

SEVENTH DAY

Thursday 17 October 2019

DRAFT HANSARD

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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Amendments cannot be accepted over the phone.

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



HARRY MOMOS

Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

SEVENTH DAY

Thursday 17 October 2019

The Acting Speaker (**Mr Jeffrey Komal**) took the Chair at 10 a.m.

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

Sitting suspended.

Mr Acting Speaker again took the Chair at 11.10 a.m., and invited the Member for Rabaul, **Honourable Dr Allan Marat** to say Prayers:

‘Father we stand in need of you. We stand in need of the forgiveness of your Son, Jesus Christ and we stand in need of the empowerment of your Holy Spirit in us. Father, we thank you for this life, for strength, for help, for fellowship for one another as Members of this National Parliament. We praise you Father for giving us the responsibility to look after your people on the Floor of this Parliament. Father, we are sorry for our failures and for having failed you, your Son, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. We have failed our people in our various electorates in many ways and we pray for your forgiveness this morning. We ask you Jesus that you will forgive all our disobedience and all our trespasses; wash our individual lives clean with your precious blood and set us right with you as we commence our meeting this morning. Father we commit the rest of this day and all our deliberations into your hands, may your spirit will guide them and you will be with us throughout this day. This is our prayer and we offer it to you Father in no other name but the precious name of Jesus Christ. Amen’

QUESTIONS

Gulf-Southern Highlands Highway Status Update

Mr WESLEY RAMINAI – Thank you Mr Acting Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Works Minister.

This is with regards to the road between Semberigi and Maloloko that is within my electorate. It is a very important road because it links the Highlands Province to the coast and that is the Southern Highlands Highway. I think this project has been stalled for the last three

years. This is the road where before the project was built, it was promised by the government some 20 to 30 years ago and to date, oil and gas have been removed from Gobe, yet this promised road is still not being delivered.

Can the Minister inform this Parliament on when this road construction will recommence so that we can start having people going back and forth from Kikori up the highlands?

As you may be aware, a policeman was shot in Tari recently. There are rumours that people are blocking the road in Chimbu Province because the policeman is from Chimbu and that this blocks about five provinces in the Highlands from receiving services.

02/07

Mr James Marape – Point of Order! With respect to the Member asking the question, Let me just indicate that my electorate Tari always receives blame for every bad thing that happens in Hela Province. The killing took place on the Koroba side of the Hela Province, so you must ask your question properly because I take offence when Tari is mentioned at Gordons Market and all over the place.

This is just a minor pointer.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER – Point of Order is in order.

Mr WESLEY RAMINAI – So, this is a very important road so I would like to find out from the Minister for Works.

Kikori Wharf Update

(2) Can the Minister also inform Parliament on when the Kikori Wharf will be built?

Mr MICHEAL NALI – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I thank the Member for Kagua-Erave for asking these important questions.

The road that the Member is referring to is the Southern Highlands-Gulf Highway. There are only 12 kilometres remaining and for the last two years no work has been done on it.

In the previous Government, there was an approval of K50 million under the Tax Credit Scheme by Oil Search and that money is available but we have some issues.

In the November, we will bring an amendment to Parliament that will clear the path for the Tax Credit Scheme to apply.

At the moment under the Tax Credit Scheme, we have a 0.75 per cent arrangement but the Government made changes and increased the Tax Credit facility up to two per cent out of which one per cent must go to non-resource provinces and one per cent to the resource provinces.

So, as soon as we make this amendment in November, the process will apply and work should recommence on the on the remaining 12 kilometres from Semberigi to Marawaka.

Mr Acting Speaker, on the question referring to the wharf, this is a major project for the Gulf and Southern Highlands Provincial Governments and the Department of Works. This is also under the Tax Credit Scheme, we are planning to build this facility in Kikori. This is because once it is built, it can service many of the Highlands Provinces so this issue is on track.

Normally these things take a lot of time when it comes to doing the feasibility studies and securing funding but the good news is that it is part of the program and eventually a wharf will be built down there.

Thank you, Acting Speaker.

\$100 Million Indian Exim Bank Loan Status Update

Mr JONNY ANANAIAS ALONK – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, my question is directed to our Prime Minister.

Around 2015 or 2016 when you were the Minister for Finance, an amount of US\$100 million was given to the Papua New Guinea Government by the Indian Government.

This money was directed to three areas, the first US\$20 million was allocated to West New Britain Highway.

03/07

The other US\$20 million was allocated to Mount Hagen Court House and US\$60 million was earmarked for the construction of Baiyer-Madang road.

(1) Is the Prime Minister aware of this? If he is, can he inform the people of this country on where this money is parked today?

(2) If this amount is already in the country than what are we going to use this money for?

Because this country needs funds to develop infrastructure.

(3) Are these funds used up already, if so where is the acquittals to prove that it's been used for its purpose?

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. Let me confirm to the Member for Middle-Ramu that yes, that K100 million was secured but we haven't had access to the funding and it's still in the process.

I apologise to the proposed recipients of the projects.

The funding for the projects has taken some time for Treasury to draw this down. But I will instruct Treasury today to start the process of drawing down this facility from India Exim Bank. This was a very soft funding that was provided to us by the Government and people of India through the India Exim arrangements. We will start the process to accommodate the Baiyer-Madang Road and the West New Britain Highway so they receive the support that they deserve.

Review Appointment of Departmental Heads

Mr PETER NUMU – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, for recognising the people of Eastern Highlands on this Floor.

I want to direct my question to the Prime Minister, and I want the Minister for Treasury, Finance, Rural Development, and, National Planning and Monitoring to take note.

My question is in relation to the legality of the appointment of certain departmental heads; the Secretary for Finance, National Planning and Monitoring, Treasury and another two.

Mr Acting Speaker, on the 8 of May 2019, these departmental heads signed their four-year contracts as per their appointment by the National Executive Council.

That eventuated after the Supreme Court three-man bench declared in the case of Dr Philip Kereme vs Peter O'Neill and others, which according to the *Public Service (Management) Act 2014* as amended allows for Ministerial Executive Appointment Committee (MEAC) to be involved in the appointment of the departmental heads, the Supreme Court has declared that as unconstitutional.

In other words, the Supreme Court removed MEAC by virtue of nullifying the very legislation as amended that caters for MEAC).

The Supreme Court in this case restored the powers and responsibility of the Public Service Commission to be involved in the appointment of departmental heads.

Therefore, the appointments made after the Supreme Court decision by the NEC is unconstitutional and illegal and suspicious in nature when we were in the process of the Vote of No Confidence.

04/07

Mr Acting Speaker, the NEC made the appointments after the Supreme Court made the decision.

My questions are as follows:

(1) Can the Prime Minister and the Chairman of the National Executive Council confirm to this Parliament whether the appointment of those key departmental heads are constitutional?

(2) If it is not, can the Prime Minister reverse that decision and follow the proper process of appointment by way of advertisement and engagement of the Public Service Commission in these decisions?

Mr Speaker, with that, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister for announcing that all the departmental heads will go through the advertisement process.

My third question in relation to the current Finance Secretary who is the head of Expenditure and also as the Chairman of the National Procurement Commission, he is the head of procurement too.

(3) Can the Prime Minister explain to this Parliament, if there is a conflict of interest between the positions, especially when the same person is heading both Expenditure and Procurement?

Before, I ask my last question, the day before yesterday, when the question raised by Leader of Opposition regarding the figures of the Supplementary Budget. You mentioned that there are some people there who are cooking up the figures and you want to correct that. That is fine, at least there is a light at the end of the tunnel. But, yet the biggest question in this Parliament House is how many times will such mistakes be corrected?

Mr Prime Minister, through the Speaker, if what you said is true, I must say that the very people who are contributing towards cooking up of figures are the bureaucrats, the

departmental heads, such as Finance Secretary, Planning and Monitoring Secretary, the Secretary for Treasury and so forth.

These are the officers responsible for cooking up the figures because they are the departmental heads and they advise the Government.

They are either directly or indirectly involved, irrespective; they are the main collaborators. They are facilitators of their masters or the main wrongdoers who brought this country into this financial crises.

(4) Why is your Government still keeping those main culprits when Papua New Guinea has high hopes in your leadership?

Obviously, the Prime Minister witnessed that in his last visit to Eastern Highlands because the people trust in your vision.

(5) Can the Prime Minister remove such officers who are misleading the Government?

Remember, I was the first one to move, I was the first one that created that leaked pool of water on this Floor.

Mr Michael Nali – Point of Order! Acting Mr Speaker, I have a lot of respect for our young Governor, but the Papua New Guineans he is referring to are professionals in their own right. I feel that the use of the word culprit is inappropriate

05/07

When you talk about culprits you talk about criminals, so the Governor should rephrase his statement. Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER – Point of order in order!

A

Mr PETER NUMU – Mr Acting Speaker, if I can substitute it with the term ‘wrong doers’. I think culprits and wrong doers means the same. They should have advised this government properly.

Remember, I was the first to move, I am the first stone on the Floor that created the ripples of this big pool of water. You are the Prime Minister now and my people of Eastern Highlands are waiting for this moment to come. If you can get rid of all those wrong doers in

the system of government, I will be the last person on the Opposition to join your Government. Thank you.

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. Let me thank the Governor of Eastern Highlands Province for asking a series of very important questions.

A question that is not meant to be personalized, a question that concerns the interest of every one of us going forward.

In respect to the first issue raised regarding the appointment, I think the appointments took place following a series of chains of processes.

Our government arrived at the concluding end of the chain of process that took place. In fact, they were possibly appointed prior to when we took office.

Since the Supreme Court has made its finding on MEAC, we are taking the corrective stand in respect to Supreme Court's findings to ensure that our laws are in compliance and congruent to them.

I think there is a proposed amendment on the *Public Service (Management) Act* in the notice paper today, in respect to some of those findings that the Court has made. We are very much aware of what is at play.

The second question was, if the appointments took place within the law. To satisfy the Member from any question or indication of ambiguity, I have asked the Attorney-General to look into what has taken place and confirm to all of us.

We will write back to the Member at the closure of this Parliament regarding the legality of those appointments that took place around May.

There are processes in place for the appointment of departmental heads. We arrived as government from the back drop of doing what is right for our country and we intend to stick to that path we want to pursue for our country. And part of that is getting our public servants to do the right thing and what is right.

So every departmental head has been placed on notice as part of our cleaning up process, we are saying that every public servant whose contract is up for due including chief secretary will not be re-engaged through ministerial appointment.

We will advertise every position for the country and the citizens to see. For those who are interested, they can apply through due processes and may the best applicant be selected regardless of their origin or affiliations.

06/07

Hopefully best Papua New Guineans can be appointed in that process. So, any position that is due for advertisement will be advertised and we will get qualified Papua New Guineans to fill them in.

For the record, we know that the Chief Secretary's position is due next February and I have instructed the Department of Personnel Management to advertise this position so that any qualified Papua New Guinean out there can apply.

In terms of the issues we have against office holders whether corruption or performance, I request that every Member of Parliament or concerned citizens and stakeholders, if you have issues with one serving public servant and it is a corruption issue there are processes to launch those issues with evidence. Upon launching of any corruption issue, then we will ask the officers concerned to step aside.

