

**FOURTH DAY**

**Tuesday 3 December 2019**

**DRAFT HANSARD**

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
CORRECTIONS TO DAILY DRAFT HANSARD

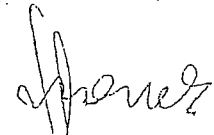
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HARRY MOMOS

Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

## FOURTH DAY

Tuesday 3 December 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.

The Acting Speaker again took the Chair at 10.40. a.m., and invited the Member for Goilala, **Honourable William Samb** to say Prayers:

‘Thank God, amongst many, only a few of us are allowed to be in this Chamber, to represent our people and able to be alive to be here today. Firstly Lord, we acknowledge that individuality and as a group we have sinned against you and your people intentionally and unintentionally, therefore we ask you today, please forgive us. Grant us wisdom and knowledge and understanding us we discuss issues concerning our people today and even after this session, wanem hap mipela go tude long en, Papa helpim mipela, Amen.’

## QUESTIONS

### **Basamuk Slurry Spillage**

**Mr JIMMY UGURO** – Thank you Mr Acting Speaker, I want to direct my questions to the Minister for Environment, Conservation and Climate Change.

Can the Minister confirm here clearly for the benefit of the people of Madang, Basamuk and this country, whether the government has any plans to send an independent team to visit this area at Basamuk?

(1) Have you sent this team yet?

(2) Is it safe now for the people of Madang, Basamuk and the nearby communities to eat fish, swim in the water and also carry out their daily activities using this water?

**Mr WERA MORI** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, I also thank the Member for Usino-Bundi for these two questions. I would like to assure the Member for Usino-Bundi and the people of Madang and the people of this country, that yes, I have basically assembled a team of very competent independent scientists to investigate the outcome of what actually happened when there was spillage at Basamuk on 24 August 2019.

This morning, a team left for Madang. I have contacted an Independent Review Organisation (IRO) from Australia. This is one of the most renowned and prominent scientific organisations in the world who will supervise and ensure that the correct protocols are in place so that when the results are obtained, it won't be disputed.

But for the benefit of the people and Parliament, yes, there is a team already stationed in Madang, as I speak.

On the issue of whether it's safe for fishing or not, I also want to elaborate further here that as far as I am concerned, it is safe for the people of Madang to go back and live their normal lives.

What actually happened was, about 80 000 litres of slurry spilled into the water.

**02/04**

When it hit the water, it reacted and normalized back to its natural standards. There was a survey done by CEPA and the samples were sent down to Australia for analysis. The result showed that the impact readings were below what was allowable on the permit. This means, it was below concern.

Therefore, to this day there has been no change to that. What I am trying to say is, everything is back to normal and I do not think the people of Madang should be worried. They should go back and live a normal life.

I know and I respect that the Honourable Governor of Madang, Chief Peter Yama and the Madang Provincial Government have been monitoring this issue.

On the other hand, one should understand that the activities of the mine and the operations of Ramu Nickel was permitted by the National Government. The National Government takes ownership of whatever may have happened. I would like to assure the people of Madang that, they can go back and use the sea for fishing and to live their normal lives. Thank you.

### **Supplementary Question**

#### **Ramu Nickel Mine Spillage**

**Mr WILLIAM TONGAMP** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I first want to add a question onto the Basamuk issue. While the Minister and his team are working on the details of the analysis, I just want to ask the Minister where the spillage started.

Normally, there is supposed to be a containment pond before it enters the sea. From reports we are getting, there were a couple of spillages of similar magnitude in the past but they were not reported. My questions are:

(1) What has really happened to the size of the containment pond before they started operating?

(2) In the event that there is another spillage, is there any guarantee or commitment made by the company to contain similar spillages in the future?

(3) Will they have improved those ponds before allowing the company to operate?

(4) If there is another spillage in the future, what would be the government's stance?

**Mr WERA MORI** – Thank you, Honourable Governor of Jiwaka. What actually happened was, one of the pumps broke down which could not control the slurry into the feed to be treated. As a consequence of that, 80,000 litres of slurry spilled into the sea.

In terms of putting into place future mechanisms, the mine safety division of MRA had actually conducted an audit with MCC and they have addressed that.

**03/04**

That's one of the things that's going to be brought to the attention of MCC on how to contain future spillages if it does happen.

So that arrangement is in place and MCC will be informed formally through CEPA. After we get the result and convey to them, they must have this in place to contain future spillages. Thank you.

#### **Health Supply Contracts**

**Mr ALLAN BIRD** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

My question is directed to the Minister for Health and I'd like the Minister for State Enterprises to take note.

Before asking the question, I would like to commend the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and his team for the exemplary work they have done on behalf of the Parliament in delving into some the issues affecting our people.

Secondly, I want to state that in spite of the findings, we are aware that there are many good workers within the health system and we want to commend them for their efforts day in and day out under very difficult circumstances for our people.

Mr Acting Speaker, what we cannot deny is the evidential break down within the health management system and obviously that has allowed corruption to creep in.

I think the most important thing, Mr Acting Speaker, is that our people want to know. We hear about corruption all the time and the great work that PAC is doing. The more important question is, what are we doing about it?

My questions are as follows;

(1) Is the Health Minister prepared to deal with all of these companies that are involved in the supply contract, mostly foreign companies? If you prepared to deal with them.

Secondly, we already have a very able organization that is call Post PNG, they have offices in 22 provinces and many workers. They have the capability, they are internationally recognized.

(2) Can the Department of Health give these contracts to Post PNG?

And in essence support, our efforts to reform and restructure our state-owned enterprises.

(3) What action is the Minister contemplating to deal with some of these very alarming and serious revelations that are coming out of the Health Department?

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

**Mr JELTA WONG** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I want to thank the Governor of East Sepik for his questions on a very important issue.

And while I am here, I would also like to congratulate the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee headed by the chairman on the great job they are doing.

For the first question regarding contracts, at this point of time, the contracts are being brought back to my office and we will be going through them with our lawyers to find out if breaches of contracts have been made so that we can terminate the contracts and start again.

The idea of using Post PNG, our State-Owned Enterprise and the PNGDF is in the works. We are working on the logistical terms at the moment.

04/04

Secondly, for those officers that are being named in the PAC, once they've been named in the PAC it is up to any individual to write a letter to the fraud squad to investigate this because this is a fraud matter.

So, I have done that. I have written a letter to the Acting Police Commissioner to investigate and I have given the names that have been mentioned and it is up to the Police Commissioner to get the fraud squad to start investigating these officers.

Health is about life and over the last couple of years it has been compromised to make money. So, under the Marape-Steven Government, we are going to look at this very closely and investigate every part of it. We will make sure we get all the culprits that are involved in this racket that has been happening in the Health Department for years.

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

**Mr JOE KULI** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker for acknowledging the people of Anglimp-South Waghi.

I have three questions. My first question is supposed to go to the Minister for Treasury but he is not here.

**Mr Acting Speaker** – Honourable Member, the good Minister is not here so if you could reserve your questions.

**Mr JOE KULI** – I am in possession of an empty warrant.

**Mr Acting Speaker** – Good leader, the Minister you wish to ask your question to is not on the Floor.

#### **Funding for PIP Project – Anglimp-South Waghi**

**Mr JOE KULI** – The second question is directed to the National Planning Minister. This is a separate question.

The previous Minister captured the PIP in the 2019 Budget, a road in my district, PIP No. 04987, but I have not received this money up until now and 2019 is about to end.

When I went to Works, they had offset all the debts of 2018 and now I have here with me this empty warrant.

In our 2020 Budget, my priority project is under the Public Investment Programme page No, 707. Scrolling down, I saw that the PIP number and noticed that there was a spelling error in the name and the location was Anglimp-South Waghi, Jiwaka.

I am raising this question because we as leaders go from office to office presenting submissions after submissions, proposals after proposals and scope of works because we are concerned about our people in the districts. But the budget for the PIP was not actioned in 2019 and even today.

**05/04**

They cancelled it and it must have been a typing error or something so they must correct that because we have two years left.

So, my question to the Minister for National Planning is to clearly identify the project properly. There was nothing for my electorate for 2019 and in 2020, there must have been some spelling error and the project was put under a different district while the actual location is in Anglimp-South Waghi electorate. Thank you for your attention and God bless.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honourable Member, your questions regarding 2020 Budget won't be entertained until the budget is deliberated on.

**Mr SAM BASIL** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, for making it clear but first of all I want to thank the Member for Anglimp-South Waghi for asking two very important questions on behalf of his people.

As the Acting Speaker has stated the Appropriation Bills for 2020 is on foot in Parliament so, after it is passed, we can ask questions about that but if there are any typing errors, the Member can see me after the sitting so we can recheck and bring the corrections back to the Department.

For 2019 budget, we all know that there is a massive cut in the PIP Programs, nearly 30 per cent was cut from the entire PIP Programs so some of the projects were cut at that time. That is why in the supplementary budget, you have to check again and see if it is there or not. But if it is there, you can come see me and we can try and work out something.



However, in regards to the Supplementary Budget, K1.082 billion was adjusted and that affect the 30 per cent of the PIP Program which also affect some of our plans like MTDP3 plans to deliver programs and projects to strengthen the economy and benefit the people. So, I asked the good Member for Anglimp-South Waghi for the good questions but if you look at the Supplementary Budget and if it is there, come and see me but if it isn't then we must have revoked some of those big projects in the Supplementary Budget so we can manage it through the year. Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

### **Protection Laws for Men**

**Mr KENNEDY WENGE** – Thank you Mr Acting Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister for Police. Before I ask my question, I want to thank the Government for transporting the body of late brother and Member for Menyamya to the Floor of Parliament for last respects and back to his home province. You have done great service to the government and people of Morobe, thank you.

My question to the Minister for Police is that can he change a law or not? There are laws that protect women and children's rights. There are lots of men involved in domestic violence against women and children and as a result, many of them end up in police cells and even prison. There should also be similar laws protecting fathers' rights as well because a family is complete when we have both father and mother. Therefore, the law must be fair to both parties; men and women.

In our cultural traditions Papua New Guinean men pay bride price and as head of the family, sometimes take responsibility of family discipline and in the event hurt their wives or children unintentionally. We believe in resolving family problems in a simple traditional manner because men and women in our societies have equal rights. I do not devalue the status of women in our country but since women have rights under the law in these modern times, men too must have the same rights as well.

**06/04**

There must be a law protecting the fathers. Traditionally, we had rights to teach and discipline our children and take charge of our families. Even the Bible states that the father is the head of the family. The father is the head of the family both traditionally and by our Christian teachings therefore, I strongly argue that fathers must have rights by law.

