

SECOND DAY

Thursday 27 August 2020

DRAFT HANSARD

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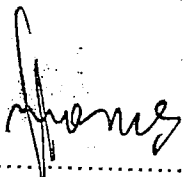
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.....
Mr Harry Momos

Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

SECOND DAY

Thursday 27 August 2020

The Deputy Speaker (**Mr Koni Iguan**) took the Chair at 10 a.m.

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

Sitting suspended.

The Deputy Speaker again took the Chair at 10.50 a.m. and invited the Member for South Fly, **Honourable Sekie Agisa**, to say Prayers:

‘God Almighty, we humbly come before you as sinners. We ask for your forgiveness, before we go into our session. We also thank you for your presence here, through your Holy Spirit. And we also thank you for waking us up once again to face this beautiful day that you have created. We thank you for the air that we breathe, the sunshine that shines, the birds that sing and so many blessings that you bless us with every day. Lord Jesus, we come before you once again, asking for your wisdom and understanding to be given to us both the Government and the Opposition as we go through this session. Lead us by your spirit. Amen.’

QUESTIONS

Gender-based Violence

Mr POWES PARKOP – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to raise a very serious issue - the issue of violence against our women and girls which they are facing in our country. This question, Mr Deputy Speaker, is directed to the Prime Minister. I ask also that the Minister for Police, Minister for Community Development, Health and the Minister for Education take note.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the whole world and our country is facing this health pandemic called Covid-19. For our country, we are not sure whether it is a real pandemic. It is for us to work out. But, the Prime Minister knows we all are with him and he has done well in terms of responding to this pandemic.

Mr Deputy Speaker and Members of Parliament, what is real in our country is the pandemic of violence, especially gender-based violence. Recently in our city, we have been reminded of the extent of this violence. A young woman in the prime, just 19 years old who is a mother, her life was snapped by violence. Violence directed mainly against women because, we do not generally consider them equal to men. We do not see them as having equal rights and equal status, despite whatever the *Constitution* says.

02/02

Mr Deputy Speaker and Members of the Parliament, the statistics on gender- based violence is staggering. And it's a real pandemic that is facing our people. It has reached crisis stage and it is caused by male folks in our country. This crisis is really affecting the females and we males don't know and feel how our female folk feel. But we must not forget that females play an important part in our lives, especially mothers who brought us all into this world. If it was not for them then we won't be where we are now. We have wives, daughters and nieces. The statistics have clearly showed that we have a major problem really affecting this country which are caused by male folks.

I will keep it short by going through the information I have on hand.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER - Honourable Governor, it is question time so can you make your statement short and ask your question.

Government's Response to Gender-Based Violence

Mr POWES PARKOP – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. My questions to the Prime Minister are:

(1) Does the Government have plans in place to respond to this crisis?

(2) Can the Government consider setting up a parliamentary committee on gender-based violence, so that it can continue to monitor and brief the Parliament and Government on the extent of this crisis and recommended steps we should take to reduce or eliminate gender-based violence in our country?

(3) Can the Government provide funding to enable the setting up of the National Gender-based Secretariat and the rolling out of the strategy that was adopted in 2016?

Since then it was never funded. We are talking about the crisis which is affecting the population of this country.

(4) Can the Government direct or recommend to the judiciary to set up a gender-based court system so that offenders are brought to justice immediately?

The crisis is getting worse because the perpetrators are freed and do not face the full force of law.

(5) Can the Government make necessary amendments to the *Constitution* so that we can allow the police to bring foreign help to boost our Police Force here?

One of the biggest hinderance and challenge in our country on crime, particularly on gender-based violence is that our Police Force doesn't have the capacity to investigate and arrest and bring perpetrators to justice especially in the Family Sexual Violence Unit because there is no capacity at all.

Mr Deputy Speaker, when the Prime Minister took office, he set a goal and we all should share, and I as the Governor of our capital city share this goal that by the time we finish our term as parliamentarians, we would like to see a mother and her daughter walking freely on the streets of our capital city. That's our goal but how are we going to get there? We need to take real tangible step and recognise that it is for real. We need to feel the agony of our daughters. They can feel safe and dream that they can come here too one day.

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to respond to the important questions raised by Governor of National Capital District on a concern that is ever increasing in our society and country.