Secondly, our Government intends to subscribe to it to the fullest performance-based contracts. Every December, we will review as to which departmental heads are performing to our expectations as intended for by our Government on behalf of our people. So, if it is based on performance based and no departmental head is delivering to expectation including allowing for expenditure to be blown out of control by those departmental head that is an offence warranting termination or suspension of their contracts.

If we had it our way, we would have terminated a whole bunch of public servants on the basis of politics. But, we took a responsible approach and as Chairman of NEC, I gave key performance indicators to our ministers who have taken them back to the departments.

Some have already submitted what they are planning to achieve but some have not written back to us. I have taken note of those who have submitted and those who have not submitted so by December we will review our six months of being in office and make preparations for our activities in 2020.

Those who are showing lack of capacity to adjust and deliver as expected will be asked to leave. But, we are doing it in a prudent and responsible manner as we have live contracts running so we just cannot come in and terminate them.

Firstly, they are Papua New Guineans, so I want it to be performance-based termination or discipline-based termination. The onus is on those who are alleging corruption to establish evidence and follow the legitimate process that deals with corruption. And the Ministers concerned with DPM will have the opportunity to set up as a prima facie case in terms of the allegations of corruption.

So, for those allegations made against our departmental heads or any public servant out there, I ask those making allegations to take up those allegations through the right processes and we can get those persons suspended. They are not indispensable and everyone must take responsibility for their actions.

On the third question in response to the Finance Secretary wearing dual hats as the Acting Chairman of the National Procurement Authority, when I was going out as Finance Minister, there was a letter issued to various organisations including Transparency International to be part of the National Procurement Authority. As they wanted to have a solid board present and the Secretary of Finance in that capacity as Acting Chair.

We were on the lookout for a replacement for the chair. At that time, I was of the view that if Transparency International had responded positively than we would make contact with the PNG Chapter, Mr Steven, that we wanted to appoint him to chair the board but we didn't get a response and I made my resignation on the 10 of April, 2019.

So, the intention to ensure that the Secretary of Finance doesn't hold chairmanship is there.

07/07

Therefore, the Minister for Finance and Rural Development is working on it. It will be delivered to Cabinet to appoint a permanent chairman of the National Procurement Commission and allow the Secretary for Finance to continue his role on the board as a non-working chairman to run that organisation.

So, let me assure the Governor that what was intended for a temporary chairmanship has prolonged into almost a year. But the Minister for Finance and Rural Development have taken note of this question. We will attend to that once we come back to Parliament in November and appoint a permanent chairman for the National Procurement Commission.

I have responded to the fourth question by saying secretaries of department are currently holding office already have a legitimate contract with the State for their employment. We can only terminate them on legitimate reasons and it will be based on performance or lack of performance and official corruption. For so long we have allowed political interference to dilute the functionality, independence and performance of our public service.

As I said earlier, if I had it my way than some of them will not be employed as Secretaries of State because they don't see eye to eye with me in politics. They have their own political inclination.

But I will be the last to bring politics into questioning their performance. I want their performances to be terminated or maintained on the basis of performances and termination on the basis of corruption.

So for those who have corruption evidence, Minister for Police is now setting up a system and we will be bringing it on board in our November sitting. The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) and Whistle-Blowers Act have been approved in Cabinet already.

So the nation is encouraged that those whistle blowers who reveal corruption will be given protection. There is a high penalty for those giving false evidence. So we are balancing on both fronts. So those observers of corruption out there in the public space, stack up your evidences and make the allegations.

And if some of these public service leaders have corruption issues against them then I will be the last person in standing in defence for them. But I just can't, on the basis of hear say or politics terminate a Papua New Guinean who is faithfully serving. We need to stack up their evidence against an allegation or if they are not delivering to the expectations of the current Government.

And that expectation will be fully realised as we review what we have done in this year, as we took office in the first six months. Around December, we will sit down with ministers concerned and take stock of how their departmental heads are performing and hopefully make a very informed and learned judgment based on performances going on into 2020.

As I mentioned earlier, if public service heads are listening in and their performance is ultimately based on their financial management.

We are going through tough times and if you are expending beyond what is budgeted for unnecessary expenditures such as hire cars, recruitment of personnel, unnecessary meetings, conferences and taking unbudgeted overseas trips are uncalled for.

These are tough times that require tough decisions so departmental heads out there, you are being watched.

By December, we will take stock of how you perform in as far as your management of finance and human resource is concerned. These are the two fundamental key litmus test to judge how our administrators and departmental heads are performing.

So Governor, to answer your question, I have gone around a long way and I can't sack people for no good reason but must have legitimate reason to sack and it must be corruption and non-performance.

We are going through the performance aspect which will be review in December 2019. Hopefully we get the right response from our public service to work better with us in 2020 and onwards.

Funding for Manam Resettlement Exercise

08/07

Mr ROBERT NAGURI – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker for finally giving me an opportunity to raise a very important issue that is affecting my district.

My question is directed to the National Planning Minister and I would like the Minister for Inter-Government Relations and the Finance Minister to take note.

This is in regard to the plight of my people of Manam Island who are still residing at the illegal settlements on the mainland of Bogia District.

I have been in the opposition for the last two and half years raising this same issue now I am sitting in the Government benches and I hope this will be the last time I will raise this issue. I need some action.

In 2019 Budget, K20 million was appropriated for the resettlement of Manam. In the Supplementary Budget, K17 million was appropriated. From these, K1.97 million was released from those funds in June and we started some work with regards to resettlement especially the road works and establishing the office.

My question to the Minister is;

When will the balance of the funds be allocated to the board to carry on the resettlement exercise?

I have a situation at the care centers now where the people are hungry and they are starving. They have no way to build their gardens because the host communities would not allow them. Whenever they are hungry, they tend to roam into the host communities and steal and that is when I have law and order issues. I have been trying to deal with these law and order issues for the last two and a half years.

In August, the Chairman of the Manam Resettlement Board, myself, former Minister for Planning and Minister Niningi had a meeting, an undertaking was given that balance of those funds will be fully paid by the end of September. It is now October and we have not

received any funding. I understand the financial crisis the country is going through and the change of Government but despite that as a responsible government I want us to attend to this issue as soon as possible, please! Thank you very much.

Mr SAM BASIL – Thank you, Mr acting Speaker. I would like to thank the Member for Bogia for raising this very important question.

As we all know, the Manam resettlement situation is an ongoing problem and issues were raised here many times on the Floor of Parliament.

I would start off by saying that in my record here, in 2018, K6 million was released.

My Department carried out an audit and I believe we will make sure that those audit reports will be given to you as the Member for Bogia and the affected district which is Sumkar and of course to the Honorable Governor. This year, as you said K1.97 million was released. I will go back to my Department to see that we must find something to add on before the end of this year to make sure that the Manam Restoration Authority carries on its jobs and functions in looking after those affected communities until next year.

I will get my Department including your district, you as the chairman, the Member for Sumkar, your Governor, the Madang Provincial Government, and the Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs. The Mining Minister, I think we have to sit down before next year.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER – The Honourable Governor of Madang, what is your point of Order!

Mr Peter Yama – Point of Order! I just want to correct the Minister, the Member for Bogia is not the Chairman.

Mr Ken Fairweather is the Chairman of the Manam Restoration Authority and Madang Provincial Administrator is the Deputy and the Member for Bogia is not the Chairman of the Authority he is the chairman of the DDA and I as the Governor of Madang the administrator is directly involved with the chairman, thank you.

Mr SAM BASIL – I am aware of that, I think I did not state it correctly but I thought I addressed him as the chairman for the DDA but anyway thank you for the advice Honorable Governor of Madang.

Mr Speaker, going forward, we will sit down with all the concerned parties including the provincial administration and the Governor to look at 2020. We have to be realistic on the budget. We have to make sure what we put there we must start to address it in the beginning of 2020, but I assure your people of Bogia that we will find a solution to settle this issue and deliver, Thank you.

Supplementary Question

K3 Million Funding For Manam

MR PETER YAMA – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, my Supplementary Question is very important, in the sense that the current Prime Minister, I repeat myself

09/07

With respect, the current Prime Minister was then the Minister for Finance and the former Prime Minister Honourable Peter O’Neill, came along with me and the Member for Bogia to Manam Island where we spent a good couple of hours.

He assured my people in the presence of the Member for Bogia that K3 million will be made available as soon as possible but up until today we are still waiting that money.

Mr Acting Speaker, the Prime Minister was then the Minister for Finance. He failed his job miserably by not paying that money as his Prime Minister then made a commitment to my people.

Mr James Marape – Point of Order! I have not failed myself or the people of Bogia miserably. That is the reason why I changed Government, when the Prime Minister decides to work without Ministers knowing what they are doing.

Mr SPEAKER – Point of Order in order.

Mr PETER YAMA – I take my point back but both of them have failed miserably.

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Mr PETER YAMA – Because back then he was his Finance Minister. Equally, the Prime Minister at that time should be more responsible because he was the man on the ground and not the current Prime Minister.

Now we have a new government with you as the Prime Minister with a new Treasurer and Planning Minister.

When will you pay that K3 million? Your word is very important. Otherwise, my people do not trust the Member for Bogia and myself. We become liars to our people. So please, give us the cheque!

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Mr SAM BASIL – Thank you, for the question. Like I have said, we have committed and we will work together with the leaders and the provincial government to make sure that we deliver what the Government had in budget.

Mr Peter Yama – Point of Order! Please, I want to be straight here.

Can you tell us if you will give us the cheque of K3 million committed? Because now myself and the Member for Bogia are getting the blame.

How would you feel, if I go to your electorate and make a commitment which I do not honour?

Just give us the money.

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Mr ACTING SPEAKER – Honourable Governor, he is trying to answer your question.

Mr SAM BASIL – Thank you, I think a commitment has been made and the Honourable Governor is pursuing the case that we must make a commitment on the Floor to pay the K3 million but there was commitments made already and it is recorded on budget which I have already made know to the Member who asked it the original question, that we will pay

Mr Acting Speaker, in saying that we would also like the money to be spent properly. We have audited K6 million and on record in the Department of National Planning, that K6 million has 20 different cheques raise to a Ramu Development Corporation Company.

That is why we want to make sure that whatever we raise must go to the Member for Bogia and the Manam Restoration Authority Chairman and they spend the money properly.

And that K3 million must be spent on Manam Island alone. Thank you.

Establish Search and Rescue Centre for PNG Air Service

Mr WALTER SCHNAUBELT – Thank you, Acting Speaker, my question is directed to the Civil Aviation Minister.

As you are fully aware, the industry has experienced three accidents in such a short space of time and the travelling public are now getting bit apprehensive.

Under the PNG Air Services Limited, is there is an already in place, a search and rescue coordinating centre and if not how soon can one be set up?

Thank you.

Mr LEKWA GURE – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, and I thank the Honourable Member for Namatanai, for asking a very important and relevant question in relation to search and rescue when it comes to accidents.

It is acknowledged that in the very recent past we have had three accidents; first, was a helicopter that auto-rotated into a reef in West New Britain; the second, was an agriculture aircraft that crashed in the Gulf area, and the third was a helicopter returning from Buka on the way to Tokua and crashed in incumbent weather so, those accidents are acknowledged.

