

FIFTH DAY

Tuesday 15 October 2019

DRAFT HANSARD

<u>Subject:</u>	<u>Page No.:</u>
QUESTIONS	1
Chimbu Hospital	1
Partnership Program with Australia	3
Defective 2019 Supplementary Budget.....	6
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS –	
EXTENDED TIME FOR QUESTIONS.....	14
Reports of Outstanding Commission of Inquiries	15
OUTBREAK AND CONTAINMENT OF POLIO VIRUS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA –	
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT– MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER.....	18
ADJOURNMENT	23

FIFTH DAY

Tuesday 15 October 2019

The Acting Speaker (**Mr Jeffery Komal**) took the Chair at 10.00 a.m.

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

Sitting suspended.

The Acting Speaker again took the Chair at 10.45 a.m., and invited the Member for Rigo and Minister for Civil Aviation, **Honourable Lekwa Gure** to say Prayers:

‘God our Heavenly we thank you for the very gift of life and thank you for the opportunity to be on the Floor of this Parliament to serve your people. Father, we seek your mind, wisdom, and your strength in our deliberations that we may be diligent in serving your people of Papua New Guinea. We come just as we are with our weaknesses; realizing that your ways and thoughts are not ours and therefore we seek your strength and wisdom, as we represent our respective electorates. We bring our prayers and petitions in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.’

QUESTIONS

Chimbu Hospital

Mr MICHAEL DUA – I direct my questions to the Minister for Health. Before I ask my question, I would like to take this time to thank him for visiting my province two weeks ago, purposely to launch our Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and CT scan and endoscopic machines at the Kundiawa Hospital. I am proud to say that we have the latest machines in the province. He was there to also close the National Nursing Symposium. We were also privileged for his presence to have our nursing college proposal endorsed during this visit.

Thank you as it is good for the people of Chimbu.

Mr Acting Speaker, last week the Minister responded to a question on the hospital level of the Goroka Base Hospital, which bothered me over the week. So, I am coming back to

question him. The Kundiawa Hospital is receiving patients from all parts of the province and currently our out-patient area attends to almost 500 patients per day, and our in-patient capacity is about 300. And they are also packed but because of the good services that are being provided; we have patients from all over the country.

02/05

Mr Acting Speaker, we have about 40 doctors in the province and 10 of them are specialist doctors and that is why, we provide good services in the province. Most of them are graduate specialist doctors with degree qualifications in special diseases.

My questions are:

(1) Can the Minister inform the the people of Chimbu and what level is the Kundiawa General Hospital? Some level 6 hospitals have up-to-date medical equipment and machines but lack specialist doctors. In Chimbu, we have a lot of specialist doctors and we get a lot of referrals so can the Minister tell us what level is our hospital?

I also want to urge the Members of Parliament that instead of seeking medical treatments overseas, they can come to Kundiawa Hospital for treatments because we have up-to-date medical equipment, machines and specialist doctors that can provide the best medical care.

(2) Can the Minister also provide cancer equipment to our hospital because we have the facility to accommodate it?

Mr ELIAS KAVAPORE – Thank you Mr Acting Speaker, I thank the Governor of Chimbu Province for these important questions.

Firstly, I want to have this opportunity to put this on record and commend the services that are provided by the management and staff of Kundiawa or the Sir Joseph Nombri Memorial Hospital in Chimbu. They are committed to providing one of the best clinical services to the people of Chimbu Province and not only Chimbu Province but it serves many parts of our country where people go there to receive healthcare in that particular hospital.

Therefore, I wish to fully acknowledge the commitment and I also wish to commend the CEO, Dr. Harry Poka and his team for doing an excellent job. I was there two weeks ago to commission the MRI scan, CT scan and endoscopic surgery equipment. I believed that this is one of the best leading hospitals in the country and I also noted they are in partnership with some Clinics from Kairo in Egypt, and they are fully utilising those facilities, especially the level of services provided by the expatriate doctors.

Chimbu Province continue to lead today in making sure that they provide the services to the people of Chimbu and other provinces in the Highlands region.

In regards to the question raised by the Governor today, last week I responded to the question raised by the Member for Ungai-Bena and I mentioned that the Goroka Hospital is a level 6 referral hospital in the Highlands region. Our health standards require that we have four regional hospitals; one for each of our region. It is also a requirement that we should have 22 provincial hospitals. It is also a requirement that we should have 89 district hospitals.

Therefore, we are supposed to have only four level 6 hospitals in the country that's why last week I mentioned that Goroka Hospital is a level 4 hospital in the Highlands region. So, at the moment, I cannot declare two or three level six hospital in a particular region. The level of a hospital clearly determines the number of referrals from the aid posts to health centre to districts hospitals to provincial hospitals and to level 6 hospitals in the region and then to level 7 PMGH. This also determines the manpower and health facilities, and it varies as we go higher.

03/05

According to health standards we must have four regional hospitals.

In regards to the question raised by the Governor on what level, because Chimbu General Hospital is now introducing endoscopic surgery and other surgical services now should we also increase the level that is required by Chimbu Province or not?