There are usually two kinds of fights. One is for revenge and the other is to fix our livelihood. The father must have rights in order to lead and be in control of his family. When in court over disputes, our courts must also consider perspectives of fathers and not just mothers and children. For example, if I as a father gives a beating to my child in order to discipline him, then, I must have rights to protect me for my responsibilities. The courts must be given the law to be fair enough while making decisions. There are laws that cover our children and mothers but there are no laws covering fathers therefore, we need to address this issue.

There are many fathers behind bars today because there are no laws protecting them. It seems all fathers will be behind bars whilst only mothers will be living freely in this country. I strongly urge this Government to pass laws to protect fathers. We must have laws for everyone to make sure we are fair with everyone irrespective of who we are.

**Mr BRYAN KRAMER** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

I think we all know that we all have rights under our *Constitution* whether you are a father, mother or a child. Our *Constitution* stands to protect each and every one of us irrespective of who we are. We cannot go and create special rights for fathers because then we will only be going against our *Constitution*. There are mothers who cause problems for fathers but there are laws to deal with such cases. If provocation is involved then man has the right to sue woman.

In response to the Member, the mother has rights because she takes care of the child. She gives birth and nurtures the child from childhood till he or she becomes an adult. Under the Marape/Steven Government, we will work with aid donors and other countries who took time considering women's rights that has led them to develop. We will need to institute mediation or dialogue when there is domestic violence. It is proper that we establish facts before we are unfair with fathers and before sending them to jail.

#### **PNGDF Brutality – South-Fly District**

**Mr JAMES DONALD** – I wish to direct my questions to the Minister for Defence. A few days ago in Wipim Village of the South-Fly District in Western Province, a 20-year old man died after being beaten up by PNGDF soldiers manning the boarder. His body is currently in the morgue.

07/04

My questions are:

(1) Is the Minister aware of this incident? We want this incident to be investigated so that we can establish facts on what actually happened because there is a general perception that such law enforcement agencies like the Defence Force are here to protect the country and its citizens but instead they went ahead and engaged themselves in such activities. We are not happy.

(2) What will happen after the investigation?

**Mr SAKI SOLOMA** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker and the Member for North-Fly for his good questions.

Firstly, I would like to apologies for the death which occurred. I have not received a report on that death. Our Defence Force are highly trained to protect the sovereignty of our country, its borders, people and properties within it. They are professionally trained to perform their duties at the highest level.

I would like to thank the Member again for raising this matter. The report of this incident has not reached my office yet but as soon as it does, I will ensure that appropriate actions are taken and if military personnel are involved, then, they will be dealt with accordingly.

### **Supplementary Question**

#### **More Defence Deployment and Recruitment – Western**

**Mr JAMES DONALD** – My supplementary question is in relation to a NEC Decision made by the Government almost two years during the former Defence Minister's time, to strengthen the Defence Force forward base at Kiunga to a battalion strength.

Mr Acting Speaker, I am keen to hear from the new Minister if he has any plans to progress that NEC Decision?

**Mr Acting Speaker** – The honourable Member for North Fly that will be a new question.

**Mr JAMES DONALD** – Mr Acting Speaker, my supplementary questions are related.

Secondly, Mr Acting Speaker, Western Province sits on two international borders, Indonesia and Australia. However, currently, there is not enough Defence Force personnel to monitor the borders. We need more Defence personnel to be deployed there to monitor and protect two border areas along our province. But for the last ten years, that recognition was never given.

Now, with the current situation, it shows that there is a need for more security. Over 40 young men from the Western Province have applied to the Defence to be trained and be deployed to provide security but they have been rejected.

So, can the Minister give me an assurance that if there is going to be another recruitment program, can his Department recognise and give priority to those applicants from the Western Province so that they can be deployed there after their training to look after the Border?

Thank you.

**Mr SAKI SOLOMA** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. The Member has raised new questions but they are very important questions.

Mr Acting Speaker, in the 2020 Budget, four new patrol posts will be established on top of the four existing patrol posts.

**08/04**

On the second new question you have asked, yes, we will ensure that we have a full forward operating base in one of those four border patrol posts and one will be established in your area.

Regarding recruitment, when I was appointed as the Minister responsible for Defence, I heard many rumors and speculations tarnishing the good name of our Defence Force.

So, when that happened, I directed towards the end of this year that all recruitment be put on hold but next year, we will resume. In relation to recruiting the personnel, because of many undisciplined soldiers damaging dormitory or causing some problems and tarnishing the name of the PNG Defence Force, the way forward under my Ministry, we will start to recruit at secondary schools. Before they sit for grade twelve national examination, they fill in the school leavers' form as part of their choices on whether they want to go to universities or technical colleges so at the same time, they can indicate if they want to join the Army.

I want to recruit male and female citizens with clear mindsets who are also career oriented so that after five or six years of training, they be well disciplined and should perform their duties well. These are legacies issues and I am trying to reintroduce corrective measures to restore confidence in our Defence Force.

We will try to make it fair by recruiting from your area and also from other parts of the region to balance our Defence Force. But I thank you for raising all these and I will take it on board to correct, improve, and modernise our Defence Force.

Thankyou Mr Acting Speaker.

### **Tariff Reduction for Airfares**

**Mr WIN DAKI** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I direct my question to the Minister for State Enterprises.

As a Vice Minister in charge of ICCC, I have written a letter to you two months ago to check the ticket pricings and inform the people on the increase in tax rates and charges.

Mr Acting Speaker, it is Christmas now and people are travelling back to their homes for holidays so can the Minister inform this Honorable House and Papua New Guinea whether he has responded to my request or not?

Thankyou.

**Mr SASINDRAN MUTHUVEL** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I thank the Vice Minister for Treasury for his important question.

Mr Acting Speaker, his question also relates to Member for North Fly's question regarding fare reduction from Air Nuigini.

Mr Acting Speaker, there is no simple answer to this question but we are working hard to bring the price tariffs down from various SOEs. But right now, to answer his question, more than 30 to 40 percent of that ticket cut has been considered as NACTs and taxes to government.

**09/04**

These Air Niugini tickets operate less than 10 percent profit margin. And if we don't reach the 10 percent margin then we cannot run this business.

However, we will try to negotiate with Treasury and NAC to find out how we can reduce some of these fees and taxes. But to be honest, I cannot promise that I can carry out this tariff reduction by this Christmas. The study is underway and I want to assure this House that as soon as we complete this study then we will announce the possible tariff reduction exercise.

### **Use of IFMS – East New Britain**

**Mr NAKIKUS KONGA** – Mr Acting Speaker, I want to direct my questions to the Minister for Finance and Rural Development. I also want the Minister for Treasury and Education to take note.

Mr Acting Speaker, as you all are aware, East New Britain Province was again the first province sanctioned by the Department of Finance and Rural Development to pilot the new on-line Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) in mid-2017. After two years of trialling the IFMS from 2017 to 2019, we have encountered a lot of challenges and experiences that can be used to improve or replace this system if need be and I believe that those provinces, who are currently implementing this system will agree with me.

Mr Acting Speaker, IFMS is a very good system for a one-line departments like all the departmental headquarters in Port Moresby such as Education, Health, Agriculture and Livestock, Finance and et cetera and it may not be a problem at all.

Mr Acting Speaker, whilst IFMS is working in my province to some extent, on the other hand, it has delayed a lot of implementation of our impact projects. Classical examples are some of our roads, building infrastructure and development projects that have been delayed for a year.

(1) Can the Ministers concerned get their respective departments to review the current IFMS with the option of reverting back to the figures system where everything was progressing well and without delay?

Mr Acting Speaker, my second question without notice is directed to the Minister for Education and I want the Minister for Finance to take note. Whilst our government policy on TFF to provide equitable education for all, the schools in the provinces do not receive their –

**Mr Acting Speaker** – Honourable Governor, you cannot ask two separate questions to two Ministers at one time. You can reserve your second question to the Minister for Education tomorrow. Thank you.

**Mr NAKIKUS KONGA** – Thank you Mr Acting Speaker, in that case, I will only require response on the first question. Thank you.

**Mr RAINBO PAITA** – Mr Acting Speaker, I thank the Governor of East New Britain for his very important question. I take note that his question probably highlights some of the issues that most of the Members of Parliament and especially governors have been raising to me for the last three weeks when I came into this office.

**10/04**

Mr Acting Speaker, as he has highlighted in his question, few provinces have pioneered in establishing the IFMS in their provincial and district treasuries. His province is one of them.

Mr Acting Speaker, to my understanding the IFMS system is a new system and at the same time it is a good system. The feed-back that I am getting from few Members and the Governors within this honourable House is that, some are saying it is working while some are saying it is not working. Coming back to us as the custodian of the IFMS system, we are trying to see how we can address that. One was through the report that was established by the former Minister for Finance, asking an audit into the IFMS system and looking at the compliance issue. Is it actually working as a system linking national level with provinces and districts?

Mr Acting Speaker, I must say that this system itself is a very good system. The issues around it, for instance, compliance with the provincial procurement system. At the same time, we look at the training and other facilities that we have not just in the provinces but districts as well. When you have districts that are isolated, weather situation and other factors affect the IFMS system as it is based on an IT infrastructure. Some of these challenges are ongoing and it is in a planning progress to implement throughout the country.

Mr Acting Speaker, specifically to the question that he is asking, I can assure him through you that we will look at it given the issues of procurement. What he is generally raising is an issue of procurement in terms of complying with some of the ongoing procurement issues aligning with the IFMS system. So that is something that I take on board and I will look into it but generally as I have said, we are dealing with issues of compliance

but it is a fairly good system that tries to curb the expenditure concerns we are having in this country.

Generally, to say case by case, some provinces are saying it is working in their provinces and are happy while some provinces are saying it is not working. We will have to find suitable and workable solutions that can feed those provinces and the districts which are having issues with the IFMS system and help them procure and implement projects as he is referring to. So, I thank the Governor. If he has any other issues, he can write to me and I can address it through my Department. Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS – EXTENDED TIME FOR QUESTIONS**

Motion (by **Mr Koni Iguan**) agreed to –

That so much of the *Standing Orders* be suspended as would prevent the time for Questions Without Notice this day being extended by 20 minutes.

### **Supplementary Question**

#### **Release of Outstanding DSIP Funds**

**Mr KONI IGUAN** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. Before I ask my question, I would like to firstly on behalf of my people of Markham congratulate the Member for Finschhafen on his appointment as the Finance Minister. I wanted to go down on record as the first Member to ask him a question in his first term as Finance Minister but I was late and the Governor of East New Britain asked you first. But I was the second Member to ask him questions so it will go on record.

**11/04**

Mr Acting Speaker, my supplementary question also relates to the IFMS system that the Governor of East New Britain has raised earlier. I know that Parliament is going to rise this week and it will close for business by next week.

Mr Minister, when will your department release warrants for the last quarter of our DSIP this year?