There is a search and rescue centre established in the Air Traffic Control Center at Jacksons Airport where there is a dedicated office with a designated officer for this role.

I understand that there are some argument between the Accident Investigation Commission and the PNG Air Services Limited where there is a tussle between who is responsible for what.

But, I think that when answering the question that the good Member for Namatanai has asked that when accidents do happen and the air traffic control is in communication with the traffic that is involved in the accident at that point in time.

After a certain period, if they do not give what is called a position report, they report at certain points as they are flying along. So, if they fail to report a schedule positional report, of

if they do not report their the arrival at the designated destination then that is where the air traffic control that is in communication with the aircraft concerned raises the alarm. Then, this alerts other traffic in the area to look out for the aircraft in the likely area where the accident is assumed to have taken place.

Now, having said that, in Papua New Guinea, we do not have a dedicated fleet of aircrafts or helicopters which are attached to the search and rescue organisation that are dispatched to go and search for the air craft.

The PNGASL through their mandate –

10/07

The PNGASL through their mandate can commandeer any aircraft within the area, whether the helicopters or fixed wing flying around in the area to start looking for the aircraft and they also ask other helicopter operations within the vicinity to go out and help with the search and rescue.

So, it's important for us to note that PNGASL at this point in time, or the country in general doesn't have that search and rescue capability in terms of fixed wing or rotary wing aircraft to carry out the search and rescue.

In answering the question, being a very highly regulated industry yet accidents do happens. And it's not really the search and rescue that causes accidents, they only step in when accidents take place. They go into action when they are advised by the necessary air traffic control centre that is in communication with the aircraft at this point in time.

When an aircraft goes missing the search and rescue steps in to start communicating with other aircraft in the area to start looking out for the aircraft that is in distress. thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Clarify ABG Referendum Ratification Process

Dr ALLAN MARAT – Mr Acting Speaker, my series of questions are directed to the Minister for Bougainville Affairs. I want the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and the four national members representing the Autonomous Region of Bougainville in this National Parliament to take note.

My question are in relation to the Bougainville Referendum process.

(1) In terms of reporting the result of the Referendum, Section 61 of Schedule 1.1 to 2 of the Organic Law on Peace Building Autonomous Bougainville Government and Bougainville Referendum states that the Returning Officer shall notify the Bougainville Referendum Commission of the results of the Referendum, the total number of votes given to each choice on the question and the total number of informal ballot papers.

(2) In terms of the return of writs, Section 61, Schedule 1.1 to 3, Sub-schedule 1 and Sub-schedule 2 of the Organic Law on Peace Building and it's the same Organic Law, states that after the Bougainville Referendum Commission has received notice from the Returning Officer, the Bougainville Referendum Commission shall calculate the total number of votes given for each choice on the question and write on the writ the total number of votes given to each choice on the question and return the writ to the Head of State and publish the Referendum results in the gazette and in any available newspaper.

(3) In terms of declaration of result of the referendum, Section 61, Schedule 1.1 to 3 on that same Organic Law, states that the Bougainville Referendum Commission shall, as soon as convenient after the result of the Referendum has been ascertained at a place appointed by the Bougainville Referendum Commission publicly declared the result of the Referendum.

(4) In terms of consultation, Section 342, Subsection 1 of the National Constitution provides that the National Government and the Bougainville Government shall consult over the results of the Referendum.

(5) Is the tabling of the result of the Referendum that is provided for under Section 342 Subsection 2 of the National Constitution provides that subject to the consultation on the result of the Referendum between the two Governments. The Minister responsible for the Bougainville Referendum shall table the results of the Referendum in the National Parliament. And the Speaker, of the National Parliament shall furnish to the Bougainville Executive a copy of the minutes of the relevant proceedings and any decision made in the National Parliament regarding the Referendum.

(6) In terms of the rectification itself, the Bougainville Peace Agreement clearly states that the outcome of the Referendum will be subject to ratification of final decision authority of this National Parliament.

Mr Acting Speaker, having set out the six points in the Bougainville Referendum process.

My question then are:

11/07

(1) If the word ratify means accept and ratification means legislative approval as it is used in *Section 117* of the National *Constitution* relating to ratification of treaties, then is it the same view of this Parliament when referring to ratification of the outcome of the referendum?

(2) How is this Parliament preparing the process of ratification and preparing us, the members of this Parliament in terms of what our role or roles would be to ratify the outcome of the Referendum?

(3) How will the ratification be dealt with by this Parliament and work procedures and methods will be applied to ratify the Bougainville Referendum results or what provisions are there in the *Standing Orders* of this Parliament to regulate this particular ratification?

(4) Will the results be ratified by general consensus or endorsement or approval or acceptance of the results, or will the National Parliament conduct another referendum on the Floor on this Parliament on a yes or no vote by each member of this Parliament?

(5) If the people overwhelmingly vote for greater autonomy it will be easy to manage the post referendum period but if the people on the island of Bougainville overwhelmingly vote for Independence, will this Parliament pass a law to be called the *Bougainville Independence Act* to grant independence similarly to what the Australian Parliament did when granting Independence to Papua New Guinea in 1975?

They passed the *Papua New Guinea Independence Act*. On the time frame for consultation and ratification?

(6) What is the likely time frame for this Parliament to ratify the results, will it be after six months or 12 months after the two governments have consulted on the results of the referendum?

(7) What is the frame time for the consultation between the two governments on the results of the referendum?

Sir PUKA TEMU – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I thank the Honorable Member for Rabaul for those very important questions that were raised at an absolutely relevant time.

I wish to respond to them as much as I can going question by question. In quoting the Organic Law provisions in my statement to this Honorable House, I actually outlined the process consistent with what the Honourable Member has quoted and I just want to summarize for our purposes before I respond to each of those seven questions.

Just to remind all of us again, on the 27th of September the writs were issued, 23rd of November our people will vote for approximately two weeks. When the Chairman of the Bougainville Referendum Commission advised his Excellency, the Governor General and on receiving the writs from his Excellency, those specific dates were part of the advice including dates of the writs, voting, as well as the return of the writs.

12/07

At this stages the return of writs are estimated to beyond on the 20 December, and so allowing for the 40 day period for disputes that will take us to end of January, before anything happens. And so for the process of the Referendum Returning Officer, once the result are made,

These results are then provided to the Bougainville Referendum Commission, and the Chairman will then advise his Excellency on the return of writs accordingly.

The counting will be in one place as recommended, so all the boxes throughout Bougainville will be carried to Buka, where the counting will be made, then the Referendum Officer will advise on the result.

The counting of the writs will include the mixing of the boxes, nobody will know which part of Bougainville have voted for which of the two options. So, that's the process that we are managing through the Bougainville Referendum Commission at this stages.

With regards to the law, it is very clear, and the Honourable Member is right, at this stage, we have now engaged the United Nations to help us to process the ratification process, so that is now work in progress.

So, every Member of the Parliament both on the Opposition and the Government side we will be informed on how we gone take on the reification process on the Floor of Parliament. So, I have requested the UN to help us implement that process.

At this stages, what we are managing through, what we are calling the Bougainville Post Referendum Ministerial Tasks Force lead by myself and my counterpart from Bougainville, is that we are now preparing on post-referendum consultation. This what going to happen and what we are preparing.

Once the results are announced, and the Nations knows the results, the process is very clear in the law, then what we are preparing now is for both the National Government and the ABG to start organising themselves on their own negotiating teams.

So, we will establish our negotiating team made up of people with high level of creditable restated seniority and ABG will do the same

Unfortunately during this important process of post-referendum. The fourth ABG Election will take place, the writs will be issue on 27 March 2019, and the new Government, the forth ABG Government will come in on June 2019.

And so you can recall now, the writs will be returned, there will be 40 days of dispute period and that will be February, by then ABG leaders will be preparing for the Elections.

So we are now managing through Ministerial Tasks Force that consultation period, what we have agreed is, we will establish a permanent secretariat that will service both the negotiating teams.

The Department of Personnel Management has already approved a secretariat structures which I will be bringing to Cabinet very soon for Budget provision in the November sitting of the Parliament.

That secretarial to be fully catered for in terms of manpower as well as funding. The secretariat will help facilitate the negotiating teams on both sides.

In terms of timing, you can see, because they will be busy with the ABG Elections in February till June, we will be setting the stages for both of them.

13/07

The Bougainville Peace Agreement rightly stated that the referendum will be non-binding. That's the awareness that we are going to make right throughout the country, as well as in Bougainville. In terms of ratification, if majority vote for independence it will not come raw to the Floor of Parliament for ratification because it is a non-binding referendum. That's the message passed around at this stage.

The Bougainville Peace Agreement was a joint creation and so the new political future for Bougainville after referendum will have to be a negotiated outcome. The negotiated outcome will be the one presented on the Floor of Parliament to be ratified; not the raw result from the referendum returning officer or the Chairman of the Bougainville Referendum Commission. So, it will be a negotiated outcome.

We have asked the United Nations to develop a process similar to other referendums which have happened in other parts of the world to assist the Parliament, especially in terms of how Parliament manages the process of ratification, for instance; do we vote for it after a period of debate or is it two-thirds majority vote. These are some of the type of votes that we

are preparing right now and it's only through the assistance of UN because they are well vested with similar situation around the world.

How long the consultation will take is really unpredictable. We must expect both our people here on the mainland and our people in Bougainville to subscribe to the spirit of the Bougainville Peace Agreement. This means that everything must be done during this process through all peaceful means and that we must maintain peace all the time and no way will we go back to conflict. And that's the commitment that we all must make.

I cannot predict how long the negotiations will take. If the ABG goes for election and a new leader is voted in through the democratic process, it is difficult to know how long it will take. While we are waiting both here on the mainland and in Bougainville we must accept and allow what the leaders have signed in 2001 Bougainville Peace Agreement. They have recognised that the National Parliament belongs to the whole of PNG and that includes Bougainville, therefore, Parliament will make the final decision and we all must accept that. But politics may come into play at times.

Right now we are processing global experience around the world. I will be inviting some of you to participate in a workshop on a presentation for the many global experiences around the world similar to what we are going through, especially on how to negotiate and create a win-win situation. We have a lot of writings on the wall around the world and we will try to use those to help us negotiate.

At the same time, we have agreed that we will have an internationally recognised moderator for the negotiation. The ministerial task force has defined the terms of reference for the international recognised moderator, and when the Prime Minister and the President consider the names on the short list they will then invite that particular person to be on standby and be called on when we find it hard to go through to a certain issue. We will engage that moderator so those are the structures that we are going through.

14/07

You will learn from that particular workshop that we are not putting a timeframe on the negotiations and the process in Parliament. As to the framework, our National Elections is in 2022 and ABG elections is next year, so can we in the Tenth Parliament be the crop of leaders to conclude the ratification process, or should we wait for the Eleventh Parliament after 2022?

The ABG elections will take place next year, but will that new government come under the current autonomous arrangement as the current ABG or should it be a transitional government, while we are negotiating the next political future for Bougainville? Those are the legal questions that the ministerial task force is trying to go through at the moment.