In terms of standard wise, we now have four regional hospitals but my Department is fully aware of this particular health facility which is providing a good service. So we have come up with a criteria where we can declare some hospitals as Centres of Excellence.

For example, if Chimbu Province is doing well in the orthopaedic surgery regarding bones and other stuff then we can declare Chimbu General Hospital as a Centre of Excellence.

In response to the question raised by the Governor of Chimbu, yes, we can declare as Centre of Excellence regarding one of the services that is being provided by Chimbu General Hospital but not necessarily including or adding another regional hospitals as level 6 in one region.

Partnership Program with Australia

Mr ALLAN BIRD – Thankyou Mr Acting Speaker, I want to direct my question to the Minister for Police.

But before, I ask my question, I want to commend him and the Department for some of the early preparatory work that they are doing to improve the Police Force.

My concern is that while the good work to improve the police is ongoing and it's progressing well perhaps, I understand that there are new officers being trained and they will be undergoing a two-year training program.

My concern stems from the fact that we already lack command and control below the PPC level in the provinces.

And I will give you an example, police station commanders now are actually non-commissioned officers, we have ran out of qualified officers at that level. And if I can understand correctly from the last response given to another question raised previously by a Member of this House, we are going to wait for another two years to fill this gap that currently exist and has existed for sometimes in the command and control structure of the Police Force.

In the meantime, while we are waiting, is it possible for us to take advantage of the partnership program we have in place with Australia to plug the gap temporarily with Australian officers?

Mr Acting Speaker, just recently on Saturday, I heard that police officers after a brawl have burnt down a village in Wewak. This incident is a good example of the lack of command and control at the police station commander level, you will always get break down when the men don't respect the commander and they end up doing things like these. So I would like to know if there are any plans to plug the gap over the next two years while we wait for the new officers to be trained?

Mr BYRAN KRAMER – Mr Acting Speaker, I want to thank the Governor for East Sepik for his question.

On his question on whether is there a possibility under the Australia/PNG partnership (AFP) to provide assistance in police stations which the discussions are underway. The Police Constabulary is meeting on a weekly basis with the AFP to discuss on a program of Station of Excellence. What we will basically do is police the police.

So every stations will have a command and control system in place whereby the police vehicle will have dash cameras both in and out of the vehicle. So we are trialling it in Waigani and it will be the first station and once we confirm that the structure works, then we will start to take in out to the provinces.

So vehicles will be on sector patrols on each stations and they will also focus on street by street and out in provinces probably village by village.

Three men team officers on foot patrol will be equipped with body cameras that the station commander can remotely access and see what the officer is seeing and the body cameras will also have GPS tracking which means the officer will be closely monitored from the main station.

So in all urban cities the officers will be on foot patrol and the GPS will say this is the distance you must walk today, four kilometres. They get dropped off by the patrol vehicle and they have to walk while the GPS tracks them. All these daily activities will be monitored by the station commander's office.

So we are actually on high level discussions and will launch this project within the next two to three months before the end of the year.

In addition to that on the issues PSC, that's correct the police station commanders have been working years in managing police stations but are non-commissioned officers.

04/05

So, on a recent visit some months ago with the now Acting Commissioner who took me to the stations in the night also raised the same point that the Governor is making. We should declare PSCs to be commissioned officers to ensure that now at that level, they can manage those stations.

I share the same concerns that if we are training the recruits for two years, who is going to fill the gap? Now, many graduates are coming out of universities without a job and our focus is to engage them on national service and nation building. We are looking at programs where we can recruit them and put them on high level training under the AFP training program and they get deployed.

Currently, if you want a police officer to do something, you will have to pay them K100 a day and if do not pay them than they will not help you. So how do we compete against that? The plan now is to put in 50 high level graduates into the training college and then when they deploy them into the provinces and some old officers only want to work for K100 a day for an operation even when they are residing there then they will be set aside and the new officers will carry out the operations without having to pay them a K100 a day. Therefore, it will make the Police Department more competitive.

If the Governor would like to pilot his province under this program while we are focusing on one station and his province to be the first outside of Port Moresby then we are happy to have that discussion with him and see how we can engage AFP in his station.

I understand that the Governor of Enga has raised the issue on many occasions asking that AFP be deployed. The AFP's concern is their immunity and until the Government passes the law for their immunity in PNG, they are restricted from being deployed in the frontline. So at the moment, we are focused on using them in the administration in managing police stations.

Thank you.

Defective 2019 Supplementary Budget

Mr BELDEN NAMAHAH – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. My questions are directed to the Prime Minister whom I believe is also the Treasurer in the absence of the Treasurer are in relation to the Supplementary Budget we just passed on Friday last week.

Mr Acting Speaker, the Parliament passed a Supplementary Budget Appropriation Bill 2019 into the law to give effect to the implementation of the 2019 Supplementary Budget. In that bill, Parliament approved the revised revenue reflection of K13, 022 million; a shortfall of K1245 million compared to the 2019 Budget and a new expenditure of K16 526 million which represents an increase of K392.6 million compared to the 2019 Budget.

The revenue shortfall and expenditure increases lead to a projected deficit of K3504 million or K3.5 billion, these are all contained in the Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2019, which was passed last Friday, despite, the Opposition opposing it, citing it's illegality amongst other reasons.

