my respect and I will still be your friend. Including the Opposition Leader, most of us in the current Opposition have served with you one way or the other. On behalf of the people of Mt Hagen, I wish you all the best and May God bless all of us. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr PAIAS WINGTI** (Western Highlands) –Today is a historical day for Papua New Guinea where a Prime Minister has stood on the Floor of Parliament and informed Parliament that he has tendered his resignation to the Governor General.

Our Prime Minister has served for seven years. In those seven years, the people of this country have seen changes taking place right throughout the country. Leadership requires a man who is determined above many things and works day and night to get things done. The people and Members have a short memory; we forget about the state of our country seven years ago.

**10/02**

**Mr Bryan Kramer** – Point of Order!

*(Government Members interjecting)*

**Mr SPEAKER** – What is your Point of Order, Honourable Member for Madang?

**Mr Bryan Kramer** – Mr Speaker, we seemed confused.

*(Government Members interjecting)*

**Mr Bryan Kramer** – Wait! I have not concluded my point of order. You talk about development but have you been to the hospital? Do you take your child to the local hospital and does your child attend the local schools? Which school does he or she attend? Many children are waiting and many have died when this man was in power. Do you ever think about that?

*(Government Members interjecting)*

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Member for Madang, you are making a statement. Your point of order is out of order.

The Chair asks that all Members give respect to the Member speaking.

**Mr PAIAS WINGTI** – Mr Speaker, this is a long journey. Those of us who are Members of Parliament must know the difference between the Office of the Prime Minister and Peter O'Neill as a person. The difference must be established. It is our responsibility to respect the Office of the Prime Minister and whoever becomes the next Prime Minister.

I have been around and I have seen things which are not right and in the process we are also destroying our own country. We are saying things and doing things that are not according to protocol and not ethical and not right. The differences must be drawn. This is a young country and whoever the next incoming Prime Minister is, let us respect the office and not get personal or make personal attacks. These are things that are beyond.

Mr Speaker, we come from a tradition where we respect people and the Office of the Prime Minister is the office of the people of this country. All I want to say is, Mr Prime Minister, you have given your best shot. In those seven years, you have delivered services right throughout the country. You cannot do everything. No government is perfect. No government can fix every problem but in those seven years you have been Prime Minister, the districts have seen changes and the airports have changed. Major infrastructure development has taken place in this country and the number of students have increased in schools. The credit must be given to where credit is due. It looks easy, but it is not that easy.

Mr Speaker, on behalf of Western Highlands and all Papua New Guineans, I salute the Prime Minister. You have made the right decision today. It paves the way for us to elect the next Prime Minister and I hope the next Prime Minister will receive all our support and stay with him to make sure our country is stable and good things happen in Papua New Guinea. Thank you, very much.

*(Mr Kerenga Kua interjecting)*

**Sir PUKA TEMU** (Abau) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. After yesterday's storm in this Honourable House under your Chairmanship, today is a different spirit. I thank all the honourable leaders for allowing today's occasion to be a bit more serene than yesterday's Sitting.

**11/02**

Honourable Speaker, on 20 December in 2011, I left this House by myself and I told the then Prime Minister, Honourable Peter O'Neill, that we had five days to go before Christmas and the way things are happening on this Floor is that Parliament will sit for the first time in PNG on a Christmas Day.

And so I requested him to leave the House and go to the Governor General's Office, the late Grand Chief Michael Ogio, during the constitutional crises. I asked him personally to

change his mind to recognise Peter O'Neill as the duly elected Prime Minister. During this time, I recognised him as a young, smart man and so I stood behind him.

In 2011, he led his party into 2012 and became a major force that PNC is today. During the *hausman* discussion while I was still a PNC member a couple of weeks ago, it was I who sat next to him on his right side and asked him to step aside. When he didn't, I left him. I said, Prime Minister, if you step aside, I will stay here.

Today the Prime Minister has heard not only the call of the people but my boys at the PNC *hausman* talk and he has now informed the nation and resigned.

There are 67 of us here who will vote tomorrow to change the Government and therefore, I am now advising the Parliament that consistent with my word that if the Prime Minister steps aside, I will stay. And now that he has done that, I now announce to leave this side and leave the 66 to vote tomorrow and I will join him because of my commitment.

*(Applause in the Chamber)*

Motion (by **Mr Fabian Pok**) agreed to –

That the question be put.

## **VACANCY IN THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER – STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members, as there is a vacancy in the position of the Prime Minister and pursuant to Section 142(3) of the *Constitution* as the Parliament is in session the question of the appointment of the Prime Minister shall be conducted on Thursday 30 May 2019, at 10 a.m.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion – That the Parliament do now adjourned – agreed to.

The Parliament adjourned at 11.20 a.m.