I hope, Mr Acting Speaker, I have provided some answers to the Honourable Member. This is an ongoing issue and I look forward to your participation during the Budget session next month for us to clarify the ratification process that the UN is helping us with at this stage.

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

BASAMUK BAY PROCESSING PLANT SLURRY SPILL UPDATE – MINISTERIAL STATEMENT – PAPER NOTED

Mr GEOFFERY KAMA (Karamui-Nomane – Minister for Environment, Conservation and Climate Change) – Mr Acting Speaker, I wish to update Parliament about the slurry spill at Basamuk Bay processing plant.

Mr Acting Speaker I wish provide an update to this Honourable House on the slurry spill incident that took place at the Basamuk processing plant which spilled into the sea off the Basamuk Bay on 24 August, 2019.

Mr Acting Speaker, in my last update and during my press conference I held with the representatives of the numerous media groups last month, I stated that the Conservation and Environment Protection Agency (CEPA) had obtained sea water samples which were sent to Brisbane, Australia, for analysis.

Mr Acting Speaker, this was to determine the presence of heavy metals in the seawater, the safety of the seawater quality and to further determine whether terms and conditions of the Environment Permit were breached.

Mr Acting Speaker, I would like to inform the Honourable House today that the result of the seawater sample which were sent to Brisbane where received on 17 September, last month. It took 15 days for the samples to be analyzed and finally for the result to be released. The analysis was conducted by ALS, an international reputable and credible laboratory in Australia, Brisbane.

Mr Acting Speaker, when the analysis result came back from Australia, CEPA then engaged a national independent consultant to review and interpret the water quality analytic result, and provide a report to CEPA with relevant recommendations for further actions to be taken to address the spill and the current situation in Basamuk.

15/07

Mr Acting Speaker, the independent review and interpretation as well as CEPA's own investigations were presented in a report that was tabled in Cabinet last week, and I am happy to share a synopsis with this Honourable House.

Mr Acting Speaker, CEPA's investigations have confirmed that 200,000 litres of raw slurry had actually over-flowed from one of the company's surge tanks within the Basamuk plant site. The slurry spill caused the seawater within the bay to be discoloured to a red maroon along the wharf area shoreline and at a place called East Duman. The sea discoloration was visible for at least two days, 24 and 25 of August, 2019.

Mr Acting Speaker, sixty per cent (20,000 litres) was captured within the bund and emergency ponds, and drainage within the plant site. Forty percent (80,000 litres) escaped via the drainage into the sea off Basamuk Bay.

Mr Acting Speaker, it is this 80,000 litres of raw slurry that caused the discoloration of the seawater that continued for 2 days. The discoloration cleared up and the seawater in the Basamuk Bay was visibly clear on the third day. I must admit that the discoloration of the seawater for the two days caused some fear amongst the local communities as this was an abnormal circumstance for them to witness.

Mr Acting Speaker, we must also understand that the immense volume of the seawater is an excellent buffering solution for that acidic slurry, hence immediately diluted and dissipated the spilled slurry.

Mr Acting Speaker, the results from the samples analysed indicates no major interference or impacts on the seawater composition at Basamuk Bay and nearby marine areas.

Furthermore, the results from the study commissioned by CEPA show that the heavy metals recorded are near baseline conditions of the marine waters. And they are within the terms and conditions specified under the Environment Permit.

Therefore, Mr Acting Speaker, I would like to inform this Honourable House that marine waters around Basamuk Bay and the nearby areas are now safe for swimming, and recreational purposes only.

Mr Acting Speaker, the report made recommendations for further assessment to be considered and acted on.

There are four (4) main recommendations and they include:

1. Need for a thorough sampling and analysis to be conducted to establish a relationship with the heavy metal components of the slurry concentrate and the baseline or background data obtained during pre-construction period,

2. A need for further sampling to be conducted to establish heavy metal concentrations in the shoreline and benthic sediments as most of the spill material will be settled at the bottom sediments,

3. A need for further fish tissue, seaweeds/grass, selfish/crustaceans, et cetera, sampling must be done to ascertain bioaccumulation and ecotoxicity from heavy metal concentrations from the slurry spill impact, and

4. A need for further sampling and analysis of heavy metals must be done to include the metal components of the slurry concentrate.

Mr Acting Speaker, having said that, I must also say that we must take all precautionary measures. The Basamuk Bay people must refrain from catching and eating fish from the Basamuk Bay now and for the next four to six weeks as CEPA is yet to establish if there is residue of heavy metals contamination through food chain in the fish population around Basamuk Bay.

16/07

Mr Acting Speaker, as soon as the findings of the next course of investigations are completed, we will inform the people as to whether they can be allowed to return to their normal lives to catch and consume fish.

Mr Acting Speaker, wider communities in Madang and Astrolabe Bay should be allowed to live their normal lives to catch fish and consume fish. In doing so people should properly prepare their fish when cooking for consumption with their families.

Mr Acting Speaker, claims of pollution of the seas in Astrolabe waters and dead fish as a result of the slurry spill by social media and mainstream media are unfounded and have no

scientific basis. Such fish deaths are isolated incidents. There is no causal link between the dead fish elsewhere and the slurry spill in Basamuk Bay.

Mr Acting Speaker, I appeal to all users of social media and mainstream media to refrain from spreading and publishing malicious and false information to create unnecessary anxiety and instill fear amongst our people of Rai Coast and the wider Madang area.

I am also aware through the media of a study undertaken by scientists sponsored by the Madang Provincial Government prior to the slurry spill. CEPA as the regulator has not been formally informed of such an independent study by the Madang Provincial Government. But now I welcome their reports to be presented to CEPA so we can work together.

Mr Acting Speaker, as much as I would want the best for the environment, the people of Madang and this country, it would be very helpful for the Madang Provincial Government and the National Government to work together and not work in isolation.

Having said that, I request the Madang Provincial Government to make available copies of the report to CEPA, so that we can work together to resolve the issues at hand. As I mentioned earlier, the study that we undertook is to find out if there is any metal in the shoreline of the water or within the fish population.

Mr Acting Speaker, my technical officers from CEPA will continue to conduct detailed environmental impact investigations into the coastal and marine ecosystems, and the fish species to fully ascertain any residual impacts within impacted coastal and marine environments at Basamuk Bay areas. The results of these studies will be presented again to this Honourable House and announced for the people of Basamuk, Madang and PNG to know at a later date.

And finally, to conclude, the study is only to determine if there is any substance of metals onshore. Thank you very much.

Mr MICHAEL NALI (Mendi – Minister for Works and Implementation) -- I move –

That the Parliament take note of the paper.

Mr Acting Speaker, it is good that the Minister has presented an update report informing us that samples were sent to Australia to confirm the extent of pollution in the sea.

17/07

The colour of the sea has changed in the areas affected by the slurry spill. Our people in the villages are used to seeing the normal blue sea and beautiful surroundings.

I must firstly say here that I condemn this carelessness. There are accidents that do happen but in my nine years of experience during my apprenticeship in Ok Tedi, the operators are always very mindful and are careful in order to avoid such incidents.

In around 1983 and 1984, we wanted to build a dam in Okman, however, when they realised that the soil was slipping, the operators decided against it.

Mr Acting Speaker, I think because of our ignorance as a Government or maybe we were not civilised enough at that time, we allowed BHP to dump all their waste into the Ok Tedi River which gradually led to the destruction of natural habitats along the waterway. And I stand here to say outright that this is not good enough.

I received many reports on the slurry spillage of Ramu Nickle but I have not had the opportunity to personally visit the place and also see how the operator is conducting its business there, but due consideration must be given.

The Office of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Mining must send officers to visit that place and make reports accordingly. It must be their business to see that our people are treated properly and our environment is properly looked after. This is because only a minority of us had the privilege to go to school and get employed in order to get paid a salary. However, the environment is the livelihood of the majority of our people back home. It is their bread and butter at stake here.

If the Ramu Nickle Mine operators were concerned about the people then I am pretty sure that they would have prepared for the worst. They would have built dams or proper holding facilities for such waste or re-process the waste to be environmentally friendly, et cetera. But to all that slurry to go into our rivers and ending up in our seas, I stand here today to condemn it. It must not and never happen again.

Mr Acting Speaker, secondly, Pogera mines has also caused environmental damage over the years as a result of the waste being dumped into the oceans through the Strickland River system. Our people depend on that river and their livelihood is encompassed with that river way. We also have animals and our natural environment that also depend on that river.

Successive governments have become deaf and probably blind to see what is happening around them, and that is why Pogera has dumped all their waste into the Strickland River. I must argue in the strongest terms that this is not good enough.

18/07

Mr Acting Speaker, coming back to our cities and towns, about three years back, I brought my family with me to Madang Resort and took them out to the nearby islands with our snorkeling gear. We went out to sea about 10 or 15 km away from Madang town to a nearby island and we saw a lot of rubbish in the form of plastic products, empty cans and more waste products. Our islands, beaches and all our reefs are definitely polluted with plastic litter and other substances.

Mr Acting Speaker, in Port Moresby City I have noticed the amount of plastic waste that is washed up in the creeks or drainage systems during the rainy season. One classic example is the Boroko Creek which begins from East Boroko going up to Korobosea and coming into the Gordons Industrial area, going further down to Kennedy Estate at the tip of the Airport and going down to Morata Sewerage Farm. And from the Sewerage Farm it flows down to the Laloki River. Whenever it rains the water pushes out all the waste products like plastic containers and it all ends up in one place and that is the sea.

We cannot just sit here and allow our waters to be polluted by foreign matter such as plastic produce or toxic substances from mines to destroy our eco-system and marine life.

Mr Acting Speaker, I would like to suggest that the Environmental Department and the Government need to look in these areas very seriously, especially in villages such as Hanuabada, Koki, and going down to Tubusereia, Barakau and Gaire where people tend to discard their rubbish into the sea. The sea is a very important resource for our people who depend on fish and other marine products.

Mr Acting Speaker, I am highlighting this because I am sure in Port Moresby, NCDC can work with the Environment & Conservation Department to build some sort of catchment system like nets or mesh wire fencing to prevent waste products flowing into the sea after heavy rainfall. Put some screen or netting, mass wire or some things to collect rubbish so it can at least slow down the amount of waste products going into the sea, it would be good.

Mr Acting Speaker, to conclude, we must take good care of our ocean environment. We will need this environment for generations to come because the sea is our life.

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

19/07

Mr WILLIAM SAMB (Goilala – Minister for Transport) – Mr Acting Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for Environment for giving us an update. There has been a

lot of coverage on this concern in the mainstream media, therefore, it is timely that the State Minister has made this statement to inform the people of Papua New Guinea.

I would also like take this time to thank the Governor of Madang for taking the initiative to fund and conduct an independent study. During my time as the Minister for Bougainville Affairs, I once made a visit to the Panguna copper mine and saw the effects of pollution in surrounding water systems from its mining days. And the same observations have been expressed by the Works Minister on the Pogera mines. It is unfathomable how successive governments have been ignorant of how and where mines dump their toxic wastes. We have only learnt in recent years that the mine wastes has polluted the waterways of Western and Gulf provinces.