And if we are going to get the DSIP this week, a week before the accounts closes, what is the guarantee that this IFMS system will connect us into the system? Can you do a clarification to this House on the close of accounts and the late receiving of the DSIP?

Mr Acting Speaker, I do not know whether I will have another opportunity to raise questions during this sitting of Parliament so I'll take this time to say Merry Christmas to all the Members. Thank you very much.

**Mr RAINBO PAITA** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I thank the good Member for Markham for asking the supplementary question and also thank him for his acknowledgment of my appointment as well.

Mr Acting Speaker, on the close of accounts, I think it was clearly communicated to the Members of Parliament in previous meetings since I took office. There is a general perception by Members of Parliament that when the account closes, most of the funding from the districts back to the consolidated revenue. However, I have communicated through my department that because of the issue of cash constraints we've experienced in previous years and this year as well, we are sensitive to the issue of leaving the accounts open for procurement and to complete implementation of the on-going DSIP and PSIP programs.

So, I want to make it clear that my department is aware of the issue on the close of accounts. We have asked the department to leave the accounts open for the districts and the provinces to access the outstanding DSIPs once the warrants are released from Treasury and Planning and through the office of the DIRD.

Once the payments are made available and they can complete the procurement for the on-going program for this year and then leading up to next year. The close of accounts is just for the department as stipulated in a newspaper advertisement sent out by my department. Accounts in the provinces and district treasuries will be open so they can complete whichever projects they have on their list.

In terms of the DSIP and the PSIP, I think the department through the Minister for Planning, Treasury and myself are working to re-tie the leftover commitments for this year so that once we leave the accounts open, all Members and governors can expand on their outstanding commitments for this year. Thank you, Acting Speaker.

## **Maternal Deaths – Popondetta General Hospital**

**Mr HENRY AMULI** – Thank you, Acting Speaker. Thank you for recognising the people of Sohe finally.

Mr Acting Speaker, my question without notice is directed to the good Minister for Health.

Before I ask my question, I want to give some background information. These are all related to maternal death in Popondetta. I believe there are many such cases but I have three cases that were brought to my attention. These three deaths are from Kokoda.

First case, a young mother was referred from Kokoda Health Center to Popondetta General Hospital. While admitted there, an inexperienced doctor attended to her and she died six hours after surgery.

**12/04**

Case number two, a Kokoda Primary School teacher from the Sepik was admitted to the Popondetta General Hospital and after the surgery, she returned to Kokoda but was re-admitted to the Kokoda Health Centre and was referred back to Popondetta General Hospital where she died after a few hours.

In the third case, a young mother also from Kokoda was admitted to the Popondetta General Hospital but died in the ward after a few hours.

Those are all three maternal deaths. My questions are:

(1) Can the Minister investigate those preventable deaths?

(2) Can the Minister or Department of Health find solutions to the on-going issues with the Popondetta General Hospital? There are many such deaths that have not come to our attention but those mothers who died did so within two weeks of each other. These are preventable deaths because those mothers were healthy. But the issue is on the inexperienced doctor attending to these mothers' surgeries or operations before their deaths.

(3) Can the Department of Health conduct an investigation into those preventable deaths and find solutions to the on-going issues within the Popondetta General Hospital?

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

**Mr JELTA WONG** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker and I thank the good Member for Sohe for his questions.

This type of news is not good. It's appalling! I will get the NDoH officials to look into the matter immediately and through the Speaker, I will get back to you.

Please forward me all the information you have and I guarantee you, we will get answers to these.

### **ADB Project – Highlands Highway**

**Mr WILLIAM TONGAMP** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I wish to direct my question to the Minister for Works but since he is not here, I will direct it to the Prime Minister.

My question is with regard to the work being done on the Highlands Highway. I also would like the Ministers for Labour and Employment and Foreign Affairs to take note.

A 430- kilometre road project from Nadzab to Kagamuga on the Highlands Highway is a very important project and I think it is the biggest road project undertaken by any government since Independence. It is a K3 billion ADB funded project, a 10-year programme from June-July of 2019 to June-July of 2027.

The project comes in three parts, and the first part is worth about K1 billion and the contract has been awarded to three Chinese companies which I understand are now working on the road. They have been paid 10 per cent advance payment sometimes back in December 2018 and the ground- breaking ceremony for the entire project was in January of 2019. From my understanding, the companies that were awarded the contract probably tendered for 30 per cent less than the possible values.

Couple of weeks ago, I drove to Goroka ADB Office and Department of Works Office which prompts me to raise few questions or issues on this Floor of Parliament as we are into December of 2019.

(1) Are the three companies now doing the Highlands Highway fully mobilised for the advanced payment?

(2) How much have they received to date?

(3) The progress of the sections they have been contracted to work on?

(4) Are the companies on track to deliver the project on schedule?

**13/04**

There are also a couple of questions I want to raise because when I walked into the ADB Office in Kamaliki in Goroko, an Italian Company was contracted to supervise the

entire project. Most of the contract engineers are over 70 years old and they don't know how to use computers to do their jobs.

(5) So, I just want to ask, who gave them the contract?

(6) Is it the Asian Development Bank (ADB) or the Department of Works (DoW) and how do we engage people who are over 70 years old and about to go into retirement homes to come here and become advisors on very important infrastructure projects in our very country?

Mr Acting Speaker, I also would like to raise another issue that the design of 430-kilometre road from Nadzab to Kagamuga in the Western Highlands Province was supposed to be complete but when I was at the ADB office in Goroka, to my amazement the designs for some of the sections of the Highlands Highway were not complete. For instance, I asked them about the 61-kilometre Chimbu-Western Highlands or the Jiwaka portion of the Highlands Highway and the ADB advisers told me that the section the Jiwaka road does not have line drains as part of the BOQ for that particular road. They also told me that they are currently working on some of the designs and I was really confused because we gave them this contract a year ago. But now they still don't have the full design for the entire road, and there is a very high likely chance that the project will be delayed and we might not deliver that project on schedule. In this case, there is likely to be variations to the total cost of the project.

(7) So what percentage of variation is the Government prepared to pay to complete this project?

Mr Acting Speaker, while I still have the Floor, I want to make additional comment here that the three companies that are engaged in the Highlands Highway are not based in the project areas. The Jiwaka portion does not have DoW or ADB presence. They are operating from Goroka and trying to supervise the Jiwaka project.

Since 2012 the Jiwaka Province doesn't have a Department of Works setup. So, I would like to request on the Floor of this Parliament for the Department of Works to immediately instruct DoW and ADB to set their work stations in Jiwaka Province to supervise the 63 km road construction in Jiwaka.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** – Mr Acting Speaker, I thank the Governor of Jiwaka for asking these very important questions. The Works Minister conveyed his apologies to me because he is feeling a bit ill today and he is resting. But I want to ask the Governor to

condense his questions into a letter to the Works Minister and a copy to me so that we can give a detailed answer because these are important questions relating to substantial investment the previous Government undertook on behalf of our country.

Over 60 percent of our country's total GDP which includes coffee and tea produces, Oil and gas produces, the mine-field produces from Porgera, Wafi, Harmony, all the way from Lae up to Porgera, Kandep on to Komo and Kopiago where some sections of those roads haven't seen the daylight of any maintenance work.

14/04

We are trying to address them but in the meantime, first things first, the first segment from Nadzab to Kagamuga is covered under this ABD program. Let me assure the Governor that I will get the detailed report from the Works Department, and either the Minister or I will take time to respond publically through a statement later in the week. But as a matter of pronouncements and principles, He raised very pertinent issues, like for instance, the variation of under-design of the roads and the variation that will be required if the contract is being under performed.

Mr Acting Speaker, by law variations only amount to 10 per cent of the costs of production. We will look into the legality of these aspects of companies bidding below the proper BOQ and they come back to the table asking for variations. That area is grey and the practice has been bad for some time. We need to look into this, so that we can have penalty clauses attach for those who bid at a certain price and they can't deliver to the specifications of those contracts.

It is about time we refurbish and refurnish our own systems to ensure that we don't have this sort of practice going on to secure contracts. They are bidding at either very low prices or bidding at the very high prices. The BOQ sets the standard for bidding and those discrepancies need to be tidied up by our Department of Works. I will get to work with them to ensure that it is best for us. The country deserves to know in totality the huge investment in this segment of the Highlands Highway. It is only fair that we give respect to the question by responding in a prepared statement later this week that entails every issue that he has raised. I will ask the Governor to forward a letter to us putting in writing his issues that he has raised so we can respond in detail.

On the the lack of presence of Works Department in Jiwaka, it is a new province and we give assurance that we will get the Works Department to ensure that they have a presence

there. The Minister must have had conversations in our pursuit to shift public servants away from central agencies and Waigani. We are trying to migrate many of our public servants to be shifted here to the provinces. It might start with the Works Department.

We want it to be anchored in the Provincial Works Engineering unit so that they become the face of government in terms of participating in the implementation of our Public Works Program right across the country. We should have a very small central policy Works Department here in Port Moresby but our implementing agencies are relocated to our provinces. We might start that by relocating some of our Port Moresby based engineers and supervisors to Jiwaka Province.

Mr Acting Speaker, to cut that long story short, that 430km segment of the Highlands Highway from Nadzab to Nadzab, the nation deserves to know the full status of it. What has been drawn down and if there has been any funding drawn down. Many people have been telling me that there is hardly any unit stationed at work. We will be getting a detailed report and table it in Parliament before it's rising. This are part of the legacy issues that we are trying to clean up from the previous Government.

15/04

#### **Kokoda Initiative – Funding for Buna, Gona and Sanananda**

**Mr RICHARD MASERE** – My question is directed to the Minister for Environment, Conversation & Climate Changes.

Firstly, let me take this opportunity to thank the former Minister for Environment and Conservation now the current Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee for his undertaking to support on behalf of the Government, the Kokoda Initiative in Northern Province.

Mr Acting Speaker, under the Kokoda Initiative between the Australian and PNG Governments, they have agreed in principal that prior to this agreement, the Kokoda Initiative only covered the Kokoda area but under the new initiative, they have extended that cover to also include 'both Buna and Sanananda villages. The reason being that during World War II, the Allied Forces lost about a total of 1700 plus infantry soldiers and 1200 of those soldiers died around the Buna and Sanananda areas, hence, the requirement to extend the Kokoda Initiative to cover those two areas. The Australian Government through Aid Support has been able to support Kokoda both on the Northern Province side and also on the Central Province side.

In 2017, I had a meeting with the High Commissioner of Australia and during our discussions, there was a gentleman agreement undertaken that if the district was to build a road to Buna, the Australian Government would assist with funding some of the projects within those areas. So, in March 2018, we completed the new road to Buna and as a result, the Australian Government was able to assist us and support us under the Kokoda Initiative to build a new Health Centre and a double classroom in Buna. Last month on 5 November, a small Museum was opened again with the support of the Australian Government.