Mr Acting Speaker, we are very concerned that the Prime Minister and his Treasurer have once again lied and misled the Parliament into approving the Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2019, which we find it to be legally defective.

Mr Acting Speaker, the issue surrounds the nature of the K392. 6 million. If you look at it very carefully, you will find that the K392.6 million as part of your deficit which is K3.5 billion and on the other hand on your own Budget Papers, you have stated that you are going to fund the K392.6 million as debt financing and on the other hand you are now directing the Treasury to access that money from the consolidated revenue.

So, you are now having two sources of funding to actually appropriate K392.6 million and in total if you look at it, you are actually already asking for K785.2 million.

05/05

My questions are as follows:

The explanatory notes to Members of the National Parliament on the Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2019 states and I quote, 'Part 3, re-appropriation and additional gain in revenue of

K392.6 million', we all know that revenue shortfalls was revised downwards in 2019 Supplementary Budget by K1,245 million.

(1) Can the Prime Minister explain to this honourable House and to the people of Papua New Guinea, where the K392.6 million additional gains in revenue come from?

(2) Again we see another misleading description of the K392.6 million in the Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2019, the heading on Part 3, reads 'grants of K392.6 million for additional appropriation'. Can the Prime Minister confirm if this is actually a grant? And if it is, what is the source? We thought that K392.6 million was already included as part of the K3.5 billion budget deficit for debt financing

(3) Based on the following premise, *Part 3, Section 3* of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2019 states, 'grants of K392.6 million for additional appropriation subject to authorisation from the Minister, the Secretary for Treasury may issue out of the Consolidated Revenue Funds and apply for additional expenditure for the year ending 31st December 2019 the sum of K392.6 million'.

Mr Acting Speaker, the Prime Minister as being the former Finance Minister for eight years should be aware that Consolidated Revenue Trust funds holds all tax money collected by the Internal Revenue Commission and PNG Customs, it does not hold loan money.

Prime Minister would you not agree that to direct the Secretary of Treasury, under the Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2019 to specifically take out K293.2 million from the consolidated revenue trust fund is an illegal direction and therefore criminal.

(4) Mr Acting Speaker, question 4 is again based on the following premise. We believe that this Parliament has been misled into approving a Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2019 to direct the Secretary for Treasury to conduct an illegal act. The amount of K392.6 million is to be financed out of the borrowing and is already part of the K3.5 billion deficit to be financed by the borrowing. It is not additional surplus revenue or grant to be taken out of consolidated revenue trust fund that holds the tax revenue collections by the State, as we are all aware of and believe.

Mr Acting Speaker, my question number four therefore is as follows:

4.1) Can the Prime Minister explain the nature of K392.6 million?

4.2) What does it represent?

4.3) Can the Prime Minister agree that his government has misled Parliament to approve a Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2019 based on deception, lies and misleading information on the 2019 Supplementary Budget?

(5) Mr Acting Speaker, my question number five to the Prime Minister is based on the following premise. I want to remind ourselves in this honourable House that the budget is a

serious piece of legislation that derives from the National *Constitution* and supported by other laws including the *Fiscal Responsibilities Act* as amended. The impeachment and removal of president Delma Rousef of Brazil by the Parliament of Brazil in 2016 and charged with criminal administrative misconduct for breaking Brazilian budget laws including that country's constitution and their fiscal responsibility law was a serious matter and therefore, Mr Acting Speaker,

5.1) Can the Prime Minister acknowledge and confirm that the actions of the Treasurer to reject the Mid-Year Economic Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) Report produced and tabled by the Treasurer in 2019 with its revised budget deficit estimate of K2.3 billion, and a budget blowout of K506 million was wrong and not legal?

5.2) Did the National Executive Council have a role to approve the Treasurer's rejection of the 2019 MYEFO Report and the setting up of a due diligence team to review the 2019 Budget outside of the MYEFO?

5.3) If not, can the Prime Minister confirm whether the Treasurer has the legal power and authority to reject the MYEFO Report outside of the Cabinet decision?

5.4) And if so, can the Prime Minister specify which law gives him that power and authority to do so?

(6) Can the Prime Minister inform this Parliament if he is prepared to get Parliament to repeal the Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2019 and bring it back to Parliament a 2019 Supplementary Budget that is based on the MYEFO Report and not just a report by some due diligence team that is not approved by the Cabinet.

06/05

If the Prime Minister is not prepared to take this action, is he prepared to sack his Treasurer or resign because he has misled and lied to this Parliament?

Mr Acting Speaker, for these lies, deception and misleading of Parliament to pass the Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2019, some provisions which are downright illegal and lies. We find that the actions of the Treasurer and the Prime Minister clearly represents and administrative criminal conduct in direct contravention of our nation's budget laws and *Constitution*. It is therefore, incumbent on the Prime Minister to take the necessary actions to urgently correct the shameful act and do the honorable thing; sack his Treasurer and himself to step aside as the Prime Minister.