Mr Acting Speaker, the point I wish to stress is the urgent need to implement the processes and laws we have made. Are we waiting for our people to die before we implement these laws? We should be giving immediate attention to the issues once they emerge and then later address or amend the laws and processes to deal with such situations going forward.

Mr Prime Minister, please take note that once Pogera comes under review we must ensure that environment issues are given priority. Let us make some bold decisions and stop mining developers from causing environmental damage because they will make their money and leave.

Mr Acting Speaker, when I first came into Parliament, there was a lot of talk on Tolokuma mines and at that time, vanilla was a booming business in the Mekeo district. A feasibility study was conducted on the vanilla grown there and it was found that the plant had high metal content. As a result, the interest in growing vanilla has died out.

The Governor of Central has talked to me about the potential of growing rice in Mekeo. If investors come to Tolokuma, they must comply with our environmental requirement. If they don't they must leave at once because we want investors who will make our environment a priority. That is where I challenge each an everyone of us here.

Mr Acting Speaker, we cannot sit back and say that it is the responsibility of the mining and environment departments to address the spillage in Basamuk. The operating company or a mining safety officer should also take responsibility.

I suggest that the Government conduct an independent feasibility study, compile reports and put this issue to rest so that we don't look abroad for extensive studies.

We have been following the laws here and there and as a result Panguna and OK Tedi still remain as they are. We haven't yet talked about where the waste in Pogera goes to.

I also wish to express my support to the Governor of East Sepik Province, Honourable Allan Bird, as well. When we talk about the Frieda mines, we also need to properly address the environment issues.

Mr Acting Speaker, I am told that Sepik River is one of the last untouched river systems in the world, and I wish to express that fact, whilst I have the opportunity.

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr PETER YAMA (Madang) – Mr Acting Speaker, the sample of water that the Minister mentioned in his report is not saltwater. It must have been taken from the waterways in Teptep village in Rai Coast, therefore, I condemned that report because it is not true.

20/07

There is no scientific-based tests and no authorized person giving such report.

Six scientists were engaged by Lutheran Mission from Zurich, Switzerland. They are not my brothers or acquaintance of mine, nor do they have any business interests with me. The Madang Provincial Government signed the agreement for the best scientists to come and conduct their tests and find out about the truth and the future of the people of Madang.

I respect the economy of Papua New Guinea and of this Government to take back Papua New Guinea; it is in the right direction. However, for the last 19 years, how much money has successive PNG Governments received as tax from this mine? Can you tell me how much has being paid to the Madang Provincial Government or the six local-level government councils and for the district of Madang?

I am a landowner from Bundi, further up the mountain, and they are below us. No one there has owned a Land Cruiser vehicle or trade store. There are no sealed roads or proper hospitals and schools or bridges.

Mr Prime Minister and Mr Minister, you both went and saw for yourselves. You had no chairs to sit so the Minister had to sit on the floor. You and I were offered drums to use as chairs in the conference room. This is the mine we are talking about here.

Mr Acting Speaker, I ask the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister to take note. Two people have died and the bodies are in the morgue now. What would you do if you were in my seat? I have now engaged a doctor to do a postmortem.

All the fish in the sea of Madang and the waters leading to Kabwum have being affected. The Members for Kabwum and Tewai-Siassi have raised this concern because their areas are affected.

The scientist report is very accurate and gives first and second preliminary findings. The final one on the latest slurry spill is ready and is being compiled. By next week six scientists will come here and conduct their study. I am not bringing them over for business interests, political point-scoring or for me to be boastful. This is for the interest of environment and the people living along the coastline of Madang and stretching far as Morobe, East Sepik, West Sepik, Manus, New Ireland and everywhere throughout the country.

Mr Acting Speaker, the tailings dam contains chemical slurry from the 135 kilometers pipeline from the mine processing plant with a draw elevation of almost an average of 680 meters. Basamuk Plant is not built to the standards of such a mine. I have been to New Caledonia and their Nickel Plant is world-class. This Plant we have in Basamuk is one of the worst, and the government of this country has allowed it to be built on Madang soil. The whole manner in which it was built, including the pipeline and its setup is not like a mine for goodness sake.

How can people residing 10 meters from the mine live in make-shift houses with no electricity and access to basic services such as health. You tell me if it is the same in Hela, Southern Highlands, or Enga with respect to Sir Peter Ipatas or in Porgera.

My father was one of the first policemen based in Pogera when Jim Taylor was at the mine. And I know how mines operate.

21/07

The mines in other places have world-class standards but the mine in discussion here was built from Chinese scrap. It does not even look like a mine. The materials used are cheap timber and glass and will only last for the duration of the mine life and whatever remains will be used by our people when the operators leave.

Mr Acting Speaker, Mother Nature has spoken because birds are now dying. Our dear Lord has given life to these animals and a habitat for them to dwell in. Why are we finding fish, shark and dolphins dying and washed up on our beaches? They were given a life just like you and me and they were placed accordingly. How is it possible that marine life must die in the waters and get washed up? There must be a reason and we need to address it. We

must not be telling lies in this Parliament. We are supposed to be talking about protecting our people and their interest.

We cannot be repeating the same things that happened in Ok Tedi or Pogera where money was put into trust accounts in the hope to better the lives of the people and the environment.

The Member for Mendi brought up a very genuine point. What was given to us by nature cannot be replaced. When we bring in big machinery to mine our land, we have to be very careful because nothing will replace our land and environment. It will be permanently damaged and will not be the same again. Krumbukari and Basamuk will be gone forever.

Mr Acting Speaker, we cannot be risking our people's lives for the sake of our economy. We cannot allow our animals and our people to die for the sake of economy. Whose interest are we protecting here? I am not protecting this company because if they are genuine then they will pay tax to the National Government and the Provincial Government. I will be protecting them if they are doing a good job. However, as it is, two of my people are dead and the bodies are in the Madang Morgue. We have fish and sharks dying everywhere in Madang from Bagaba, Karkar, Long Island, and Bogia. Something needs to be done about this disaster.

In politics not everybody will be your supporter. There will always be enemies in this game. If everyone is behind me with regard to this matter then I will fight this matter till the very end. If the National Government does not take up this case then I will take it up against that mine. I want the National Government to remove this mine and close down its operations. Mr Prime Minister, I am telling you that if you do not support me then I will fight it alone to the end for the sake of my people.

Mr Minister, you have to close that mine for the sake of our people. You need to do that and get a second opinion from specialist in Australia and New Zealand and take the samples to Zürich for results. If you cannot afford that travel then I am willing to meet the expenses. Your staff who have been there for the last 18 years having been lying to the Government. They have compromised their position as government officials. They are in their pockets and they have become too comfortable there.

I have the greatest respect for this Government and for the Prime Minister and your deputy. To take this country back, you have to start from Madang. Take Madang first because that mine has not been paying tax for the last 18 years. Tell them to pack up and go and we

take over and own that mine. Why can't our National Government own this mine? We have to do that because they have destroyed everything in our land.

Under the *Proceeds Crime Act*, they have committed a very serious crime. Let us get them out of the country and take over the mine. This is a very serious matter and we need to address it properly. In the next two weeks there will be a very big protest march of about 100 thousand plus people. I will organise the people to stand up for their rights and demand action from the Marape-Steven Government.

22/07

When I will tell the people of Madang to move with me, you will see that the town and other areas of Madang will come to a standstill. That is how we feel, Mr Acting Speaker.

Madang needs clear quick attention. We need smooth Government intervention, and there is no other way. I will give a copy of these plans to the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister. This report is the scientific report from Zurich. This is the same scientist who closed down mines in China, Xinjiang City. Twenty Mines were closed by the Government after China engaged the scientist from Zurich to carry out studies in China. The scientist advised the Chinese Government to close the mine because the environment was completely destroyed. This is the same scientist telling us that if China has applied those rules to close down their mines then why are we applying different rules? You cannot have two rules; one for China and the other one for Papua New Guinea. He is the same Scientist and the President of the Zurich University and a professor with many other scientists working under him. He is more qualified and no one can question his intelligence and experience because he has attained more than 27 or 28 degrees.

In the best interest of our people of Madang I have spent a lot of money and I am waiting for Madang's Provincial Government to reimburse my money, CEPA will reimburse it. I will take you personally responsible for all these damages inflicted upon the lives of our people. You people have been sleeping in the same beds while successive governments have come and gone but you do not do anything. These public servants are corrupt people.

In the interest of my people - and I am worried for my people - I want the Marape-Steven government to get another scientist if you wish from New Zealand or Singapore and get them in quickly and do a counter- investigation on our environment because we cannot trust CEPA.

The CEPA agreement states that they must compile a report four times in a year and must report to the Madang Government. It was a National Court decision by Judge Cunnings in 2002 that four times in a year, you must report on the environmental issues in relation to Madang and submit it to the Madang Government. The agreement clearly states that CEPA must provide a report to government and stakeholders including the LLG managers and the landowners four times in a year. From 2002 until today, not one report from CEPA has been submitted. These amounts to 74 times that they have failed to compile a report.

The Chinese Government or the MCC cannot come under the protection of CEPA and say look, CEPA has questioned the integrity of the scientist. Who are they to question? As the Governor for Madang I have the legitimate and constitutional right to engage people in the interest of my people.

I need this Government to please take it very seriously because our people lives are at stake. Let us prioritize and protect people's interest. I kindly ask the Prime Minister and his Deputy, if you have certain doubts about the seriousness of this issue, please come out to Madang and inspect or check for yourselves. Come and talk to the people in Basamuk or in Bundi, they are your people. Find out what is happening down there and you will know the truth. The truth only will change your mind and make the right decision.

With respect to my brother Minister I had a good lengthy talk with him last night. He has also agreed with me that we should have somebody to go and get the inspection done because he also feels that with the scientific report coming we would seriously need to address this issue.

The issue is everywhere on the internet, especially Facebook. Fish are dying everyday.

23/07

People are collecting dead fish everywhere along the Madang coast. What is going on? God created the oceans to sustain different kinds of marine life and the land was created for people to live and survive on. However, both our land and sea environment have been polluted because you will see that our bushes and vegetable gardens have turned brown.

All the people in Rai Cost and Bundi do not own land cruiser vehicles like those landowners in Southern Highlands, Enga and other places like New Ireland. These people own good cars and make investments and carry large amounts of money and beat their chest and go around everywhere with billions of kina in their trust account. However, the Bundi and Rai Coast people are uncivilized. They don't have any trade stores to earn money and the

people live miserable lives. Only four-wheel vehicles alone are able to drive through to those areas, and it is twice as difficult at night. Where is the Member for Rai Coast, open your mouth.

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Mr PETER YAMA – The Member for Usino-Bundi must have a lot of money so he is shutting his mouth up there.

PNG is going corrupt and we must be telling the truth here. That is what we are here for, Usino-Bundi. Do you know your people are dying out there? There's no one in my electorate who has a VX-land cruiser or trade stores. None of them.

Our own people are very poor. Our people from Akosia are out there and yet whatever nature provides them in terms of the little fish they catch and the food they get from the garden is now unsafe for human consumption. Their income depends entirely on fish. They sell fish for money in order to pay for their children's needs and for food rations. That is why, please, I want the interest of our people to be looked at. You are more concerned about the economy. If there's no people, there's no country, there's no money.