The support from the Australian Government has been generous but the support from the PNG Government is almost zero apart from the DSIP Funds that we used to build the road.

My question is in line with whether the PNG Government will fund or support through CEPA?

I understand that since 2016 under CEPA, some grants were paid to the Central and Oro Provincial Governments including the Sohe Open District in 2016, 2017 2018 and 2019 but unfortunately, the people of Buna and Gona have missed out on these funds.

My question to the Minister is that now that you have taken on this Ministry, can you assure the people of Ijivitari, particularly those in Buna and Gona who also deserve these funds and that from the fees that are collected, I understand the tourist fee is about K350 per adult and K175 per child, whether these two communities will be recognised by CEPA? I understand that CEPA paid K500 000, this year to the Central side, Sohe and the Oro Provincial Government but Ijivitari have received nothing.

So, can the Minister assure us in this House that the people of Buna, Gona and Sanananda are included into those grants that are issued to these communities?

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

**Mr WERA MORI** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, and I would also like to thank the Member for Ijivitari for this question

In the beginning of this year in my capacity as the former Minister for Commerce, I actually visited Buna, Gona and Sanananda. One of the reasons for visiting those areas was to basically look at how we can create SME's in tourism business.

And the Member is correct in saying that Buna was where one of the fiercest battles was fought with the Japanese. I totally agree with him and in my capacity, I will make sure

that the areas that he is referring to will come under the radar of the benefits on the Kokoda Track Arrangement that we have with the Government of Australia.

I am aware that there will be some money made available of which the Budget has not been passed so I will not disclose the figures but it will be only fair that I make sure that CEPA extends its series of benefits that are being enjoyed by the people of the Central Province on the Kokoda Track and also those on the Northern Province side of the Kokoda Trail which must be extended to the people of Buna, Gona and Sananada.

**16/04**

It is also one of those areas which I would like to through the Office of Tourism – I will later discuss with him – as to how we could develop Tourism in that part of the area. This is part of the country where one of the fiercest battles were fought.

Thankyou Mr Acting Speaker.

#### **Supplementary Question**

**Mr PETER YAMA** – Thankyou Mr Acting Speaker, it's very good to see the Minister standing up and answering a very good question from the Member for Ijivitari.

Firstly, I want to thank him for suddenly meeting me at the airport on Sunday and giving me an invitation on the same day for his trip to Madang with his cohorts.

Minister my question is; as the Governor of Madang, should I really believe your statement you made one day after assuming office or should I believe recommendations from a highly world class qualified professional scientist confirming my province's recommendations?

I am asking the question, you just wait; don't disturb me.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honorable Governor, I have respect for you but you have to respect the chair.

**Mr PETER YAMA** – I have respect for the Chair, what's your question?

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*



**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – It's a new question and our time for questions has lapsed.

**Mr PETER YAMA** – This is a supplementary question regarding environmental damage and not the issues of Madang. It is about the environment and should be in order.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER** – Honorable Governor, I know you wanted to ask a supplementary question but it seems to be a new question.

### **Madang – Basamuk Spillage Report**

**Mr PETER YAMA** – Mr Acting Speaker, I'll frame it well. Minister, you sit down and listen to me!

My question Mr Acting Speaker is; can the Minister provide a scientific report on issues in relation to the spillage in Madang.

Less than twenty-four hours after becoming a Minister, how do you know that the spill is coming from RD Tuna? Minister, should I really believe you or I should believe my scientist to verify the damages that has been done to the marine life of my 300 000 people of Madang who depend on seafood. Now spillage and the contamination has gone as far as Manus and the Sepik River.

When will you table a report to me or the Parliament as per the agreement? You and your Managing Director failed in my office when I asked you that question. You have no report to give me. As per the agreement, your Department is supposed to give reports four times in a year and seven years have lapsed.

Thankyou Mr Acting Speaker.

**Mr WERA MORI** – Thankyou Mr Acting Speaker. I would like to also thank the Governor of Madang Province, Honorable Peter Yama for framing those very important questions.

**17/04**

Firstly, I must apologise to him because the letter written was basically to inform him that we will be in the province and it was emailed to his Provincial Administrator. But unfortunately, the Administrator never received the email, and so we had to deliver the original letter to the Governor.

Secondly, on this issue of believing –

**Mr Peter Yama** – Point of Order! I want to correct the Minister, he gave me the letter at the airport on Sunday when we boarded the same flight. He didn't give it to the administrator but to me.

**Mr WERA MORI** – Sorry, I emailed it to his Provincial Administrator and the original was delivered to him at the airport. That's what I meant.

Secondly, on the issue of believing the scientist, let me say this, science don't tell lies. So, when there was a report about death fish contaminated by heavy metals, by then we had in this Parliament through the former Minister for Environment, Conservation and Climate Change the results of the work done by Conservation and Environment Protection Authority (CEPA) and it was distributed on the Floor of Parliament.

When I became the Minister, it's just like a detective trying to link the crime to the suspect. So, I asked firstly to have hard copies of the report but we didn't and secondly, we needed to know what were the heavy metals or elements and whether they were present in the samples taken by CEPA at Basamuk. That would enable us to link that with the result taken at Basamuk. But, to date, we haven't obtained a copy of the report that the good Governor is referring to.

It's a scientific practice worldwide where we had to conduct due diligence on any scientific investigations, which means that the appropriate protocols must be in place. So that in that way, they can all stuck up and the data will back-up each other.

We don't know where the spillage is coming from but with respect to RD Tuna Company, they also dispose their rejects – and it's not only them but other fishing companies as well – they also dispose their rejects out in the ocean and it floats everywhere. And so it could also reach PNG waters and other neighbouring countries as well.

What we needed to know from CEPA was the specific elements in the contamination they are referring to because we will link that back. I cannot invent these assumptions because this is scientifically not proper.

For the benefit of the Governor, CEPA has the right to assemble the team because it's the State Agency. And Ramu Nickel is the project that has been licenced by the National Government. What will happen is that the team in place now will be underseen by CSIRO,

the major scientific company in Australia that oversees all Australian scientific investigation, whether in Australia, Antarctic or anywhere around the world.

That's basically to prove the point of whether it be the death fish or anything else connected to Basamuk spillage. So that's what we needed to establish with other data to prove and verify that the environment in Madang and other parts of the province is safe.

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

18/04

**AUDITOR-GENERAL OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA –  
REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES  
AND STATUTORY BODIES, PART IV, 2018 – PAPER –  
MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF THE PAPER**

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER-** Honourable Members, pursuant to statute, I present the following paper:

*Auditor-General of Papua New Guinea –*

*Report on the Accounts of Public Authorities and  
Statutory Bodies, Part IV, 2018*

Motion (by **Mr John Pundari**) agreed to –

That the Parliament take note of the Paper and the Report be referred to the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts.

Debate adjourned.

**MOTION BY LEAVE**

**Mr RAINBO PAITA** (Finschhafen – Minister for Finance and Rural Development) –  
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 Notice No. 31 of Government Business this day being called on forthwith.

**DEPARTMENT OF POLICE – STATUS OF GUN RELATED ISSUES –  
MINISTERIAL STATEMENT – PAPER NOTED**

Debate resumed from 15 February 2018 (See page...)

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** (Tari-Pori – Prime Minister) – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. Let me debate on this important matter in the face of our nation's exposure to many lawlessness and violence in our society. I think it is important that this Parliament debate on these matters like on how to address gun related issues, gun related lawlessness and violence in our society and for us to find an amicable solution as we step forward to secure our country insofar as our country's safety is concerned.

There are many instances of past where guns in society have caused havoc in districts, provinces and urban areas that we are living in. I just thought that we start this debate this morning and bring this sort of important government agenda to the forefront, and for us to reach some understanding as to what is the response that a responsible government must give to ensure prevalence of guns in our society is under control, and penalty is given to the highest order to those who use guns to perpetrate and perpetuate offences in our society.

Having said this, let me also place on record my balanced view that some guns, especially those that are licensed - in most instances - are not causes of crime in our society. It is these un-licensed and illegal firearms that continue to emerge in our society, and where I come from up in the Highlands is a growing gun culture where possibly the wealth of a tribe is mobilised towards purchasing guns that are sold on the black-market and transported across the borders.

**19/04**

These are guns that have been lost by our disciplinary forces.

So those are the whole wide-ranging issues that need to be firstly discussed here amongst Members of Parliament in the forum where issues of country are spoken, and secondly, for the Executive Government to pick on from recommendations that are coming out of these sorts of communications in Parliament or outside of Parliament for us together to progress a way forward to address these issues.

Mr Acting Speaker, next year's census will confirm in our country a population that would have easily gone past eight million. At the conclusion of the national census next year, we will know exactly how many people are living in our country.

In our efforts to create greater participation in the economy through SME interventions and our efforts this morning, I addressed the PNG Mining and Petroleum Conference. And my parting words was that they must not leave behind Papua New Guineans, especially the landowners from where they are operating.

As a population increases, presence of guns in our society continuously will cause danger and threat to our societies.

Mr Acting Speaker, I stand this morning to speak on this issue as Prime Minister and for Members of Parliament to assist by productively debating this issue, and also for relevant Ministers who are in the Executive Government, especially the Police Minister and Minister for Justice and Attorney General and few other Ministers, to look into how best we could curtail the use of illegal guns by firstly increasing penalty.

Mr Acting Speaker, I am proposing that the increase of penalties be looked at by virtue of the fact that someone has used a gun or weapon with the intention to harm someone else.

Over the weekend I was totally dismayed and very angry that what started out as a drunken brawl spilled into a suburb or settlement of Port Moresby as a result of uncontrolled liquor sales and uncontrolled population migration into our cities. The clash between the Southern Highlanders and the people from Hela resulted in the death of some youths from Southern Highlands.

The use of guns and the use of weapons to kill someone else is becoming prevalent in our society and I stand up to rally the concern in this Parliament.

The measure that we can take is to impose tougher penalties for those who use guns in our society to kill someone else.

Mr Acting Speaker, in Singapore, if I am not wrong, if someone is found to have drugs in his possession, he gets life imprisonment or death sentence as the maximum penalty.

We have the ability to make laws in this Parliament so that the Police can enforce these laws for us. If someone has an illegal gun in our society, it must attract the highest penalty. Whether it be home-made or factory made, it doesn't matter because I am seeing an emergence in culture where people are running to the safety of a tribal gun rather than to the safety of a state law enforcement agency.

**20/04**

If a tribal youth has a gun then that youth becomes a kingpin, a hero and people in the tribe or in the neighbourhood run and take safety behind that person who has got a gun in the *haus lain*. We must eliminate guns in our society and I make this firm commitment as Prime Minister.