Mr William Powi – Point of Order! Whilst we appreciate the good Opposition Leader’s series of questions. When we were in the previous government, we did not know how the revenue collection was happening. We had no visibility and no idea how the revenue collection was taking place. We had no idea how the budget performance was taking place. Now we know. This has been dissected, the operations of the PNG economy is made to come to light. Let me bring you to this record here, statistics, and deficit from 2019 stands at 30.8 per cent. From the MYEFO Report from Treasury Department, it stands at 31.8 per cent deficit.

If we had not dissected and made this information available and we have breached the law and have gone over the debt to GDP level. Thank God that we are now in the clear and made aware of these things. And now the due diligence team has come up with a report and said that we have gone past 41.2 per cent. The record is right here. What do you do as a responsible Government?

Let us know as to what we were not made aware of and let us put ourselves in the clear. Do not come here and tell lies. All I want is for the Honourable Opposition Leader to put the record straight, because you have gone past the revenue. The records are before you, no one is misleading you. You have gone past the expenditure trend. What do you do as a responsible Government? Do you sit back and let the people suffer? You have to commend the government and be responsive. Do not come and scrummage and mislead the people of this country.

Mr Acting Speaker – Honourable Governor, are you debating?

Mr Pila Niningi – Point of Order! I want him to withdraw the unparliamentary language. He has been using the words, lies, criminal, fraud and lying, all these are unparliamentary, so can he withdraw these words? This is the House where we are mandate by the people and we have to be treated with respect.

07/05

Mr Acting Speaker – Honourable Minister your Point of Order is out of order.

Mr BELDEN NAMA – Mr Acting Speaker, I directed the questions to the Prime Minister and if they want to become Prime Ministers, then we can have many Prime Ministers on the Floor of Parliament.

Mr Acting Speaker, my questions are very simple. There are two loans, two sources of funding; one is the debt financing of K392.6 million and then on the same legislation you are already directing the Finance to give you another K392.6 million and it adds to K785.2 million.

So can the Prime Minister explain?

Why are we not sitting on our seats properly? Is there something under your seats?

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Thankyou Mr Acting Speaker, I thank the Opposition Leader who continues to do an excellent job on the other side of the House.

It's only fair that he is asking this question to ensure that we are doing things correctly and for the betterment of our country at heart.

Mr Acting Speaker, this Parliament is now privileged to appreciate the state of our economy in totality for the first time in many years.

The rationale of our Government on this side appointing a former colleague of the honourable Opposition Leader, honourable Ian Ling Stuckey as the Treasurer in our present team, with respect to former Treasurers, I have the privilege of also having them on this side of the House including present Minister for National Planning and Minister for Finance.

But irrespective of how many numbers we all put there was a stereotype in our economy. A perception is that someone is hiding the numbers somewhere and cooking the numbers somewhere. So as a responsible Prime Minister, elected by 101 Members of Parliament, I felt that it is my duty to appoint a Treasurer who can come fresh into Treasury.

And I say this with greatest respect to former Treasurers and the perception in our society that every one of us including myself who were a part of previous government will try to defend whatever numbers previous government had.

So with no preconceived views in mind but with the intention to ensure we get the correct numbers once and for all out of Treasury, and to establish a baseline, basic fundamental macro-economic numbers in which we can launch out into 2020 Budget preparation and beyond we allowed the honourable Ian Ling Stuckey to dissect clearly what was taking place at Treasury.

And so in that dissection, and if I may Mr Acting Speaker, with respect to the Opposition Leader asking, he has outlaid series of questions and I struggled to follow every detail of the questions that he raised.

But if he can furnish to me the questions in writing and I will provide him a detailed response before Parliament rises later this week.

But just to appease his heart and satisfy his mind, including many of our citizens of our country who deserves to know this too, and he is raising some issues that needs to be also appreciated in totality.

Let me use this time to reflect back on what has taken place in the Supplementary Budget.

Firstly, no one was ignorant of Mid-Year Economic Outlook (MYEFO) that our own Treasury puts out.

08/05

MYEFO was establishing the statistics as of June this year, mid-way through, it also indicates some projection to the conclusion of this fiscal year.

The 2019 Supplementary Budget is not MYEFO rather it is an event that is taking place four months after MYEFO, circumstances can change and the economy can shrink or increase but one thing that the 2019 Supplementary Budget affirms is the fact that a trend, as pointed or correlated by MYEFO, was affirmed but more greater. The trend is simple, revenue was shrinking and expenditure was increasing in the MYEFO, in June this year.

Mr Acting Speaker, the 2019 Supplementary Budget, confirms this but at an alarming, if not an exponential trend that was, whether by design or default, something that Treasury, under previous the regime was not able to clearly extrapolate, articulate and point out so that non-economist minds like myself and the Opposition Leader can fully appreciate in totality. –

Mr Belden Namah – Point Of Order! Mr Acting Speaker, the Prime Minister is going on and on about the Budget but my question is simple. You have two sources of funding of K392.6 million so can you explain how this is possible?

Firstly, you are financing it through debt financing and secondly you are giving direction which means that you are not only getting K392.6 million but you will be getting K785. 2 million. You can see this all on the budget paper. It is simple, just answer the question.