I am governor of the people. Whether you like it or not I will fight for what is right and I am speaking for what is right here. I need your support. Otherwise, why should I waste my time here, Mr Prime Minister? I voted for you to become Prime Minister. Mr Deputy Prime Minister, I gave you my vote. I supported all of you in this government here. I am the one who told Peter O'Neill to step down. So why am I wasting my time here? I am the one who told Michael Nali and Sir Julius Chan and told Peter O'Neill to step down from the engine room. I'm the one who put this government in office because I forced him to resign. But when it comes to my people, I have a duty and obligation to serve my people. I'm here because of my people. This is my third term as a Member of Parliament. All of you have come here only once and are protecting your same seat. I am protecting three different seats and represented those seats.

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Mr PETER YAMA – And you have to respect me for that, Mr Acting Speaker. With respect to Prime Minister and his deputy, I have represented three different seats in the history of this country and I think I earn some respect from the Chair too please.

When I speak, I do so as the Governor of Madang, and I want to emphasise that my people are in danger. Mr Prime Minister and your deputy, please attend to this issue. This is a very serious issue in the interest of our people and I respect you great men, so let's do the right thing and get other scientists or whatever you want to do, but in the meantime, close the mine and let's move.

All I am saying is, in the interest of our people, leaders should come and see for yourselves and talk to the people and find out the truth. Only the truth will make you understand about what I am talking about here on the Floor of Parliament and then I am certain we can all move forward from here. Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr PETER SAPIA (Rai Coast) – Mr Acting Speaker, I thank the Minister for tabling this report, however, this report does not entirely satisfy my people and the governor has expressed the same sentiments. The spillage that occurred had caused more fish to die and has caused the death of two men after consuming fish from those waters.

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As the Governor stated, a post mortem will be conducted to determine the cause of deaths. The sea is considered as a garden that provides food to my people. They depend on the fish to make a living for themselves, but now my people cannot fish until further investigations are conducted.

My people are now burdened with concerns on how to feed their families. How and where will they catch fish? How will they find food? Where will they get money to pay school fees for their children?

Mr Acting Speaker, I thank the Minister and Governor for engaging a team to look into how this slurry spill happened and whether it is safe for the people to eat the fish from those waters. And I urge that the findings be made known as soon as possible.

Since the start of its operations, MCC has not built infrastructure or provided basic services within my district. There are no proper roads, classrooms, hospitals, and even nine rivers are without bridges.

I know Usino-Bundi has a sealed road and bridges and the people have benefitted but what about Rai Coast? All the waste has been dumped in the sea with the recent spillage, yet not one benefit has come from the company or the government.

My people have suffered from environmental damage and one such contributing factor affecting the vegetable gardens is the toxic smoke produced from burning nickel. Crops such as cocoa and coffee do not grow well. This burning smoke also has severe effects on the people so I want to caution the Minister that safety of our people is important. Mining companies will make money and go but I am thinking about how my people and the future generation will benefit?

Mr Minister, I support the closure of this mine so we can address the safety of my people to an acceptable standard before opening the mine.

The slurry spill has affected those living along the border of Morobe, Karkar and Madang town. The smaller outer islands have refrained from fishing as well. For instance, people on Karanget Island make money from their catch to cater for their family needs but that is impossible now because of the contaminated water.

I urge the Minister to further investigate without delay so my people can go back to the sea as their garden for fishing to look after their families

If safety is not guaranteed, the mine should be shut down so we can address the safety of our people.

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr GARRY JUFFA (Northern) – Mr Acting Speaker, I would also want to discuss on this disaster that occurred, and we must call it a disaster.

Firstly, I would like to commend the Minister but this doesn't look like a scientific report that we can be satisfied with.

25/07

This does not look like a scientific report that we can be satisfied with. The findings from your organisation doesn't show that actual work was carried out. Before I give an opinion about my observations, I would like to say that this disaster that happened affected all coastal people. It's not only the Madang people but other coastal provinces as well. My people are also concerned and are sending me text messages and emails asking if they can consume fish from our waters. People who have access to social media as well as other

mainstream media outlets and those living on the coasts are really concerned about consuming food from our seas.

We know that fish is not confined to one area because of race or political ideology or economic circumstances. They migrate from one place to another. When the nuclear power plant in Fukushima in Japan exploded, within one week they found contaminated fish in waters around Europe. When they presented their report in their Parliament it is nothing like what we have here. They gave explanations to their sampling and who took the sampling and who was responsible for the sampling. His qualifications were detailed for their Parliament and for the people to know. We have all kinds of consultants running around our towns and cities. You will find some of them at the back of the post office in Boroko. Who was the consultant that did the report on this disaster? At least the Governor's Report stated who carried out the assessments and its results and it is more scientific. It is a document that when you look at it you can be assured that genuine work was carried out.

What is ALS? What does it represent? Does it represent a reputable firm? Why are we taking this report and then doing another analysis? This is really funny. Why can't we ask the Australian Government to come and carry out assessments similar to what they did when the earthquake struck in Hela and Southern Highlands? The Australian Government sent a team in to make an assessment. So we can request them to send in a team to assess the damage. It is important that we do that because we have two conflicting reports. There is one from the Governor's Office that he sanctioned. He has the right to do so under our laws. There is also the report from CEPA. Therefore, who are we going to believe? CEPA is saying we can consume fish but not from that particular area. This is an admission that there is pollution in this area. Can all Members of Parliament go and consume fish in Rai Coast? If they bring fish to us for consumption, how many of us will be willing to consume it?

And bring those operators of the mine who came to our country and disrespected many of our laws. I went to that mine and was surprised. I grew up in Ok Tedi and Bougainville and the infrastructure that those mines build show you clearly that there are mines there. But over there you cannot tell that there is a mine existing.

The report that came out from the Office of the Governor stated that this scientist had closed mines in China which was sanctioned by the Chinese Government and their standards are higher than ours, a conclusion I can draw from this report is that they view us as sub-standard human beings. They see us as the inferior ones. Why are we allowing this people to come and treat our people and our country like this? Over time I have seen that our

government entities have been converted to mercenary organisations to serve other people's interest. They are serving whoever comes with the money. I feel sorry for many of our ministers because they have been misled by many of our departments who are no longer serving our people. They are serving private interests and have become mercenary organisations. They are packaging and selling our country. This particular mine has also breached many of our foreign employment laws too.

26/07

Most workers there are all foreigners where they have breached *Labour Laws* and *Migration Laws*. There are no three-year working plans in place for transfer of skills to locals.

They do not fulfil the criteria of speaking any of our three national languages. Yet we are still entertaining them. It is like a person who steals on the road which we open the door for the thief to enter the house and steals everything in the house while, we stand and observe. Is it okay for everybody?

We come into this Parliament to represent our people or we come here to represent the Mines where foreigners come to make money and destroy our people. We must ask ourselves. Every five years we go back to our people and plead for their votes so that we will represent them and when we come into this Parliament, do we play our responsibility or not? We must ask ourselves.

Close that Mine. If we make analysis with benefit and cost, you will see that the benefit coming into our country is very little but, the cost is much higher were we will feel it for decades and generations.

Money is not life. Our land is our life and we Papua New Guineans and Melanesians must understand the value of land. We were created by dust and we'll go back to it. It was stated in the book of Bible and we agree to it in prayer here in Parliament saying that to do our jobs honestly to serve our people. It is time to act upon the interest of our people and one way to do that is to shut that mine. The benefits from that mine we have yet to see.

I would like to say that, we must immediately pass a law to disallow that same mine from expanding to other parts of our country. They have reached my Province already and are talking about a large nickel deposit in my Province. You will not open any mines in my provinces, very sorry.

Here I must say that Mining Minister, your officers and the MRA, those people who are mercenaries, I say mercenaries because they do not seem to operate in the interest of the people. They go and conduct warden hearings on their own volition in the middle of jungles even where the landowners are absent, they will get some magani and rats and signed papers and say they have agreed and award concessions at their whims. We do not even know that they go to visit our home villages.

This report Minister, is insulting and shameful report to our people. It is not a scientific report. Who is your consultant because it is not stated here? Is it a true consultant or pokies consultant, scientist or who knows and how did he get samples? We need to know this information.

Sir Puka Temu – Point of Order! Mr Deputy Speaker, the good Governor is not fair. The Minister has presented a Ministerial statement, so please calm down.

His argument is okay but it is a ministerial statement that has been distributed not the actual report.

Thank you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Point of Order is in order.

Mr GARRY JUFFA – Thank you. It is stated in the Report on Basamuk Bay Process Plans Slurry Spill Incident and that is why I am referring to this report but, thank you and I acknowledge the Point of Order by Sir Puka Temu. Thank you.

The important factor is this, that millions of our people are affected by this disaster. The question comes back to us as leaders of this House. While our coastal areas are been affected, what are we going to do as leaders? I propose that we immediately sanction a third investigation from an independent source. That we go to Australian Government or if it is a conflict of interest because, of issues to do with nationalism then we must find an independent reputable firm to come and conduct real assessment in that area for prove and comfort that the true work has been done in that situation.

27/07

We must look at Bougainville the cost of operating the consideration of our people and the environment, you only need to have a look at Bougainville, 20 000 lives were lost, we can't even quantify the damage done, that is ongoing.

We are bearing the bill of that. We must learn lessons, this is why history is important. This is important because we must review histories constantly, consistently, and continuously so that we do not repeat the mistakes made by those whom went before us. They may have made mistakes because they did not know, they could argue that, we know, the technology available is profound. We have access to this technology, it is available, we can bring the best people in the world in a very short time and they could immediately carry out the assessment of this area and inform us.

You and I don't have to go home tomorrow, tonight and have the fish from that area for dinner, it is not just fish, it is other food that are contained in the ocean. We have to be mindful of this. Our people are watching, they are hoping, their hopes are enough. We came in here to defend their interest, protect and promote Papua New Guinea at all times, 24-7, 365 for as long we called ourselves leaders, so let's just do that, I believed we ought to seriously consider shutting this mine down or at least suspending it until we found out for sure the state of this disaster and what it has done to our people.

Thank you very much.

Mr JOHN PUNDARI (Kompiam-Ambum) – Thank you Mr Acting Speaker, first of all I want to commend the Minister for Environment and Conservation, I speak as a former Minister for Environment myself. I want to appreciate the leadership. In a short space of time, he has been able to provide CEPA as well as CCDA. I want to thank him and also commend for short and sharp ministerial report to Parliament in so far as the Basamuk Bay is concerned with the spill of the slurry.

Mr Acting Speaker, let me also commend the Governor for Madang for his heart for his people and his concerns he has for the environment and I think many of us have spoken passionately insofar as our environment is concerned. I think we all agreed to the fact that the environment concerns our livelihood, our wellbeing and therefore the need to protect it is significantly important and Mr Acting Speaker, many of the decisions that we've made as a Government since our Independence to date that pertains to our environment for that matter insofar as extractive industry is a concerned in our country.

Mr Acting Speaker, we've got no one else to blame except ourselves. We have no one else to blame except ourselves Mr Acting Speaker for the want of development in our health, for the want and the need for the development as far as our education is concerned. The growth we want to see in our economy, the employment opportunities for our people, the living standards that we see improved in the lives of our people.