03/02

Mr Deputy Speaker, may I inform this Parliament and our country that first and foremost, our country has enough or adequate laws to deal with matters of gender-based violence or violence for that matter. But effective policing of these laws has been one of the causes of offenders getting away free all the time when crime has been committed amongst us.

Any form of gender-based violence is a criminal offence in itself. Our present laws specify and point to gender-based violence as a crime, however, we have not been effectively prosecuting these crimes committed in our society in the family setting as well as in our nation to ensure that the perpetrators face justice for the crimes they commit.

Mr Deputy Speaker, to try to get around it, our Government has given it a great thought and one of which is something that the Governor has proposed, setting a pathway to addressing the issue of gender-based violence amongst us.

Whilst violence generally is a crime and it comes under violence per se, but more specifically, gender-based violence to the vulnerable females amongst us who are continuously being abused by males of females. Let me inform this House that our government has, through the Police Minister, instructed all our police stations nationwide to have a specific complaints desk and a crime registry desk and a pathway for gender-based violence.

That is something that has now been installed, if it has not been set up yet, then instructions have gone out for every police station nationwide, police station commanders and every provincial police commanders to ensure that this pathway for accepting complaints in as far as gender-based violence is concerned, is set up in every police station.

So, any gender-based violence or any gender related complaint in our society is to be addressed with this specific pathway that our police should set up in all our police stations nationwide.

As I said earlier, Mr Deputy Speaker, laws abound but effective prosecution based on these laws and dispensation of justice is not forthcoming from our existing law and justice sector system. The courts are left with what you feed into the court system, especially the prosecution perspective.

I don't intend to lecture this House on what happens at the prosecution level. Prosecutions are based on complaints laid, evidence collected, evidence compiled and police or lawyers prosecuting this matter in a competent court system.

Mr Deputy Speaker, a part of the problem we are facing and up to today is that at the complaint stage, much of these issues are terminated. Either you have the much-known issue of compensation and wantoks or relatives settling the matter out of court, even way before the matter is filed, and so all these social factors and cultural norms sometimes stop the effective policing of complaints that arises as a result of gender-based violence.

So, our Government has established now and we are in discussions with the National Research Institute for a terms of reference to be established and for a Parliamentary Committee to look at.

This includes setting up a pathway for gender-based violence to be prosecuted, complaint lodged prosecuted, and effective judicial address made by specific judicial pathway.

04/02

Those issues are being worked on but we will get the help of independent national think tank in NRI to set up a broader look into existing laws and systems that we have, and based on research, this could assist government policy areas where it is a very genuine concern that we have up to this day.

As far as modern Papua New Guinea is concerned, this is something that we need to get rid of. And as I have said a lot of times, I want to live through the next ten years in my lifetime and into the future to ensure that our mothers and daughters have a secure country to live. That is something that we all I believe have envisaged for our country. How to get there is important. The NRI as well as this parliamentary committee that we will set up will again look at the systems we have and the laws we have.

If they are not strong and sufficient then we by all means are here to check, change laws and upgrade them to ensure that they have the fire power or teeth that it must have. This is to ensure that we ensure further domestic and gender violence from happening in our country. This is something that we need to do at the very early stage NRI will get back to us and we want in this session of Parliament to set up a bi-partisan parliamentary committee, to look into this work with NRI and the terms of reference and see if our existing laws need to be stepped up.

And while talking about laws let me inform our mothers and children. That the laws that we have in place must be utilized. Let us not resort to compensation when something happens on the ground. I proposed part of this to the Police Minister and the team who are working on this that we will criminalize compensation at the door-step of prosecution. When a complaint is mounted, let the police deal with it as a full matter. We have succumbed to resolving disputes the customary way through compensation and many times crimes are covered and society accepts compensation as giving justice to innocent victims.

Mr Speaker, the Parliament must think about criminalizing compensation and allow the justice system to deal with any violence that takes place. Do not make domestic violence as a family issue. The trigger point is once the victim and the associate of the victim, make a complaint, it is a police matter and the police should be allowed to see it to the end and make

sure justice is served at the specific police pathway. We will not only deal with domestic and gender-based violence but for all criminal matters, we will try to go into e-policing.