Illegal guns must be eliminated and I am encouraged that the Police Minister has taken steps to put in place practical measures for us to move towards removing illegal guns from our society.

The other side of the debate has been that some amongst us, want a total ban on firearms and that is why I am raising this conversation here for every one of us to say we want a total ban on firearms. But if we want a properly structured systematic use of licenced firearms to those who already have it, a total ban and heavy penalties on those who have illegal firearms and home-made, then, I am recommending for us to relook at the Law, and next year give the highest penalties for those who have guns.

Mr Acting Speaker, I am also proposing for those who have bullets and ammunitions. Some time ago, up there in the mountains of PNG, a neighbouring tribe removed the detonator pins off from a grenade, if I am not wrong, and threw the grenade in a tribal warfare. It was a first and took place about three or four years ago.

This sort of prevalence of guns and introduced weapons in our societies can cause havoc for us into the future if we don't secure it very well. And I am appealing to this Parliament for us to have these conversations, enter into these discussions and take a mature approach to dealing with guns or use of weapons to kill someone else in our society.

The use of bush knives and knives have now been used unnecessarily to attack one another, not just guns now. It's gone down to use of bush knives and guns. How do we discuss or stop the use of that? Holding knives, bush knives and guns in public as well as consuming alcohol in public places or alcohol restricted areas, there are measures to take to

keep this within our control. And on the other side, if we pass this law it is up to policemen now to start to police that.

And, Mr Acting Speaker, this conversation needs to be sounded out by every one of us for us to help police also. Many of our policemen and policewomen, whilst they want to work and they are working very hard and we acknowledge those who work very hard, but some are also intimidated. Maybe their skill level is low that they can't confront situations like that.

I give you another sad example of that policeman who was murdered at Tokia Bridge that borders my electorate and the electorate of Koroba-Kopiago. The policeman was in a convoy, he was the third car in that convoy as police always do. They were there to protect the security of the principal they were traveling with. But as the first two cars turned away, the policeman, lacking defensive driving skills and having a higher firepower with him, was not able to engage to disperse the crowd and make an escape route for himself. And a youth walked up with a home-made gun and shot and killed the policeman who had a SLR or M16.

So, Mr Acting Speaker, this one made me think again on how we are handling these matters. Maybe an M16 or SLR is not the right weapon for police to have when engaging with society?

**21/04**

When the other police officer who was next to him was asked to explain what had happened, he said that the officer that was killed was not comfortable in engaging with the crowd with an M16 gun. And he paid his life with it when someone with a home-made gun walked up and shot him.

Mr Acting Speaker, this is a serious issue confronting our nation. It concerns me because gun-related criminal activities and violence in once peaceful places like Alotau and other areas indicate that the fundamentals of our society is heading towards shaky grounds, if we don't really anchor this issue properly.

As I converse with our miners and petroleum sector people, I have said that I want to grow the economy and seek an increase in their participation, but it will be a waste if we do not anchor the fundamentals of our law and justice system.

Mr Acting Speaker, Parliament has a duty of passing laws and if the laws that we have today are not tough enough then we really need to look deeper into those laws and maybe start passing greater penalties, not just on guns but for any other offences as well. For

instance, I proposed to Cabinet the other day that the penalty for drink driving should be increased to K5000 or K10 000 where the driver causes harm to himself and to society. Effective policing of laws and imposing heavier penalties is an effective deterrent to crime.

Mr Acting Speaker, some of these issues need to be discussed publicly for every one of us to be concerned and to offer a lending hand to the good Police Minister who is trying his very best to ensure a police system that has broken down over a long period of time is now restored and is resuscitated for all the citizens of this country for a future without guns and violence. Though we may not rid this country of everything but the ability of our policing to respond to arresting lawlessness must be represented.

Mr Acting Speaker, I am proposing to Parliament to pick up the debate on guns and talk on the law and order issue this afternoon and onwards and early next year for us to pave a path that we are moving towards. If it is the will of this Parliament and the nation as a whole to abolish guns totally it must start here in Parliament.

We should also consider the types of guns used by police. I have received very precise information in places like Tari that when someone is in possession of an illegal gun in the village, he goes on a firing spree and a week later he is still firing the same number of bullets and you wonder if there is a bullet factory up there in the mountains.

Mr Acting Speaker, there must be a monthly stocktake of our Armouries. We need to know the number of ammunition and guns in stock and how many and what types are missing. We all need to work together to build a stronger and safer society.

We need to police these issues properly from our borders from West Papua right up to Solomon Islands and across to Australia. I ask this Parliament to think deep into the law and order issue affecting us and consider establishing heavier penalties and to legislate laws that can control and strengthen our law and order and justice systems.

**22/04**

Mr Acting Speaker, I remember two years ago, we made some amendments to existing laws. We tried to point towards increasing penalties for illegal guns, drugs and other law and order issues that we have. I am proposing to Parliament for higher penalties for possession of ammunition and illegal guns whether it be home-made or factory-made. It must be the highest we can give regardless of whether it be manslaughter or murder. It should receive the highest and nothing can go higher than attracting life sentences. This Parliament



has the ability to pass these sort of laws that can be the anchor of a safe country. I am proposing that this Parliament has a run on debates concerning this issue.

Mr Acting Speaker, whilst we are preoccupied with a mindset about discussing our National Budget and what we have to do for our society, I think it is also fundamentally important that we raise concerns on law and order. This is because law and order anchors the fabric and fundamentals of our society. I look forward to a mutual outcome from both sides of the House to finding a solution towards giving greater light in addressing law and order issues in our country.

**Mr BELDEN NAMA** (Vanimo-Green – Leader of the Opposition) – Mr Acting Speaker, I am very happy that the Government has decided to bring this forward as a matter of national importance for us to debate on the gun status and related issues in our country.

Mr Acting Speaker, we can stand here all day and debate such issues but Mr Prime Minister needs to understand that there are already laws in place. There had already been a guns report that was published by a committee that was headed by the retired Major General Jerry Singirok for this Parliament to debate and deliberate on it and implement those recommendations. These are things that the Prime Minister needs to educate himself with.

Mr Acting Speaker, the gun issue is a serious issue in this country. Most of the lawlessness that is being caused in this country is being caused by the use of guns. I understand that there is also a death penalty law that is already in place.

However, what is needed in this country is enforcement. This country is over regulated with too many laws. There are already laws in place and we just need to enforce them. Unless there are new amendments to those laws or if there are new laws then we need to bring to Parliament for endorsement. There is no need to debate and waste time on issues that have already been debated on.

Mr Acting Speaker, the issue rests with us as the leaders. Most of us are buying guns for our tribes to win our election campaigns and sit here on the Floor of Parliament.

**Mr Allan Bird** – Point of Order! The good Opposition Leader needs to qualify that statement. I belong to the Abelam Tribe which is the biggest in both Sepik provinces but I have not purchased a single firearm for my tribesmen. If you are going to name names then please do.

**Mr BELDEN NAMAHA** – I am not talking about the Governor or the people of Abelam in the East Sepik Province. I am making a general statement.

**23/04**

I know that it is very true because I have done my investigation prior to coming to this Floor of Parliament. I know that there are more guns up in the Highlands than in the Defence or Police Force.

Mr Acting Speaker, we need to take real action, not just come and talk on this Floor. The Prime Minister himself needs to account for the guns he bought for the Police in Tari, whether they are still in the Police armoury or in the hands of the locals who are causing havoc in Tari.

If I was in charge of this Government or if I was the Police Minister, I will immediately call for surrender of illegal firearms in the country, instead of wasting time on *Facebook* and attending to issues that the Police Commissioner can attend to. The Police Minister should be concentrating on policy matters and how to address these type of issues and so forth, not wasting your time on *Facebook* or attending to a crime scene at Erima. –

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*

**Mr Bryan Kramer** – Point of Order! Mr Acting Speaker, I do not know if the Opposition Leader has taken the position of the former Prime Minister of always getting obsessed with directing questions to me or commenting about *Facebook*.

Mr Acting Speaker, there were people actually killed at Erima. Lives were lost so to come and make insensitive comments on that issue is unbecoming of the Opposition Leader.

I ask that he take back that comment. Thank you.

**Mr BELDEN NAMAHA** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, I am not going to take back that because we are trying to take back PNG here.

*(Laughter in the Chamber)*

**Mr BELDEN NAMAH** – What I am saying is the truth! You should be sitting in the office and concentrating on how you can assist the Prime Minister to enforce the laws in this country and make policy decisions, not running around on the street.

Mr Acting Speaker, this is a very serious issue –

**Mr James Marape** – Point of Order! I am not trying to interrupt the Opposition Leader's good debate but let me place on record that I did state that the Police Minister is doing his absolute best and working. He has had conversations with me so he is not running around.

I picked up this debate for all of us leaders to have a conversation on it so it is not only the Police Minister's work. I want us to engage into this conversation and find a common path, going forward.

My Point of Order is to correct the Opposition Leader that the Police Minister is not running around. I did say that he is at work and he has had serious consultation on this matter.

Thank you.

**Mr BELDEN NAMAH** – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. Then I will ask the Prime Minister to put him to task on this gun law issue and come up with proactive measures on how best we as a nation will deal with guns in this country because it is causing havoc.

The Prime Minister mentioned something about bush knives. At Erima and even at the Boroko Market men are tucking bush knives in their trousers but we are not talking about that, we are talking about guns. Criminals have been doing hold-ups using guns and it has been happening for decades. What measures do we have and if we have laws, how can we enforce them? That is what we should be talking about and if the laws are not tough enough, how can we amend them to become stronger?

You are a Government, do not try to come to the Floor to seek views and try to look for solutions.

**24/04**

It is the responsibility of the Police Minister, the Attorney General and the Defence Minister to work together and come up with laws. If you think that the current and existing laws are not strong enough then bring recommendations to the floor. Don't try to come and

look for solutions. When you take government you should be well equipped to try to run this country properly, not waste people's time.

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

**Mr BRYAN KRAMER** (Madang – Minister for Police) – Mr Acting Speaker, as this topic does relate to the Ministry that I hold, I would like to acknowledge the comments and views expressed by the Opposition Leader.

But I think we need to be apply common sense and understand that these issues didn't turn up yesterday. It is a serious issue faced throughout our country from the four corners of Papua New Guinea. This is because we have a critical mass of young people with limited opportunity, the introduction of western system that are breaking down our cultural systems in terms of Kukurai and leadership where people lead by example. Now our youths don't really care who is a Kukurai. There is lack of leadership demonstration in the community. A critical mass of young people are now involved in home brew, drugs and even if you as a community leader take up position against them you are only one and they will attack you. So, what do our Leaders do? They can't do anything at the community level. So, we have systems of government breaking down.