Mr Acting Speaker, maybe the need and the want may have raised our desire to give permit, approval for extractive industries to be developed and operated in our country for that matter. Mr Acting Speaker, the legacies of Ok Tedi will live with us and we will continue to talk about it today, we spoke about it, we talked about it yesterday. And we will continue to talk about it going into the future.

The damage that the legacies of Ok Tedi continues to impact on the environment and the facts that it impacts and affects the lives of our people there. It will still be there.

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Why did BHP move out of Ok Tedi, for what reason? They were worried about their reputation and integrity as a corporate institution in the global community.

Mr Acting Speaker, they don't want to spend more money to build a tailings dam, they told us that it was difficult to construct one. Constant seismic activities may have been reason for that. They have seen our economic fragility and economically we were not strong that we should easily follow their advice and you look at what happened?

Sustainable Development occurred in the name of sustainable development the people of Ok Tedi. What had happened and we created PNG Sustainable Development? Now we continue to discuss and debate about it and the former Prime Minister took out court cases and whatever else is in Singapore? Who is controlling this? Who is sitting behind and influencing it?

On the face of all these sufferings that we have insofar as the damages there in Ok Tedi operations and the river system.

Mr Acting Speaker, that time we thought that we needed Ok Tedi and off course maybe we did and yes we did. Look at how much Ok Tedi has invested into our consolidated revenue? The money we brought here and budget for the development needs of our country.

At what cost, the cost of our environment, the cost of our livelihood? Listen! This is a sacrificial decision we are making. Intentional decisions, these are not decisions that we made

in the light of what we didn't know about. We cannot say that we didn't know about it. We know this damage will continue to exist and that is what it is?

Look at Porgera today and the impact on the environment as a result of the mining activity that occurred there affecting the lives of our people. The compensation that our people get as a result of the impact and the damage. It is a question of whether it is enough or not but, the agreement we enter, into our contractual obligations to the development of that projects. Whom do we blame?

At that time we should have said it will damage our environment and a lot of trace metals will enter our river system. The area where we do gardening and hunting will be damaged when this mine comes. Why don't we stop it at that time? What happened and we put it into effect? Why are we crying now insofar as Ok Tedi and Porgera is concerned?

Who gives the environment permit? Who gives mining leases? All those developers do not come on their own will to do mining here. It is your problem with the environment go back to bush and remain like that. We open the way for them to come and to develop the mines.

Mr Acting Speaker, you cannot and we cannot have our environment and at the same time you enjoy the benefit of the harvest of the gold or the copper that is in there.

29/07

If you want to take it out, you will do some damage to the environment and you have no choice. Some of these damages will be permanent footprints. It will be an eye sore for generations to come. How did we end up with the Ramu Nickel Mine? Who gave them the environmental permit? Who gave them the authorisation to come and build a mine? Who gave them the mining lease? Who saw that everything was right and proper with all our independent inspections that the mine was now constructed convincingly enough for it to operate safely? For all our extractive industries around the country, Look at Lihir, Hidden Valley Gold Mine, and now we will have Wafi-Golpu coming up. The only encouragement that I have under the leadership of the good Prime Minister with ministers like the Minister for Petroleum, Minister for Mining and our economic ministers of Vulupindi and this Parliament as a whole. I think we see that we need to have a level playing field insofar as extractive industry investment is concerned in this country.

We need to give ourselves a fair go. We have come to a stage and a point where we may not have given ourselves a fair go. This is not to say that we will discourage investments

coming into the country but we want to see the benefits insofar as the cost on the environment and insofar as the resources we feel and we believe we own are concerned.

Mr Acting Speaker, with regard to the Minister's statement, I want to thank him and the leadership he has provided in collecting those samples and sending them to an independent laboratory in Australia. The tests have come back and he has reported to Parliament about the water quality in and around the Basamuk Bay. I think it is a responsible statement of him to say that further tests will be done. In the meantime, he advises that our people refrain from consuming fish around there except that it is safe for our people to be able to swim. Isn't that responsible leadership? For him to invite the good Governor for Madang and his scientist to work closely with his organisation, I think is a responsible statement to make.

Mr Acting Speaker, when you want to do a sampling test, it really is when you collect samples and where you collect the samples. Where ever you send your samples will give you the same results. But if the test are at opposite ends respectfully like what is seen between the Governor of Madang and CEPA then it does not stop us from doing another independent test. But the fact remains from the minister that tests will continue and it will not end there.

30/07

My brother the Governor of Oro has called for us to have a third party to do an independent assessment again, I think it is well fed for us to support that and I think it is consistent if you look at the minister's statement. This is consistent with the report that Minister has brought to Parliament.

And as leaders I think we need to be very careful. I share the emotions of many of us. We share maybe on the Floor of this Parliament or outside of this Parliament. Where ever we have our discussions, I share with you sincerely the emotions we share.

But I think whilst we might be emotionally affected so much so, I think we need to have some control in exercising responsible leadership in ensuring that as leaders of this country –

Mr Peter Yama – Point of Order! My point of order is that the Member himself has failed miserably. He was a former Minister in the former government and his job was to make sure to furnish me with the information from CEPA as per article two of the agreement with the company, CEPA and the Madang provincial government. In one year, he has to furnish me a report four times.

And with respect to Member for Kompiam-Ambum, when he was a Minister for Environment and Conservation, he has not furnished any information to the former governor or even to me now.

So, I think he may have failed somewhere along the line his duty entrusted to him at that time as the Minister for Environment and Conservation and he has to be mindful of that because he has not furnished any information to Madang Provincial Government. And I do not expect anything from CEPA now because CEPA, also in this government, has not provided me any information at all.

And this is one of the agreements that we have agreed with the company. And in the missing of that information, I do not want us to mislead the Chair please.

Mr JOHN PUNDARI – I am not misleading the Parliament or the Chair for that matter. But insofar as the point of order is concerned, according to the briefings I had, there has always been ongoing consultation with the provincial government of Madang.

Something that needs to be affirmed or confirmed but insofar as the briefings I had, when I was a Minister, was the fact that there is always this consultation and this respect for the Cannings decision for that matter and I also say this for the record of Parliament.

Mr Acting Speaker, coming back to where I left off before the point of order is that, as leaders we've got to be very careful in some of the things we say.

Be it a Canadian investor in this country, could be an American investor in the country, or it could be an Australian investor in the country, Malaysian for that matter.

We've got to be very careful in the way, as leaders, in managing and controlling our emotions when we are out there in the public forum talking about some of these issues and challenges that we may have. For example, if you talk about a company not paying taxes to the Independent State of Papua New Guinea. How have you asserting this? How do you know? If they are not paying taxes, get IRC to go and audit their books. And then you have something to stand on.

Lihir hasn't been paying taxes. Maybe Hidden Valley as well and maybe other corporate institutions in the country who may not be participating in the extractive industry for that matter.

Mr Acting Speaker, I am speaking as a national leader here and Mr Acting Speaker, when you are talking about the environmental damages, we have got an environmental plan

that these companies are supposed to work within. If they breach that, they will surely compensate for that.

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If any issue of safety has occurred independent assessments will ensure that the operator rectifies those problems Mr Acting Speaker and therefore, Mr Acting Speaker, my support to the Minister for Environment's statement on the floor of parliament is to say that, yes.

Let us go with the analysis that had being done by the laboratory and if there are any conflict and opposing laboratory test that we have got to determine going forward, I think the Minister has made the responsible, statement on the floor of Parliament. I think if there are further independent test to be done, I think that is only responsible way to go. I thank the Minister and his organisation for the leadership in that front.

(Mr Peter Yama interjecting)

Mr JOHN PUNDARI – Mr Acting Speaker, the test of fish tissues are very, very important, let me caution here also taking cue from the Governor of Oro's statement. Mr Acting Speaker, I want to speak only on the information from the Minister for environment, according to his statement, which states that, some fish will be safe for our people in Madang to consume along extended areas of the coast purposes, I think we need to be very, very careful. CEPA should not only stop consumption of fish within the vicinity of the slurry spill area but over certain extended areas within the province. The warning must extend until the tests are properly done because the ocean does not have fences to prevent fish from one area to swim to another.

I think we need to take some care there, but I also take note of the fact that an active volcano activity that goes on and out at Manam Island and other causes can cause the death of some of this fish as well, but only test can be able to give us the benefit of any decisions we can make going forward.

Around the world today, Mr Acting Speaker, before I sit down, there are thousands of fish around the world that are dying and washed up on the sea shores.

Just 2019 go into and Google and search mass deaths of animals and you will get all these results, Mr Acting Speaker, animals on land, animals in the sea are dying in masses and

whom do you want to blame for all this. Mankind's impact on the environment for the want of whatever we need to developing and to improve our ways of life Mr Acting Speaker, so it is not only in Papua New Guinea, it's happening all over the world, but let us send to test, let us send to analysis, let us send to assessments that are done by scientist and in independent laboratories and we allow the Minister for Environment within the parameters of environment impact statements to do their job and also the Minister for Mining as these issues are concerned, Thank you Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari-Pori – Prime Minister) – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, let me –

Mr Peter Yama – You are all in the pockets of the Chinese!

Mr John Pundari – Point of Order! The Governor for Madang said that we are all in the pockets of the Chinese. I think that is a defamatory statement to make on the Floor of this Parliament. How does he know that anyone of us is in the pockets of the Chinese? You know, maybe some of you people here used to go around collecting bribery and you are thinking that some Members on the Floor of Parliament do likewise. He should withdraw that statement because I have a lot of respect for him.

32/07

Mr ACTING SPEAKER – Point of Order is in order!

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Thank you Mr Acting Speaker, let me make response to this or let me put a punctuation mark into this very important debate. This story will go on and are very important stories.

Mr Acting Speaker, I note, most members of Parliament have a conversation to make with regards to this ministerial statement presented. Our senior and the Deputy Opposition Leader was standing up but please in the interest of time am just putting this punctuation mark and then we can carry on this conversation a little bit later on as indicated by the Minister.

In his statement that there will be further assessment, investigation and everyone every stakeholder including the Governor for Madang has every right to have an interest in this

matter. When matters relate to the security of our people, the interest of our people, and matters relating to the environment? They fish in their gardening they leave in I think it's just responsible that we all have a concern and we note that concern that is registered by every Members of Parliament in this House.

Especially, Governor for Madang and Member for Rai Coast in the immediate precincts of the interest areas and the affected area. But also greatly, comments spoken by every leader this afternoon or morning in respect to the statement Minister's made.

Governor for Northern Province has made some fundamental statements as well as Member for Kompiam-Ambum has also made some important fundamental statements that we all can also learn from and observe so finding the right balance. I think the statement by the speaker, who took precedent over me. Honorable Member for Kompiam-Ambum is correct and every other statement made this afternoon is also correct, finding the right balance.

Our harvest of resource comes at a price on our environment. We've allowed those investors to come in. The investor, who come in must also operate within responsibility and due care to our environment, to our country and to our people. I think from me, from the outset, without the specifics of the effects and impact on the environment the fact that there was a technical defect in the structure of the mine itself, Ministers and Members of Parliament, is an incident that warrants deeper study into what is taking place in far as mine safety and operation is concern? So as Cabinet did indicate to the Minister, and I note the Minister's statement that embraces further investigation and assessment.