It really is using the latest technology to say that judiciary knows that this complaint is mounted at this police station, so no policeman with a file anywhere can walk away and sabotage the entire process. The committee must take responsibility and when this sort of events take place in our society, it is everybody's responsibility to report it to the police. And when we report it to the police, it is taken away from the hands of wantok-system, community conflict resolutions and becomes part of the formal process of policing. And any police who fails to prosecute this matter at that infant stage will face discipline for failing to prosecute legitimate complaints that have already been mounted. So this committee as well as our work in partnership with NRI, will look into all these finer process and tidy, this inherent deficiency we have in our society where complaints are mounted and eliminated at an early stage, through wantok-system, nepotism etcetera.

So, some of these proposals that we are mounting must be looked at seriously. And one that I am talking about is criminalizing compensation against offence that is criminal in nature.

05/02

As you decriminalize compensation and get police to start prosecuting and also start penalizing policemen who fail to prosecute complaints that are mounted then you will get complaints with evidence being fed into our district and national courts. And I don't think our district and national court will fail with sufficient or evidence-packed files that are being placed before them and for the magistrates and charges to handle.

We need to tidy the lower end of feeding our juridical system with complaints that are solidly backed by evidence and remove compensation, *wantok* system and nepotism must be at the mounting stage, policing stage or infant stage to get through.

So, Governor, your concerns are very important. We have laws but the laws are not being utilized right now by complainants and everyone. Sometimes they get intimidated and pull back their complaints out of society pressure or family pressure, with respect to many of the deaths that took place as far as gender-based violence is concerned.

Mr Deputy Speaker, when you think about this, society or community is in total knowledge about domestic violence that is taking place. Suddenly when a death takes place, it becomes a big issue.

Where were we in the beginning in mounting a complaint? And for government, I give assurance to the highest that we will tidy police matters so that prosecution at infant stage is taken by police.

I am proposing to this committee to criminalise compensation, *wontok* system and reaching resolutions outside of the formal court process, and give due penalty to those that cause gender-based violence in our society.

Mr Deputy Speaker, whilst it's not directly related to gender-based violence, sorcery-related issues are raised on Facebook all the time. In the last Parliament under the leadership of the former Prime Minister, we had criminalised sorcery and I asked members and governors in this House respectfully and the police system that when we see issues like this happening in our society, it is our responsibility to start to act on instead of waiting for someone else to do the job.

Laws are in place in this instance but we are not bringing these instances to be effective by the police. Sometimes we fail and go around complaining so, Mr Speaker, the issue is relevant, it's contemporary. It is a weak spot in our nation's life which we are carrying where our daughters and mothers lives continue to be abused.

I propose to this House that we will criminalise compensation. We will set up a strategic police path to deal with gender-based violence and any policeman nation wide when a complain is mounted and you fail to prosecute, that will be an offence in itself where we will look into it so that you are prosecuting. We will get NRI and parliamentary bipartisan committee to look at this and if the laws and the system is insufficient then they will propose recommendations to this House for us to act upon so that our ladies feel secure in their own country.

God bless.

Mr Powes Parkop – Point of order! I thank the Prime Minister for his response and the steps that he has announced, but he didn't answer one of my questions.

This is in relation to amendments to the *Constitution* so that the Police Minister can be free to get international police to come.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we must be aware that we don't have enough police officers and our women and girls of our country can't just wait. They have waited long enough.

In Port Moresby, for example, we have only 500 police men and women dealing with one million people, and that is inadequate.

06/03

Can the government push for an amendment to the *Constitution*? Australia, for example, is prepared to assist us.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Honorable Governor, I won't allow you to debate your point of order.

Allow me to ask the Prime Minister to respond to your point of order on the question you have asked.

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Thank you, Deputy Speaker, let me apologize to the Governor for not clearly stating the answer.

That will be the part of the terms of reference once we get the Parliamentary Committee on Gender Based Violence to look into it. If they do propose the need for additional outside help then we will look into that in due time. In the meantime, that recommendation will be part of the terms of reference for this Parliamentary Committee.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Honorable Members let me remind you all that we have limited of forty – five (45) minutes question time.

Prepare a short and brief question. Those who will reply must make a brief statement and be succinct to allow other members to participate in question time.

Once again, I remind the House that whenever a member stands to make a statement, all other members standing must take their seat and after the Speaker makes a ruling you can rise to ask your question.

APEC – Debts and Audit Report

Mr ROBERT AGAROBÉ - Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker for recognising the people of Central Province. I have some very important questions to raise.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I'd like to direct these questions to our Honorable Prime Minister regarding the coronavirus pandemic facing the country and the whole world.