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Mr Acting Speaker, if it was just one question he asked I would have given him a direct answer but he asked a convoluted series of questions.

Mr Belden Namah – Point Of Order! I seek leave of Parliament to give the questions to the Prime Minister.

(Uproar in the Chamber)

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Mr Acting Speaker, with due respect to his lengthy questions, I am also giving very lengthy answers.

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Mr JAMES MARAPE – And, that K392.6 million that he alluded to is part of that question so an answer is coming back in that respect.

So, Mr Acting Speaker, MYEFO was not ignored but it was acknowledged and it took place in June and we are handling Supplementary Budget in October and the numbers will be concluded in December for 2019 Fiscal Year.

Budgets are always focused at policy documents and so in November and October we are focusing how 2019 will conclude and in that focus we are affirming the trend established at MYEFO where the revenue is shrinking and expenditure is increasing.

But, interestingly, our Supplementary Budget also embraces and treats certain issues of debt that was never treated by the O'Neill led Government. For instance, we are treating valuation of a total debt that are now matured for repayment like the forex issue, in terms of the valuation of the entire loan that has matured.

Secondly, we are treating other debts that was never embraced as the National Government Debts but the Sovereign State of Papua New Guinea was repaying them, like the Motukea Port and the NCDC Roads which we appreciate but the State and people of this country are repaying all these through the Waigani Public Accounts.

So, we have embraced world standards definers in economy like the World Bank and IMF to come on board for the first time to add credibility to the numbers that we are scrutinising.

Instead of myself, the Treasurer and Cabinet running the numbers to Parliament or the Nation so that everyone has their view to pay in respect to the numbers we put out and someone might think that because we are a new government we are having an issue against the former Government-

09/05

So every credible international benchmark in so far as measuring the economy is concerned. The IMF, World Bank, ADB, our own Treasury, our own Cabinet and this Parliament will put through the process firstly, affirming what the numbers are and secondly

allowing this process to come to Parliament in which the fullest measure of Parliament went through this one and passed last week and which I am so thankful about.

Mr Acting Speaker, the K392 million that he is alluding to is not new money. The Treasurer did indicate in his Supplementary Budget that there will be an element of debt financing. What do you do in the context of revenue shrunk? If revenue is shrunk and we are collecting only K10 billion or K11 billion, we will have no money to finance ongoing road contracts, retire our TFF commitments, our health commitments, public service bill wage which has increased by almost K300 million to K500 million if I am not wrong.

In the face of an expanded demand for resource in our present need, the Treasurer was very responsible. In his responsibility and he never touched allocations to the provinces, especially those that run key government services like education and health for our provinces where the 90 percent of our population live. He also was responsible for making slashes right across all sectors in our view facing only two months that are left. We will not have the ability to spend all if we ever raise money.

Mr Acting Speaker, facing December, there was an element of pulling back resources. I take this time to assure Members of Parliament that if those programs are multi-year programs secured properly through documentation and plan, they will reappear in the 2020 Budget. The Planning Minister is taking carriage of this to assess which programs to run in 2020. But to tidy the defect and to tidy the situation that we are faced in 2019 where revenue has shrunk and expenditure has increased those are the adjustments that we have made.

Mr Acting Speaker, the K392 million that he is alluding to is simple. From within the shrunk revenue base and from within the PIP envelope reallocation that his Treasurer has carved out was allocated to few other specific areas. For instance, disaster has received some money. Bougainville has also received some money. You tell me that we can't pay Bougainville for the constructions. We are allocating for the first time and we have been running contracts after contracts on borrowed money. For the first time the PNG Government is putting straight and retiring some of these major contracts. Most of these contractors are local Papua New Guinean businessmen and women and we can't keep them hanging.

Mr Acting Speaker, we are trying to reallocate within the constraints of what we can raise. The element of increase in expenditure including those that are debt competent was acknowledged and that is why you are seeing an increased element that is appearing in the expenditure area.

Mr Acting Speaker, I will do my best endeavour to go through the script of every question that he has asked. We are being responsible within the context of what we can afford

in balance of this year. Let me say thank you to every Member of Parliament, chairmen of every district development authorities, as governors of respective provincial assemblies, you've also heed to the call for us to tighten the belt and make sacrifices. One must sacrifice resources that are earmarked for your districts and provinces. Many times we are accused that we are being overly complacent and reckless but Members of this House have shown responsibility for the first time. I am yet to hear critics from the other side of the House.

A few critics have stood up but have never complimented Members for making the sacrifice. Let me commend the Members of Parliament. This is our country as much as it is theirs.

10/05

And as responsible leaders we need to tighten our belts and the reallocation of K392 million, it is made to specific areas, for instance Bougainville. There are some allocations for SME and commerce as we want to grow the economy. And there is some allocation on disasters, so when disaster strikes such as heavy rains, roads being washed away, volcanic eruptions or earthquakes and you ask the government for help. So, we are trying our best within the context of what we can raise. And as we are coming to the 2020 Budget preparation within the context of the economic fundamentals; especially the numbers that we have established in the 2019 Supplementary Budget. and as in my speech, the 2019 supplementary was all about getting the numbers correct for us to prepare for the 2020 Budget.