Let me assure people of Madang and people of Rai Coast and people Usino Bundi and this country that this report and investigation done thus far is not conclusive and there is not the end of the story. That's why I said this is just a punctuation mark. In this journey towards fully ascertaining exactly what is taking place? What we must do going forward as I am saying in my statement the fact that there was a slip took place in the mine infrastructure, irrespective of the extent of the damage it slipped as a default, there was a fault and that warrants deeper scrutiny, investigation, assessment and I am giving assurance to the people of Madang, Usino Bundi, Rai Coast, as well as our country that we will work in partnership with all stakeholders, Madang Government led by CEPA, as well as our Mining Department and all of inter government approach to be chaired by Deputy Prime Minister to look deeper into what has happened?

33/07

I am just falling short of asking the mine to cease until we take stock but I will not be influenced by emotion to make this call. I will allow due processes and this report that we have been waiting for some time is the reference point, starting point and the basis point. It is now elevated to a higher committee, a committee of ministers led by the Deputy Prime Minister to look into it. They will use this report and call for another report including mobilising the reports that have been done by the Madang Provincial Government as well as other interested parties. This must be a pointer to present operators of Ramu Nickel Mine that a slip has taken place and we want to work with them to ascertain fully what has taken place and for us to go forward into ensuring that the mine is not only safe in as far as its operation is concerned but also is responsive towards our economy and our country going forward.

Mr Acting Speaker, this group of leaders here in Parliament with me are not responsible for the mine agreement that has given rights to the mining operations but we will be responsible going forward. We want to ensure that going forward this incident doesn't happen again. What can we learn and gain out of this experience? Learning and gaining is something that will be part of our terms of reference that the Deputy Prime Minister and his team of ministers, including the Mining Minister and the Environment Minister will assemble to ensure that at the ministerial committee level, our technocrats and technical advisors are mobilised for us to ensure we put a full stop to this story in as far as Ramu Nickel is concerned.

The Member for Kompiam-Ambum, Sir John, did allude to greater operations of mines in our country that has impact on our country in as far as environmental impacts are concerned. Legacy aside we just have to secure these operations in a manner in which it is done in the least harmful way to our environment going into the future.

Mr Acting Speaker, on record I condemn the spillage that has occurred due to collapse in the infrastructure. That is a safety breach and it needs to be given a closer look into and ascertained as well as looking into the environmental impact. We have asked the Minister and CEPA to mobilise a third credible international and assisted by certified local scientist to go again and assess and give us a third report for the benefit and satisfaction of us as a Government and our people.

We commend the Minister for informing the Parliament and this nation as to what has been done thus far but this is not conclusive. It is not a full stop or the end but just part of the

journey towards fully ascertaining what is taking place. I ask the operators of the mine to be cooperative with us.

We want to the mine to do better for the economy too if you are impacting the environment. We will take this as an opportune time to sit with those who are mining out there and go through all. This is why you have the Department of Mining and CEPA under the leadership of the Deputy Prime Minister in this pursuit.

Mr Acting Speaker, may I assure the Governor for Madang, the Member for Rai Coast, our people of Madang and the country that this is not the end as the minister has presented. We will go better and further and fully ensure that we adequately assisted with the clearest information as to the extent of the damage. If need be for us to take further actions going forward. Therefore something will come out of this one. I will not pre-empt what will come out but I will allow the due processes to take its course. We will come back to Parliament to report as to what we are doing as a Government. This is just a punctuation mark in history. Thank you Mr Acting Speaker.

Motion – That the question be now put – agreed to.

Motion – That the Parliament take note of the paper – agreed to.

34/07

Mr RAINBO PAITA – Mr Acting Speaker, I want to thank this honourable House and the Members of this House through you, Mr Acting Speaker, for the last two weeks we've sat through.

And as we've been always saying, Parliament take precedence over any business and I caution all the Ministers and Members to take note that when you have any conflicting schedules with any of these programs, Parliament always takes precedence.

Thus it is compulsory for us to sit and pay respect to this House. So, to those other leaders and Members who are here, we know, fights had occurred and people have died in order for us to come and sit here. So when we are here, we pay respect to Parliament so any programs that we have, please schedule it in a way where Parliament must take precedence.

Through you, Mr Acting Speaker, I caution and advise our Members that when we have Parliament sittings, we come and attend so that our people can see that we are doing our jobs and are sensitive to the issues facing our country.

Mr Acting Speaker, before I move the motion, I would like to give my remark from our sittings that we had. Thanking Parliament on those few fundamental reforms and at the same time legislative amendments that we did in this week and at the same time meetings that we had.

These are the kind of programs and legislative reforms that we have set programs and benchmarks for this government going forward.

Mr Acting Speaker, through you, I would like to thank the Opposition too. I once heard, Thailand's Prime Minister say that a "Yes-Yes government is a very dangerous government" so that's why it's good to have an Opposition to keep us in check.

We also understand that we hold power, yet that power is accountable and we must hold it with some checks so I thank the Opposition in raising some fundamental questions that have come on this side for us to provoke debate which our people can appreciate and know that those issues that they have faced in this country have been heard in this House so I thank the Opposition.

From this side of the House, we as a government too, are taking measures that can promote the interest of this country, Mr Acting Speaker.

Two points where, Mr Acting Speaker, before I close and move, Mr Acting Speaker, when we come to Parliament, as Cabinet we have tried to do some changes that can set the platform for future reforms in this country going forward.

But Mr Acting Speaker, one thing I realized in these two weeks that has made an impression on me to share to this Parliament before we rise.

This government when we came into office, made some ambitious statements and our energy has been seen by the country in terms of the reforms that we are trying to push in the most famous quote that Governor for Northern has put "Taking Back PNG".

Mr Acting Speaker, we as a government, I think, has shown in some of the policy statements that we made, we want to be a government that is strong, stable, Mr Acting Speaker and, at the same time transparent in some of those process that we had and you can see from the statements made by several Ministers and even the Prime Minister.

Taking que from other leaders in this House too, that is what we are trying to do. At the same time, Mr Acting Speaker, this a government, I believe, that we are trying to be sensitive to the needs of our people.

At the same time sensitive to the need that we want to reconstruct a new economy growing forward on greater participation of our people in this economy as well.

At the same time sensitive to the politics that we have on this Floor. At the same time outside as well, accommodating different views, different political parties, different ideologies but finding a middle ground that we can stand and stand strong so that we can lead this country forward.

Mr Speaker, sometimes I hear some men say “we are a people, we are very weak people.” May I remind this honourable House, there are two things that differentiate; they are assumptions and facts.

Mr Speaker, when some people say that we are weak, I want to remind this honourable House that we are not a weak people.

For 50 000 years we’ve been roaming this land farming. As you can see from our history, that is a fact that we cannot disputed Mr Acting Speaker, we are a strong country.

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Mr Acting Speaker, before the first contact we were a nation of institutions that were passed on verbally from time immemorial. And sometimes, Mr Acting Speaker, I heard some people say, when they describe us as we are not capable, Mr Acting Speaker, when you look at Papua New Guinea as expounded by so many ministers, leaders where we are here, we are a nation of a thousand tribes, thousand languages, a million views but yet we have managed to hold the country together for 40 years now, going onto 50. And that is a credit we must give to us as leaders of this House and the nation going forward.

Mr Acting Speaker, my last statement. When our Prime Minister made a statement when he took office and he said for us to be the richest black Christian nation, many people said it is a dream, or is it a far-fetched statement that cannot be achieved. It is non-attainable. We cannot achieve that within the next 10 years.

I sat down and I pondered it. Mr Acting Speaker, when you talk about richest black Christian nation, some misconstrued that statement, that it is a racist statement. If you want to go to the debate on race, whether you are an evolutionist or creationist, everyone will ascertain that we all came from Africa. So, whether you take which different form, deep down in you there is some blackness in you, Mr Acting Speaker.

If you take it from a philosophical point of view, even the Bible says, and I quote, when David said, your Word is a lamp unto my feet, so, in those ideologies we have some symbols going back to the statement that the Prime Minister made. And then to myself, Mr Acting Speaker, I wondered, is this achievable?

Mr Acting Speaker, I wish to put forward two ideas or facts. When you talk about wealth or riches, you talk about wealth, when you talk about black and you talk about Christianity, I think that when you talk about rich and wealth, there is three or four fundamental things that you can construct that statement from.

Wealth can either mean physical, social, financial or some other wealth not just isolating it to finance. But read it in the abstract of finance, Mr Acting Speaker, you look at the resources that we have. We have countless resources in our country. We have oil, gas, timber, fish and every other thing that a country could wish for, we have it.

When you talk about social wealth. A Simple man, when he dies, all of you Members face this, when someone dies we give him social reputation when we go to the mourning house. We buy his coffin and send him away. We are one of the only countries that pay respect to the dead, therein giving social significance to someone in society. So when you talk about social wealth we have it already, Mr Acting Speaker.

When you talk about time, time wealth or physical wealth we already have those things. I don't think it is a new statement that the Prime Minister has made.

In terms of Christianity, Mr Acting Speaker, by the fact that we have a Bible here, Christianity has been, is and will still be the fundamental religion for us in the country.

So, when the Prime Minister makes a statement like that, gentlemen, I think this House has to appreciate that we are half way through already. It's just getting our issues together regardless of our differences in politics and policy we have to find common grounds to drive this nation forward.

Mr Acting Speaker, I say thank you to all the leaders who have come, ministers, backbenchers, regardless of whichever position or title we hold in this House, we play a significant role in moving this nation forward and we as a government will try our best to give the best we can to this government.

I say thank you to all ministers, Members, governors and others for paying respect to this House for attending Parliament, debating those issues at a level where we can promote unity in this House so that our country can go forward as a united country as well.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

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

That Parliament at its rising adjourn to 26 November 2019 at 2.00 p.m..

MOTION BY LEAVE

Mr RAINBO PAITA (Finschhaffen – Minister for Communication and Energy) – I ask leave of Parliament to move a Motion without Notice.

Leave granted.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – REARRANGEMENT OF BUSINESS

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

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent the Leader of Government Business moving a motion for the establishment and appointment of Members to the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Citizenship Matters forthwith.

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PERMANENT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON CITIZENSHIP MATTERS – ESTABLISHMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

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

That:

(1) this Parliament establishes a Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Citizenship Matters, consisting of:

- (a) Mr Toboi Yoto Chairman
- (b) Mr Richard Masere Deputy Chairman
- (c) Mr Isi Henry Lenard,
- (d) Mr Robert Agarobe,

(e) Mr Ginson Saonu,

(f) Mr Salio Waipo.

(2) the Committee shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

(a) to consider and report on matters relating to citizenship as provided for by:

(i) the Parliament,

(ii) the Minister,

(iii) or on its own initiative and

(b) to consider any matter of importance relating to citizenship and report to the Parliament in accordance with the *Citizenship Act 1975*.

(3) the Committee has power to send for persons, papers and records and to act during recess.

(4) the quorum for a meeting of Committee is three.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 2.15 p.m..