It has put a lot of strain and pressure on the people of Papua New Guinea, especially our businesses that are struggling to survive in this country. A lot of these businesses have changed their normal ways of doing business. They are now adopting different strategies and

barely surviving by rostering their workers, putting a lot of workers into early retirement, laying off workers and the list goes on.

A lot of these businesses are struggling and a lot of their money is owed by the State as well, especially from the APEC meeting that was hosted here. A lot of these businesses also took part in this APEC program and are yet to be paid.

In addition, during the APEC meeting in this country, a huge amount of money was laid down and invested in this meeting. The people of Papua New Guinea and a lot of these businesses would like to know about the benefits that we are reaping off during this time when the country is facing a lot financial stress from this global pandemic.

Mr Deputy Speaker my questions to the Honorable Prime Minister are as follows;

(1) A lot of businesses being owed money want to know, when they will be paid and if they will be paid at all.

(2) Honorable Deputy Speaker, is there any tangible benefits being achieved from the billions of kina we invested in the APEC program? Can the Honorable Prime Minister inform this Honorable House and the people of Papua New Guinea what these benefits are?

(3) Can the Prime Minister inform the people of Papua New Guinea on when the APEC report was presented or when is it going to be presented to this honorable House? So, the people of Papua New Guinea can know once and for all, where and how the funds were invested in this program.

07/02

In times like this when we are in crises these are funds that we could be using to lessen the burden that we are all facing in this country of ours.

Mr JAMES MARAPE – I thank the Governor of Central for his questions.

At this time when our country is reeling from the effect of the Covid-19 induced economic contraction and for the Governor to pose a series of questions which are concerns for our people is highly commendable.

From medical evidence and what is happening in the world, Covid-19 will be around for this year and next year. Many economies and countries around the world are adjusting to living with Covid-19. How do we manage to function and perform and also keep our country safe from the ravage and uncontrolled Covid-19 and its harm?

Mr Deputy Speaker, finding a balance between the health of our people or population as well as our economy is the most important thing. We have had starts and stops. The assessment measures that we have taken from the start were as mentioned in Parliament two days ago; it was on how we dealt with people travelling into our country from China or a country overseas. The lockdowns that we had were not to shut down or stop the country, it was to take stock of where Covid-19 was in as far as mapping it out in our country.

From our latest lockdown, we received advice from the medical and scientific community, from people like Professor Kevau, Profession Tefarani, Dr. Evelyn Lavu and many other professionals with us in the National Control Centre. The advice is let us face it and live with it instead of shutting down the country. Let us adjust, manage and see how we can go. Hence, we have come out of this in the new normal environment.

Mr Speaker, about four months ago, I did issue instructions for masks to be available at all levels of our community. Today, masks are compulsory if you are in close proximity to others and have to interact with other people. The Covid-19 is here to stay and we must learn to live with it. I commend from the outset, members of our business community who are adjusting especially those in the formal sector who pay corporate taxes and consumer taxes to our revenue.

I commend all business men and women who have remained. I know it has been tough on you but you remained patient and supported us in times where we have been rearranging ourselves for the new normal.

Mr Deputy Speaker, some measures we have taken since we took office last year, is the reorganisation of our supplementary budget earmark to retire debts that the Government had up till 2019. Some of those debts are carried into the 2020 books.

08/02

In the last six to seven years, the Government went into heavy borrowing and heavy construction, for instance, if Minister Nali can confirm, we have over K5 billion worth of debts in government contracts issued by the previous Government which I was a part of but we had no guts or commitment to settle all these contracts that we issued.

And under our last Supplementary Budget, we reorganised for the first time after many years and I speak as a former Finance Minister that Treasury was allowed to transfer K300 million directly to the Works Department to settle some of the outstanding debts that we were carrying in our books.

We talk about construction everywhere but to pay for the construction is something else and so for the first time as part of our strategy to manage a downturn in our economy, our construction companies need to be paid for them to maintain work and debts they carry in their books.

So, K300 million was paid to the Works Department and the department did pay out which reduced the huge debt of K5 billion. If I am wrong the Minister for Works can correct me, but from memory, his department advised me on the amount of debt owed to contractors.

That payment was consistent with our view and the Treasury's Strategy which is to give service providers some money. They must be paid within some of the reforms that we were doing in as far as reorganising our Government Books are concerned.