And for the greater comfort of my colleague, the opposition leader, I will get his questions in writing and get a detailed statement out to him, both to the Parliament and paid media for the media to appreciate exactly what is the supplementary budget.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – EXTENDED TIME FOR QUESTIONS

Motion (by **Mr Peter Yama**) put –

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

There being no absolute majority, motion not carried.

Reports of Outstanding Commission of Inquiries

Mr PETER YAMA – My question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Attorney -General and I would like the Chair and the Prime Minister to take note. Almost a year and half has gone since I raised a question on this Floor of Parliament but before I ask my question, I would like to acknowledge and thank the present government for trying its best to bring to Parliament the ICAC Bill. I am happy and will look forward to support and them. As currently the people's perception of our people is that as we come into Parliament we are seen as rich, and corrupt and not serving the people. The ICAC bill will have an impact on our people and if we want to get back PNG, we must start with ourselves.

My question is; 15 months ago, I raised a question that was in relation to all the Commission of Inquiries; it started with the Sandline Crisis, PNGBC, Finance Inquiry, SBL, Land issues and others. All these inquiries are outstanding, PNG tax payers' monies have been spent for those inquiries to be done for good governance and accountability. And bring all these people who are corrupt to justice. That is the whole idea of holding inquiries. The Prime Minister, you are now adamant to speak out about fighting corruption and I fully support you. And bring the ICCAC bill which has been sitting there since 2015, doing nothing. You are the one who will be remembered by the people of Papua New Guinea for bringing this bill.

11/05

Mr Acting Speaker, when will all these inquiries that are outstanding which has cost the State millions of kina be dealt with? This Government has gone ahead and instituted an inquiry on the UBS Loan.

There are outstanding inquiries including PNG Banking Corporation which was sold for just K80 million and the Bank itself is worth over K6-K9 billion. When will all these accounting firms, lawyers and Queens Counsel who collaborated in this crimes with recommendations already forwarded when will they be prosecuted?

Mr DAVIS STEVEN – Mr Acting Speaker, I thank the Honourable Governor for Madang for bringing our minds back to what is an important priority of the Marape-Steven Government in terms of the rule of law may I put it that way. One aspect of it is the fight against the perception of corruption in our country. By international assessment has ranked our country poorly for so many decades now and it is one of our priorities now together with the efforts to improve our laws and enforcement side of things. Where improvement of law enforcement is concerned in terms of the fight against corruption as the honourable Governor

has said that our priority one has been to get the work on ICAC completed and to be brought to this Parliament for debate for consideration and if agreed upon passed so that the Independent Commission Against Corruption can be established in our term of Parliament.

Mr Acting Speaker, while I have the opportunity the National Executive Council has approved the text of the ICAC Bill in accordance with law that will now be passed to the Deputy Speaker and the text of the Bill will be reproduced and gazetted in the National Gazette for public consumption. As well as that my department will be putting that Bill on our website for the benefit of our country.

Part of our strategy in terms of ensuring the rule of law is seen to be alive and active in our time especially under the leadership of our current Prime Minister is to take a stock of all the commissions of inquiry that have taken place in the past.

Mr Acting Speaker, certain of the Commissions of Inquiry are subject of Court proceedings. In fact on the current assessment by a task force that we have set up we know that there are one or two which involve Court cases and Court Orders preventing these inquiry reports being presented. My department is working on them.

Mr Acting Speaker, I will bring a Parliamentary Statement in this regard because as the honourable Governor has indicated we have become a country of Commissions of Inquiries that often times reports don't find their way into the Parliament where it should be.

Mr Acting Speaker, this Government started off by bringing a Report of the Ombudsman Commission into the UBS Loan to indicate that we want to show that the laws a passed in this Honourable House and must be complied with.

As to the question of prosecution on inquiries, we need to be mindful of the nature of the report whether they are admissible in Court, who can prosecute and what sort of action is allowable or permissible. But if indeed we all want to ensure that prosecution is conducted we need to now begin to invest in capacity to build the office of the Public Prosecutors Office, our Courts both the lower and higher courts.

That is why the Marape-Steven Government in terms of our strategy to ensure that what reports of Commissions of Inquiry are available and ready to be tabled will be tabled. Those that need to be cleared and freed by way of Court Orders we will deal with them –

Mr Peter Yama – Point of Order! Mr Acting Speaker, my point of order is some of those inquiries are not before the Supreme Court. For example the Sandline Crisis.

The recommendations are very clear, the accountants, professional con-man, lawyers including the Queens Counsel received monies. Monies went into their accounts and how

much they have withdrawn these are all documented and it is beyond reasonable doubt. I am not a lawyer but a learned man and I know. Why can't these people be prosecuted now? The evidence here is very clear. Why are they free when they continuously continue to commit serious crimes in the country.

Mr DAVIS STEVEN – Mr Acting Speaker, obviously we don't need to be learned in the law to know that a crime must be punished.

12/05

Let me put it on record that the *Constitution* creates a system of Government where relevant Authorities including the Public Prosecutor and the Commissioner of Police, independent institutions and organs of Government who have independence are not subject to direction and control of the Executive Arm of Government.