For policing in 2010 we got K171 million. The number one issue we face in this country is law and order. So I am thankful that the Government has taken action under Marape-Steven government by allocating a record budget of K380 million. The request by Police was K420 million. So, we will take this K380 million and make sure that it goes to work in addressing lawlessness in the community, developing a partnership between police and the community. It's good to see our good Opposition Leader taking-off after giving his comments.

*(Members interjecting)*

**Mr BRYAN KRAMER** - Mr Acting Speaker, these issues will take time, they are not going to be resolved overnight. It's going to take a clarity partnership between government, between Members of Parliament, between Governors, between PPCs, between members of the communities, between churches and between NGOs, and it is no quick-fix. It is something that has taken since 1975 to now, 45 years of independence.

We have a limited budget and we are in a cash flow crisis in this year's Budget in terms of our record debt but the Government is still committed to addressing these issues. I will look forward to working with Members of Parliament and Governors on how best we can address these issues.

There is already a procurement for over 10 new vehicles that will be deployed by the Police Department in the next two weeks. We no longer focus on hire car business; we are now focused on deploying vehicles to the provinces and districts. For K1 million, we were able to procure 10 brand new vehicles. These were procured in partnership with Australian Federal Police and were duty and GST free. We look forward now to Police Department working with Members, and not spending a million kina and only buying four 5-door vehicles but a million kina and getting 10 vehicles that are fully equipped for Police work.

This initiative will take time. I have no question or doubt working in partnership under the Prime Minister and Members of Parliament that we will make meaningful efforts to address these issues. But, again, the main problem we are facing is the large number of people that have limited opportunities and a shrinking Police force.

Mr Acting Speaker, of the 7500 police members, 500 are over the age of 60. They talk about increasing our police to 10 000 but there's no money to pay them. Some officers are yet to be paid their allowances that they are entitle to and some officers have taken promotions but haven't even got paid for those positions. This is because DPM is yet to approve it because there is no money.

Mr Acting Speaker, going forward, the only solution is if we all work together, and not just come here just like the Opposition Leader says. Talk is cheap so he can do his part in his electorate and we can all do our part in our electorate with the little funds.

**25/04**

There is no point building a classroom to only have it burnt down or procuring equipment to build a road and instead youths vandalise and burn them too.

What has happened at 8-mile is also happening throughout the country in places like Madang and Lae. But as for Lae, I have learnt from the initiative taken by the Member who is funding his police personnel, engaging with private business and in return they donate vehicles to police personnel to carry out their duties. These are some of the bright ideas and best practices in those areas that we all can consider and work in partnership to address these issues of law and order.

On the issue of guns in the Highlands; yes, initiatives have been considered which the EU has proposed to come and run mediation. They will be here on Monday, 9 December, 2019, upon the request of the Prime Minister, which they are willing to fund. They will consider some areas on how they will address conflicts in the Highlands Region starting next week and have discussions with us and see how we can apply other methods of addressing law and order, conflicts and gun culture by going through mediation and sitting down and resolving issues within the communities. Our people don't have mediation skills, but for compensation, yes. So their focus will be mediation in Bougainville; how we can learn lessons from there and how we can contribute to help our government address those issues. Thank you.

**Mr SAM BASIL** (Bulolo – Minister for National Planning and Monitoring) –

Mr Acting Speaker, I would like to contribute to the debate but before I do, I would like to also remind all of us here in this House that it's very important that we debate such issues. We know that the firearms issue is a problem from the past that has compounded over the years until today. And I believe it's our responsibility as the Opposition and the Government to make sure that we contribute meaningfully by suggesting ideas. I believe that the difference we can make as a government is to ensure that it's pinned down and pass some laws if necessary.

Mr Acting Speaker, I have my own views and I would like to share it on this Floor. I see that we do have legal gun owners such as the three disciplinary forces, licence firearm owners throughout PNG, many security companies, individuals and businesses. We do have a large scale of businesses that are operating throughout the rural areas such as buying of gold and coffee with hard cash.

So I won't support the idea of banning firearms in PNG because if we do then we won't have enough police manpower to take over the functions and the protection provided to individuals and businesses that are taking care of their businesses and other licences holders.

Mr Acting Speaker, that doesn't mean that legal gun owners and users are legal in everything they do. One example of misuse of guns carried out by legal gun owners that I know happened in my district some eight years ago. Some of the youths from my district went to Bogia to buy betel nut and a policeman from there murdered one of them while others sustained injuries. Such incidents do happen so we must pass laws that will penalise them from misusing their privileges.

I also suggest that anybody found in possession of unlicensed firearms should automatically be charged and imprisoned for up to 10 years. And the penalty for usage of ammunition without proper documentation should be five years imprisonment.

**26/04**

Mr Acting Speaker, I believe we should make amendments and impose tougher penalties. In some communities and villages, people who own firearms are committing crimes and are getting away with it. And when this happens, they become powerful and feel that they are above the law

Mr Acting Speaker, whilst changing these laws, we should also consider engaging 500 to 1000 soldiers to be specifically tasked to remove firearms from certain places. For instance, if people in the villages fail to surrender their firearms, the PNG Government should use the Defence Force to walk into that village and disarm those people. If they fight back, so be it. We know that there will be casualties but this government or any successive government must show that they are in control. Not taking serious action only suggests that we are allowing people in the villages to commit murder or cause problems. As a result, they then become powerful, earn the respect of the neighbouring tribe, and take control. Therefore, I suggest that we should allow our Defence Force to intervene and walk into a village and disarm the whole village, if we have to.

Mr Acting Speaker, correct me if I am wrong, but I believe we have up to 14 prisoners on death row, and more than half of these people were found guilty on gun-related cases. Let's not be afraid to take the stand now and start executing these prisoners.

We continue to come back to Parliament to find ways to control gun-related violence, but one sure way is to execute those prisoners on death row. This will send a strong message to those who want to take lives unnecessarily on the street and most likely will think twice before pulling the trigger. Whether it's a licensed or unlicensed gun, the perpetrators should all come under the same law and face the full force of the law.

Mr Acting Speaker, I want our government to be the first to implement the death penalty and start executing those on death row for gun-related violence.

Mr Acting Speaker, with that, I look forward to the changes in our laws. We should also consider strengthening the laws on firearm licensing. We must make sure all firearm owners must present genuine and valid identification such as an NID card and a bio-data must be kept by the Police Department as well as records of their performance. If a person in

possession of a licensed gun is found to have used it unlawfully, he should be banned from owning firearms for the rest of his life.

Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

**Mr ALLAN BIRD** (East Sepik) – Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to also contribute to this debate. Without taking away anything from previous speakers, it is important for us to understand the context of some of these issues. Before the Independence era, it was the tribe that gave comfort to the people and they managed to keep law and order. After Independence, the tribes gave up their rights to a State that was supposed to protect those rights. Over the years, the State became more and more incapable of securing the rights of the people.

Mr Acting Speaker, this is a general breakdown. I was chairman of a hospital for four years and I can tell you that of 60 per cent of those people that were injured with trauma, less than one per cent was caused by guns. Most of those injuries were caused by bush knives and grass knives. The latest weapon is called the wire catapult. This is used by firing a nail with a hook on it from a rubber strap. A number of young people in my province have been killed with this weapon.

Mr Acting Speaker, we have tried by empowering people and in central Sepik now my people make quite a bit of money. They make a really good income to survive in the village. But we now have a latest trend where criminals from other provinces have now come into my province and highway and are now conducting criminal activities, not only using home-made guns but also using bush knives.

**27/04**

I am getting reports every day and my people are asking me to provide more protection along the highway.

I have just authorised the purchase of two more vehicles for Police to patrol this highway. These criminal activities have extended beyond Maprik and into Nuku as well. There never used to be hold-ups in Nuku. Now we are experiencing hold-ups in Nuku and the perpetrators are from other provinces who are now coming into my province.

So, Mr Acting Speaker, my personal view is that if our tribal communities have given up the right to defend themselves by allowing the State to deal with the law and order



problems, and if the State cannot perform these responsibilities, then what do we do when my tribesmen start arming themselves?

Mr Acting Speaker, we never had hold-ups in Maprik because for more than 40 years the Abelam tribe provided protection around the township. Since we are not armed now, the outsiders are coming in with arms.

I have 200 policemen to patrol my province that has six districts with a population of 600 000 and more than four million hectares of land, and it is very difficult. I am encouraged by the fact that the police will be getting more resources as promised in the 2020 Budget.

Mr Acting Speaker, I think the solution lies in better policing. If it means we need another 10 000 police personnel, we need to find a way and fund it. We already have laws in place but policing is a problem and prosecutions are not very good.

The other problem we have is that courts take too long to prosecute people. Whether it is to do with murders or other crimes like corruption, it will take four to five years before offenders get punished for their wrong doings. These delays are not good. The longer our systems are paralysed and are not able to respond to these issues, we are only forcing the people to take up laws into their own hands and that's what is happening. And in a way, the Opposition Leader is right; we cannot come here and complain about it. Who has the authority to enforce these? If it's not us then who is going to do it? If we are not going to get the judiciary right or police right then who is going to do it?

Mr Acting Speaker, I am encouraged by the work of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). The PAC is an extension of the Parliament; it is an important organ. It demonstrates that when Parliament uses its power, we can get some actions. I think the Minister for Police, Police Force itself, Minister for Defence and the Law and Justice Sector needs to be oversighted by the Parliament. I think we have to go by the way of what we have seen with the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee. We need an oversight committee to look at this. We understand that there is a Guns Report, so which part of this report is going to be useful? Do we only rely on the Guns Report or should we be encompassing a collective view from the societies? How do we do it and how do we oversight it? I think the best way is through the Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts.

Mr Acting Speaker, I was in the Philippines six years ago and I visited a place called Davao. The person who is now President of the Philippines was the mayor of Davao. That place is the second safest city in the world. They have police and security guards and they will check you everywhere you go. They have a shoot-on-sight policy.

28/04

When the mayor became the President of Philippines he killed more than 16 000 people. I have gone to Manilla and I have seen Manila change. Manilla is now like Davao.

That is leadership. You want to fix a problem, you deploy the resources of your country. Are we going to make our country safe or are we going to let the evil people take it over?

We are a government. We have the right to wield power to execute people. That is the power of government. It's not ours to forgive if someone is going to take someone else's life, an innocent life, and then turn around and look at the State. We need to exercise the power of the State. You remove a life, we take yours too. If you cannot respect a decent citizen of this country, then it is up to the government to exercise its power.

So, Mr Acting Speaker, I wish to encourage you since you are occupying that Chair, please put together a parliamentary committee to provide oversight over the work of the police. We cannot come back here and talk again. We take action similar to what the PAC is doing. Let's fund it, let's get it out there and let's solve this problem. Let's give confidence to our people. Let's make sure that the ordinary Papua New Guinean knows that if you threaten my life, my government is going to come and defend me. That's what the citizen wants. Let's give it to the citizen, Mr Acting Speaker.

Thank you for listening.

**Mr JOHN ROSSO** (Lae – Minister for Lands and Physical Planning) – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I wish to join this debate and provide some facts and my opinion.

Everything we have spoken about is good and the problem of guns is a serious problem in Papua New Guinea which affects many of us. But many times when we act, we do a knee-jerk reaction.

We have to look at statistics, facts and probably as the good Governor of East Sepik has said, provide an oversight committee to look at the true reality and problems we have.

Some of the facts, as he said, is the enforcement of the laws. Many of our people in rural areas, especially in districts and LLGs do not get to see the hand of the law. That is why when people have complaints and go to the police station, there is no policeman or magistrate in the district. There is not even a local gaol. So they do not see justice being carried out.

I speak from experience being a *kiap* for about 10 years in Chimbu. When I was a young *kiap* in Chimbu, my boss the district administrator, was the deputy local court

magistrate, there was a rural lock-up there, and the police were there effectively. Immediately after the complaint was laid, the offender was arrested and imprisoned. He got sentenced for one year or two years or some such times.

Nobody wanted to fight because they saw justice being carried out. Right now a lot of our rural people, when they do not see justice, end up resorting to violence to protect their own. That is why they accumulated weapons.

There is no more discipline in our villages and our urban centres because people respect law and order. When they lay a complaint at the police station and the perpetrator get arrested, a week later they see him out of jail. There is no proper prosecution. When you bring an offender to prison, the offender bails out and gets out and there is no proper prosecution for murderers so our people resort to using violence.

Mr Acting Speaker, many times we talk about guns but the fact of the matter is people with bush knives cause the biggest problems. Drunkards also cause even bigger problems. Enforcement is the key.

If you go to Boroko or Lae market all the youths there are armed with bush knives and screw drivers. Our police should stop, search and make sure these guys are prosecuted and send them to prison. This is within the law. There is a law there. There is a penalty there. You can be imprisoned for up to six months. Arrest them, prosecute them and apply effective prosecution for carrying a weapon in a public place. There is a law there, enforce it. They should get out of the cars and walk and enforce this.

**29/04**

I speak from experience serving as a Reserve chief sergeant in Lae for 15 years. I speak from experience why Lae has dropped 80 percent of its major crime rate now.

So if we are talking about guns we must know what guns we are talking about. When semi-automatic guns are lost, the perception is to blame licensed gun holders. The licensed gun holder does not carry an M16, SLR, M60 or a K1 or K2 assault rifle or Galil automatic rifle or a 5.56 bullet; they don't carry these weapons. We must understand that the military and police carry these sorts of weapons.

When you look at the tribal fights in Tari and Chimbu, look at the type of guns in the photographs. What sort of weapons are there? Galil automatic rifles. Where do the Galil rifles come from? They come from a Police Armoury. Where does an SLR rifle come from? From the Military Armoury and Bougainville, the civil war in Bougainville. When you see a M16

and M60 mounted on the back of a gun in Mendi; where did that gun come from? We forget the mutiny in Wewak where we lost 150 weapons from the Wewak Moem Barracks. Those guns ended up there in Southern Highlands – SLR and M16 M 203 grenade launchers all ended up there. They did not end up with the people with gun licenses. They came from our own armouries because we do not enforce our armouries. I speak from experience serving as a policeman because after shift we don't lock our guns in the Armory; we take them home. The Duty Sergeant needs to make sure that the weapons are locked in the Armory and are accounted for after every shift.

Mr Acting Speaker, we have to have stringent accountability of those weapons. The Defence Force needs to lock up the weapons and sign them out every time.

When we are talking about guns, we must understand that licensed holders do not carry those sorts of weapons.

Like our good Prime Minister stated, when we run out of bullets there is no bullet factory here in Papua New Guinea. So where do you get the 5.56, 7.62 bullets from? The private citizen does not have that. It comes from our existing Police, Defence and CIS armouries. They literally sell it to them.

Mr Acting Speaker, the bottom line is effective policing and strengthening the Police Force so when we make arrests the perpetrators must be locked behind bars.

We need to ensure the Police Force, Defence and CIS have a monthly stocktake on their armouries for accountability.

I concur that the Minister for Police has a huge task ahead of him. These problems were not created only yesterday. We inherited 20 years of problems and we need to fix those systems and make the systems accountable. If we start fixing the systems we are on the right path.

Mr Acting Speaker, going back to recovering those guns in the tribal war zones and conflict areas, we have to stop telling the whole world we are going on a State of Emergency up there. We should have an oversight and make sure we have good intelligence in pinpointing where the high powered guns are. I'm pretty sure all of us will know who and where the people with these guns are in our own villages. Collate good intelligence and have a ready prepared strike team to go in there, without telling the whole world we are going in there.

The Australian Government can assist by sending 10 sniffer dogs to help the strike team recover the weapons and prosecute the culprits. The weapons that are recovered must

not be returned to the armouries because the police will go and sell those guns again. We must dispose of them in public by burning them up.

This problem needs the help and assistance of every PNG citizen and we all must unite to work together on this gun culture.

Mr Acting Speaker, as an ordinary citizen and Member of Parliament, I also want PNG to be some place where I can go to the beach with my children and not worry about criminals holding me up and my innocent family.

**30/04**

However, today if you are going out with your family to the beach, you will always be afraid of being held up. Until we eradicate all illegal weapons whether it be for business houses or individuals, we have to do it to make our environment safe. First of all, we need to make certain that our laws are accountable and that our Police Force is very efficient.

We must also make sure that we train our police personnel properly and adequately. For example, you need about 1 000 to 2 000 plus ammunitions to train our personnel in the usage of weapons. Many of whom that come out of our training institutions are not properly trained therefore not qualified enough in the handling of firearms.

Before I became a Member of Parliament, there was an incident in Lae where there was a high-speed chase. The police man, a friend of mine, accidentally shot and killed an innocent person during the chase. He is now behind bars serving a jail sentence of 30 years. There have been a lot of such incidents where innocent people have been killed. This may be because of lack of proper training. We cannot blame this policemen because we as a government failed to train them properly. I think the only properly trained policemen are our SSD personnel.

The Australian military and police personnel go through certification courses every year to be given a permit to handle weapons. In our case, when you pass out of Bomana, you are qualified to handle any kind of weapon. There are no standards and regulations as to the use of different kinds of weapons. A different kind of a weapon demands certain knowledge on how it can be used. There is no one way of using all weapons.

However, going back to Lae when that incident happened, I made it my personal business to train all young police personnel on weapons training. I can say here today that from that time till today, we have not had any more of such incidents. We spent time and much of my private money to train this people properly on the use of firearms.

Mr Acting Speaker, there are a lot of things that we need to do but we have to work together to achieve them. We cannot let our good Police Minister to do it alone. I suggest we establish a committee as the Governor of East Sepik has suggested, and put our heads together and come up with the best option to help our people thereby becoming a gun-free nation where everyone can be safe.

On the same token, we should also be addressing the use of knives, drunkenness, and lawlessness and many of our other problems. The incident that happened at Erima was an alcohol related issue and I have such issues in Lae. Why is it happening like that? Our liquor licensing people are just issuing licenses to just anybody. We must enforce the stringent operating times of our tucker shops. They seem to operate at very extraordinary hours. Anyone can knock on the door at 3 a.m or 4 a.m and they will still serve you. This is an issue that boils down and back to our licensing people to monitor and control liquor outlets. I cannot control it in Lae even though I am the board chairman.

Our liquor licensing people have given licenses to almost everybody and anybody. It is very hard to monitor and control by the board and even the police. We must therefore do a wholesale approach and address it as a whole to combat our problems.

**Mr RAINBO PAITA** (Finschhafen – Minister for Finance and Rural Development) – Mr Acting Speaker, I too would like to take the cue to debate on this issue. I first entered Parliament as a junior research officer dealing with the guns issue. This issue has been an issue successive Parliaments have been trying to deal with it. I thank the Prime Minister for bringing this issue to the floor and allowing us to debate, as opposed to the Opposition Leader's sentiments that there is no need for debate.

**31/04**

Mr Acting Speaker, the intention for a bill to be brought before this Parliament appears on notice on your information paper, and the intention of Government is to amend this law to better protect and regulate illegal firearms that are floating around this country.

Mr Acting Speaker, at the same time, we would all know that as much as we talk about the issue of guns in this country, all the members are thinking about their re-elections in 2022. The relationship between guns and elections is synonymous and cannot be broken up.

Mr Acting Speaker, the issue of guns is one of the hottest topics that countries like America are facing where the ratio of guns is about 120 to 100 people. The Second Amendment in their Constitution states that everyone has the access or right to own a firearm.

However, in PNG, it is a qualified right that someone can have a licensed gun. As the Prime Minister said, it is important to understand the issue.

In all the reports that we see on gun related violence or cases, can anyone attest to reading about guns that have fired on their own? The issue is guns don't kill people. People kill people by firing a gun. The primary issue is our people. This Honourable House has to understand that guns is not the issue. It is a tool or mechanism or by product of our society change.

I remember in the old times on community work days, unarmed, well-dressed police officers would tell the people to work and everyone involved would work diligently but the moment the officers left to take a break everyone would laze off and stop working. So one smart police officer came up with a plan and told his friends to erect a post and dress the post with a police uniform. The plan was successful because just the sight of the uniform on the post kept the people working.

Mr Acting Speaker, today the population of people has increased, and the ratio difference is much larger. It doesn't take a police uniform to frighten people into obeying the law. It takes much more than that.

I take the comments made by the Governor of East Sepik Province that we need to make tougher decisions. This Honourable House is always making tougher decisions, especially on the issue of the death penalty. Some say we are a Christian country and it is wrong, while others say we have to do it.

The Bible says that he who lives by the sword shall die by the sword. So, whoever sees fit to kill a person with a gun must die too. These are tough penalties that we must take on.

There are only two ways we can go about this issue; we either let the issue escalate into an ongoing problem that we have no control over or we make a revolutionary approach as expounded by the Governor of East Sepik. The Government has to now take a tough stand.

When we look at this issue, we have species that migrate all the time and the latest species added to the animal migration list are guns. Guns are a migratory species now because they are moving from one province to another.

How can we as an effective Government regulate something that is always moving?

I take some of the points raised by the Opposition Leader. If we address it jointly as a Parliament, I think we can address this issue because if we just keep talking we will not get there.

I thank the Government for bringing forward a legislation to deal with the issue of guns in Papua New Guinea.

Mr Acting Speaker, the last point is my own personal opinion of our people and attitude.