Mr Acting Speaker, what we are doing as a Government for the first time is taking stock of what is available and what action can occur. Let me also put a warning here for those of us who are also enthusiastic about the rule of law which recognises all of us as below the law. No one above. That is to stop politicizing the Police Force, the Judiciary and the systems of Government but start supporting sensible policy such as the ability to move from consumption to revenue based focused as a Government so that we can start doing the repair work as necessary. We must strengthen confidence by our people in our systems. Strengthen confidence to the international observers in the systems that we are referring to.

Mr Acting Speaker, Commissions of Inquiry will continue. The only reason the last one did not proceed was because there was a Court Order preventing it so under the former Prime Minister an administrative inquiry was instituted. Yes I hear the sentiment and we have heard that sentiment when we went to elections in 2017 National Elections. Our people are sick and tired of corruption. Our people want to break free and move this nation into a position moving into the future. That is a big task.

Mr Acting Speaker, on the question that is before the Parliament now is that Commission of Inquiry Reports will be audited, analysed and brought to this Parliament if need be. As to prosecution, obviously we need to push where we must prosecute. If we need to do recovery action we must do recovery action because we have now passed what they call the *Proceeds of Crime Act* for the first time and now we are bringing the whistle blowers with the Opposition Leader and his front man. We are committed and serious. With the courage and

passion we have from behind us including the Governor for Madang, I am sure that this Parliament will do the right thing for our country going into the future.

Mr Peter Numu – Point of Order! Mr Acting Speaker, can the Attorney General and Minister for Justice as the head of Justice in this country inform Parliament whether he is able to give directions to the Public Prosecutor regarding any evidence in any Commission of Inquiry must proceed to prosecute this law breakers. Why are we protected by the privileges of Parliament? If former Member for Pomio, Paul Tienstein, can go behind bars for a mere signature –

Mr Acting Speaker – You are raising a new question on your point of order. Minister.

Mr Peter Numu – My Point of Order is in regard to when will the Justice department and relevant Commission of Inquiries proceed to prosecute law breakers –

13/05

Can this Government tell this Parliament when will the Commission of Inquiry reports be tabled in Parliament?

MR ACTING SPEAKER – Honourable Governor Question time has lapsed. I will reserve your right to ask your questions tomorrow morning when you come early.

**OUTBREAK AND CONTAINMENT OF POLIO VIRUS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA –
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT– MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER**

Mr ELIAS KAPAVORE (Pomio – Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS) – Mr Acting Speaker, I bring to your attention and to my fellow Members of Parliament an insight into the recent outbreak of the immunizable disease, Poliomyelitis, or POLIO in sort and efforts in its containment.

Mr Acting Speaker, PNG has been experiencing low immunization coverage for some time. Our coverage for all vaccines were less than 40 percent for the last five (5) years or more.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a nation must maintain immunization coverage of above 80-90 percent at all times to provide herd immunity to protect our children and the population from Vaccine Preventable Diseases. However, ours was not the case and this placed our children at a compromising position. Therefore, the nation was hit by an outbreak from a strain of polio virus called "Circulating Vaccine-Derived Poliovirus" abbreviated as CVDPV in 2018.

The first case was reported from Lae in June 2018 followed by a case in Enga and spread to a total of nine (9) provinces. The Government based on advice from Department of Health and WHO declared a Health Emergency and took immediate action to control the epidemic. National Department of Health (NDOH) began to establish the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) to monitor and support the outbreak response. Subsequently, Provincial Emergency Operation Centres (PEOC) were established in all the 22 provinces of PNG, with WHO support to coordinate the polio outbreak response.

Mr Acting Speaker, a total of 26 confirmed cases from 9 provinces have been detected. These provinces include — EHP, Enga, Morobe, NCD, Gulf, Madang, SHP and ESP. The most recent confirmed case was detected in Angoram district in East Sepik Province on October 18, 2018. From those, only one (1) child died from the disease while everyone else survived and are now living.

To control and prevent the disease from spreading into the vulnerable and unvaccinated population, five rounds of Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIA) were successfully completed in 2018. The immunization campaigns initially targeted children below 5 years of age. However, the age group for vaccination was expanded to all children below 15 years following detection of CVDPV1 cases in older children.

14/05

Mr Acting Speaker, the National Immunization Program was massive and was encouraging. It covered more than 90 percent in all rounds of supplementary immunisation activities across the country. This is a good achievement thus all those who participated in the operation must be commended.

Mr Acting Speaker, this was a truly national massive operation which included 12,000 volunteers and health care workers being mobilized and deployed to all the villages and households to vaccinate every child and leaving no one behind. A total of K77 million was spent on this outbreak and was mostly financed by our partners in health which included; UNICEF (K4.6m) and WHO (K71.3m), to which we owe a great deal of gratitude. I want to

thank everyone who supported us in this program especially our partners. We must also thank NZAID, GAVI or GPEI (Global polio eradication initiative), Rotary International, US Centre for Disease Control, private companies like Oil Search Limited, PJV, NBPOL, TNT, LD Logistics, DHL, Air Niugini, PNG Air, Heli-Niugini helicopter company, all the print and mass media, the Provincial Health Authorities and the provinces.