**32/04**

We should start creating a culture for Papua New Guineans. The problems is we have so many Morobeans, we have so many Sepiks, we have so many Taris, but we don't enough Papua New Guineans.

We must start to develop a culture of people to think holistic now. In that sense, they will start caring and start to be more responsible. We have become regionalists and divided as tribes and it is very hard to govern a people like that.

When countries from other parts of the world look at us and tell us we should be doing this or doing that, the solutions they are offering will not work in this country in my opinion.

Mr Acting Speaker, our solution must be a PNG-made solution to these problems and we must take a very strong approach. If we don't, we are heading into a very dangerous trend. As a responsible government, if it means for us impose tougher penalties for illegal firearms.

We must start to tell the people that this is the law to comply. If it means to enact the death penalty as a government we must look at it. In that way we try to move our people to different paths. If not, you know we can talk all day in terms of how we can reform but I can tell you for a fact that the threshold to withstand law and order has increased. In the past, it just took a uniform, now it takes a pistol, it takes an M16 rifle and the threshold to increase the tolerance level is increased.

Mr Acting Speaker, so we must also put into this drastic time, drastic measures to address law and order in this country, and I commend the Police Minister for doing a wonderful job and he has the full support of our Ministers and Prime Minister in this Cabinet and in this government to address the issues of law and order and in particularly to do with gun issues. So, I hope that in this Parliament we can find the quick solution in this ever-increasing issue of gun related violence and other weapons or objects that are used to inflict



bodily harm such as bush knives, catapults or whatever we may have. It has to stop somewhere and that is something that we must do. If we don't, the problem will be passed onto the next generation of leaders and next generation of parliaments and we keep debating onwards.

Than you, Mr Acting Speaker.

**Mr JOHN PUNDARI** (Kompiam-Ambum) – Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for bringing back the gun debate for us to deliberate.

I am very happy because bringing back the gun debate shows a strong indication that our leaders in government are serious about addressing issues within our country. I think all leaders must acknowledge this and rally behind it and find a pathway forward.

Mr Acting Speaker, I don't wish to repeat many of the good points raised by the previous speakers. I only wish to make a few suggestions as a way forward.

Mr Acting Speaker, the Prime Minister having brought the debate on this gun issue indicates so very clearly that the leader of our government is serious about this issue. Therefore, I suggest that we allocate some funds to buy back all these illegal firearms in the country. If there is no incentive I don't think we will have any success in the outcome of ensuring that we clean out illegal firearms in this country.

Mr Acting Speaker, some good debate has ensued whilst I sat and listened. Some points were raised such as bringing in sniffer dogs and helicopters to get there and setting up intelligence to flush out illegal firearms as suggested by the Minister for Lands or even declaring a state of emergency in some parts of the country and hiring cars for policemen and to go in and intervene.

**33/04**

Mr Acting Speaker, it will cost the government huge sums of money and it won't be for free.

For example, at one time, I can recall, we spent about K15 million for police personnel to carry out an exercise in Hela. After this exercise was completed we were briefed by officers in command that the firearms that were surrendered were effective weapons, home-made, factory-made or may have been stolen from Defence and Police armouries. These event was also captured in the daily newspapers. Even brand new guns illegally

smuggled in from borders of Jayapura or traded for drugs between the waters of PNG and Australia.

Mr Acting Speaker, brand new factory-made firearms are very difficult to confiscate from our people. Instead of spending time and money to involve Defence and Police forces or coming up with other schemes to get our people to surrender their firearms, one avenue is for the Government to propose to buy back these illegal firearms for a certain amount. And that idea might attract them to sell their weapons. If we do that then they will make a move in surrendering those firearms, unless other Members come up with a better idea.

As a way forward, I personally think that as a government we have to find some money to buy back all the illegal firearms and not the licenced one. Until and after we have dealt with the illegal firearms in this country, then, we can move on dealing with licenced firearms. When you want to start addressing the licenced firearms together with the illegal ones it won't work. When the licence ones are surrendered then we are at the mercy of those who have illegal firearms.

To carry out this initiatives effectively we must carry out awareness and we must clearly explain that the government will put some huge amount to buy back all these illegal weapons and a certain time frame must be set. After the time lapses then it must come with some legislation and it must be enforced.

Mr Acting Speaker, 10 years imprisonment is not sufficient enough for those who have illegal and unlicensed firearms. Awareness must be carried out explaining all the laws that deal with this issue.

If they don't surrender these firearms with incentives of buying them back then why not impose the death penalty. Singapore applies the death penalty for drug possession.

**34/04**

If we see that this is a real issue that has to be addressed in this country once and for all, then we have to be very serious about it. We have to look at serious options going forward. If it doesn't have to be the death penalty then the 10-year sentence needs to be increased. The government seems to be very serious about it.

The money that we are allocating to Police and the Defence Force using various strategies to flush out illegal firearm in our country will not do much. We should provide an incentive for these criminals and people to surrender their illegal firearms. When their stated period for surrendering is over, our people must know and be aware that they will face the

full brunt of the law. It has to be 25 years imprisonment without parole. There has got to be some aggressive approach to it or we will never get around that, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr Acting Speaker, I think we need to also be concerned with our borders as well. All these illegal firearms that we find in our country do not come out of the armories from Police, CIS and Defence for that matter. Most of those firearms are coming from Australia and across our good bordering countries like Indonesia. I think most of us are well aware of these stories.

Maybe as I speak on this Floor of Parliament, Mr Acting Speaker, these trades for drug and cheap purchase of factory-made firearms over our borders is happening. Tonight, as we go to sleep some of these exchanges will be happening between Australia and Papua New Guinea on boats, and et cetera.

It is not going to be any easier for us, therefore, the strategies and how we can approach to flush illegal firearms in this country must be workable strategies and workable solutions.

The options must give us the outcome that we want. If not, I want to clearly say that, probably one, two, five or seven years down the line we will come back and talk about this again or we will regret that we did not take any aggressive approaches.

Mr Acting Speaker, I see that the way forward and the options that are available to us are workable options. I believe in providing incentives and awareness for our people to surrender those firearms immediately and ensuring that we toughen up laws and we are seen to be enforcing them.

A review in regards to the armories of the security forces must be done immediately. Maybe through a Parliamentary Committee like the Governor of East Sepik stated, or if not, the agency Ministers must take it as an aggressive responsibility to address it and give comfort to the people of this country on the measures that they put in place.

Mr Acting Speaker, they must also come with aggressive punitive on personnel of our security forces who would be undermining policies as a result of the reviews we carry out and put in place.

Mr Acting Speaker, this is not an easy task where we just come to this Floor of Parliament to talk about it and we go away. I think we had enough talking. If you want to take your country back, I think you need to take all these illegal firearms away from all the people who possess them. It is really a threat to the economic growth of this country and a major threat to the peace and well-being of our people. We do not have to come with all these

issues involving illegal firearms in this country because we all know it and it is overflowing. We just have to now get up and do the right thing.

**35/04**

The issue of firearms smuggling across our borders is very serious. When we talk about controlling the use of illegal firearms in the country, we must also control smuggling of arms across our borders.

The Foreign Minister, under the Prime Minister's leadership, must look at bilateral relationships with Indonesia and Australia and find how best we can be able to partner and cooperate and ensure that all these drugs for guns trade that is going on or guns for cash trade can be stopped as well. And some laws must be in place to protect and ensure that our borders are safe.

Mr Acting Speaker, let us also tighten up laws on drugs as well because guns and drugs go together in this country. This is not the first time because we hear about these things. It is ongoing so three-month imprisonment for drugs and so on has to be reviewed and it must also equate to the tough laws that we would want to have on illegal firearms in this country.

Mr Acting Speaker, many of the debates today mentioned alcohol as a problem. I see alcohol as a form of drug in our country. If we want to address illegal firearms, we must also address those concerns and issues associated with illegal firearms. And many of illegal firearm incidents involve the use of alcohol.

If we are serious about taking our law and order back, at least here is the start. The Prime Minister is very serious. In my experience, not until now have I seeing a prime minister seriously taking a lead in debating and addressing such an important issue.

Mr Prime Minister, I congratulate you. You've provided a very strong leadership now. It must not stop here.

Mr Acting Speaker, through you, I want to tell Prime Minister that it is going to be a big shame on your leadership if we don't move forward. There will be a big shame for this government if we don't have options for going forward. I'm suggesting an option here. Stop wasting money with the Police and the Defence Force on hiring choppers and sniffer dogs and everything.

The money that we are spending can be used for buying all these firearms once they surrender them to the state. And after this period, anyone in this country with an illegal firearm can be given a tough penalty.

Let us address the drugs and alcohol issues as well as gun trading at the borders all at the same time.

Let us not debate and go away, Mr Acting Speaker. The National Executive Council has to go and talk about it now.

The Minister for Police is doing a great job. We really appreciate the leadership that you are providing. Unfortunately, I do not appreciate your debate on firearms. We need solutions, we need options that you will suggest to the government – attractive options and alternatives going forward. We are here ready to support you. But first of all, don't take the licenses away from those who have legal firearms in this country. When you do that, you are giving the criminals the upper hand.

We need to address the illegal firearms first. Once that is over and done, if you want to get rid of licensed firearms in this country, then, you can also buy them back as well. If not, the Minister for Finance is right, forget about licensing firearms in this country. We open up so everybody can own a gun in this country like the Americans.

We can't have it two ways. It's going to be one way. We all have firearms in this country or we don't have firearms in this country.

You want to remove it, remove it now. I heard someone saying on the Floor of this Parliament and it is a true statement. Firearms in the Highlands region has surpassed the number of firearms in the armoury of our security forces. And that statement alone should be enough to drive fear in us to doing the right thing.

**36/04**

We have firearms in Enga, Hela, Southern Highlands, Western Highlands and Eastern Highlands. And now firearms are not only prevalent in the Highlands but when you come to this business part of the world, firearms are here also. There are firearms in the settlements of this city. When there is an altercation, they do not fight bare hands, not only with knives, you already hear a shot. Every week where I live I hear a shot being fired.

Mr Acting Speaker, the Prime Minister has spoken, providing the leadership now. He is asking for ideas and thoughts, he's asking for this debate so that we can find a way forward. There have been some very bright ideas proposed today, please put them together.

And with the good Minister for Police, let us aggressively deal with the issue of illegal firearms in this country.

Mr Acting Speaker, if we don't, maybe five or 10 years down the line, we will come back to this Floor of Parliament and we will regret that we did not deal with illegal firearms in this country. We are losing our country, we are losing the respect for authorities in this land. And the firepower of illegal firearms is undermining authority. It is going to go to an extent if we are not careful and if we do not aggressively deal with it now, we can lose our country, not only to social disorders but civil war.

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.

#### ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 1.35 p.m.