Mr Acting Speaker, I must take this time to commend all our partners for their great support to control this epidemic, which we could not have done it alone. It took collaborative efforts of everyone from individuals, corporate organizations to development and bilateral partners who must be acknowledged and commended by this honourable Parliament.

Mr Acting Speaker, I am also indebted and must pass our heartfelt sympathy to two nurses who were raped in Lae, Morobe Province as they went into the villages to immunize our children. I must also convey our heartfelt gratitude and condolences to the families of five health workers: three in Finchaffen, Morobe Province and two in AROB, who sacrificed their lives and got lost at sea when they went out to immunize our children to control the epidemic.

Mr Acting Speaker, let me inform this house that it is not easy to deliver health services, particularly during emergencies and epidemics. Health workers even go to the extreme by putting their lives at risks even into death as it happened in this Polio Epidemic. That is why, during the normal good times, we must give adequate resources to the Health Sector to immunize our children at all times.

Mr Acting Speaker, we have done well to interrupt polio epidemic and no more new cases were detected again since October 2018. We however must completely block it and prevent any more outbreaks to ensure the country is "Polio Free" again. We must improve the routine immunization and strengthen our surveillance systems. Polio returned because we as a government did not ensure that routine immunization was fully funded and implemented every year. We must fund and implement essential vaccination and immunization programs to prevent outbreaks and unnecessary deaths. Our coverage must be above 90 percent in all communities at all times. Anything below that will experience outbreaks and that will be costly again in funding, manpower, energy and even lives lost to control them.

Mr Acting Speaker, there is an intervention currently undertaken by UNICEF to improve the cold chain systems with the installation of the hybrid solar and windmill systems which is currently being launched by UNICEF and we are now expanding this to our country. This particular system will ensure vaccines will be readily available in our rural health facilities at any given time. I will present to NEC the new initiative through the UNICEF arrangement on Savings Lives, Spreading Smiles that will be launched soon.

Mr Acting Speaker, I must take this opportunity, while presenting this report, call on all our leaders to ensure the health staff in your districts are conducting Maternal and Child Health Clinics at all times, the cold chain fridges and systems are working.

Moreover, Mr Acting Speaker, most of these clinics are conducted using any transport systems; therefore, we must make sure we have good roads and jetties at all times and buy MCH vehicles and boats to equip our health centres for the MCH and disease control programs in our communities.

Finally, but not the least; Mr Acting Speaker, our health system is working and effective and can deliver all the health services including disease prevention to our people as long as the health system is adequately resourced with funding and human resources, without which, we will continue to experience such epidemics.

Mr Acting Speaker, I thank you and the Parliament for giving me time to talk on behalf of our children so that their health is guaranteed at all times. To conclude, I want to thank all the Members of Parliament for using some of your DSIP Funds in supporting this Polio fight that -

15/05

And as you can see attached today, some of the performance in the respective districts are so you can see where your districts per in this particular time. Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr RAINBO PAITA (Finschhafen – Minister for Communication and Energy) – I move –

That the Parliament take note of the paper.

Mr Acting Speaker, I thank the Minister for Health for the good work he had put in since he took office. I see three, especially in the health workers we have, I would like to contribute my debate especially on those health workers that we have throughout the country.

Mr Acting Speaker, I note from the statement that particularly for my district and from province from the isolated incidents that had happened in the process of carrying out vaccination program. And particularly the deaths that occurred and I note that three were from my district.

These are occasions where Minister try to take note and my challenge for us as a government would be those workers who are staffed especially in those districts.

Mr Acting Speaker, most of them used to face a lot of difficulties especially in those rural areas. And when time for carrying out vaccination, most of the districts faces difficulties in trying to support initiatives such as vaccination or distribution of drugs or any programs that are coordinated particularly in the health sector as well as programs in other sectors.

And in those interventions that the district makes, as a government we must have greater partnership so that we the districts too can take ownerships of those programs. And also given the constraints in funding we have, how we can participate more in terms of funding allocations that the district used to receive.

Sometimes we don't get DSIP in tranches quickly and we are faced with difficulties in terms of supporting those national programs that we have. So just basing out from especially district to come out from rural areas.

Mr Acting Speaker, I noted that we face issues and that is prevalent throughout the country in respect of those other district but particularly for my district as well and I speak on behalf of the other districts that are isolated in terms of logistic support.

Minister through the department can take note and also give us greater support if there is any support through his department can put in in terms of giving more specific support to the districts where logistics support is bigger and the geography doesn't allow for those programs to reach the most isolated places.

And I commend the good Member for the drive that he has in his Ministry and the work that he is doing and we will continue to support him and I commend him on the statement he had made on the Floor.

Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Sitting suspended from 12 noon to 2 p.m.

16/05

Debate (on motion by **Mr Rainbo Paita**) adjourned.

Mr RAINBO PAITA – Mr Acting Speaker, due to problem being experienced with the air conditioning system, I would like to move that Parliament do now adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion (by **Mr Rainbo Paita**) agreed to –

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 2.10 p.m.