In a similar approach, last year Treasury did set some money aside to start retiring service providers to the State. This includes those who provide service to State during the 2015 South Pacific Games, the 2018 APEC Summit with debts like office rentals which we have been carrying overtime.

So, our Government under the Treasury's leadership started to put everything out in the open for all stakeholders in the economy and supporting our Budget to have a look at the liabilities that we carry on in our books. And, part of that and consistent with our view and strategies is to ensure that service providers are being paid so that the legal Papua New Guinean companies are breathing instead of us killing them during these tough times.

The 2019 Supplementary Budget addressed these areas of concern upon our economic and in the 2020 Budget money was also parked aside to retire debts that we owe. I think Finance and Treasury were trying to assess the genuine debts owed and those which were not. So, once we have cleared that we will start paying them out.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in as far as the APEC Report is concerned, as I speak today, there was an issue between the Auditor-Generals Office, Finance Department and PM's Department but I have given them robust instructions that this report must be finalised before the 2021 Budget is brought in. The APEC Report must be settled once and for all and Papua New Guinea must know exactly where we are. These three Departments; Finance, Auditor-General's Office and PM's Department have been running around in circles but my instruction has reached them. A report has come in from an auditing firm that was engaged to assist in studying this report and the PM's Department will lead in this allowing for the Auditor-General and the Finance Department to also come in.

So, hopefully in our November Sitting when Parliament is in Session to pass the 2021 Budget, we could have this APEC Report put through Parliament and for Parliament to have a total view and oversight on what did transpire during the APEC Meeting.

09/02

So, hopefully in November sitting when Parliament sits to pass 2021 National Budget, we could have the APEC Report presented to Parliament to have a total view on what has transpired during the APEC time.

As the Governor of NCD asked on the relevance of APEC, we all may not agree on hosting it at the time when our economy was hard but it was a milestone achievement which was led by the previous government and thus we all commend them.

The work which now remains is for to link the connectivity that was made in the APEC occasion. And so, the APEC economies like China, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Philippines and our traditional links like Australia, New Zealand and USA are markets to tap into as far as export is concerned for our raw producers.

Whilst it was costly on the part of Government in 2018, and we are still bearing the cost today, but the gains from it must never be reduced or diluted. Our Government today is working to ensure that the connectivity is restored so that the markets for producers are established and we can sell our produce to them and also relate with these economies.

I can't take away the wisdom of the former Prime Minister for bringing APEC to our country, it's just the nitty-gritty of what happened that stirs discussions but the big picture of APEC is that it was achievable by any government. And for us all we must continue to work at it and move forward with the relevant connections with this APEC economies.

Let me conclude by saying, our Government has also put in place K200 million and we will be releasing and not to compromise with the struggle we faced. This K200 million will go to partner banks and the banks must agree on the terms of lending. Once the lending terms are agreed on then funds will be released.

The banks considered are Bank South Pacific, Kina Bank and National Development Bank, which Cabinet has already approved BSP and NDB to be partners and we will work through with Kina Bank to see whether they could also be a partner so that they can lend at very soft concessional lending to PNG business.

As for BSP, it has agreed for a five per cent lending for 15 years, and NDB has agreed for a four per cent lending for 20 years. These are some of the measures that we have

put in place to ensure Papua New Guineans who are struggling, refinance themselves and keep themselves above water going into the future.

This program of partnering with banks will be furnished for the next 10 years to ensure that the Government consistently park funds in the banks starting from 2021 to 2030 so citizen can do business.

From past experiences, when funds were parked in Finance and Treasury and agriculture sector in 2009 or 2010, farmers borrowed the money but no actual production increase was shown in our agriculture sector.

Therefore, we want the bank to handle the transaction and keep government away from it so genuine business men and women can borrow; part of that lending will be classified into lending for general business, lending for our friends in Bougainville which will be 10 per cent and 10 per cent for mothers and daughters who wants to do business, so I want to announce this for the country's knowledge.

That's about it Governor, I hope I replied to your questions and I apologise for taking much time.

Crime – Appalling Murder Rate

Mr PETER O'NEILL – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate the Deputy Speaker of this honourable House on his elevation.

I want to direct my questions to the Prime Minister. This partly relates to the questions asked by the good Governor of NCD. This is about law and order generally in the country.

I hear the responses by the Prime Minister on gender-based violence that's been experienced by our population in our country and response that his Government is trying to undertake insofar as addressing this issue.

10/02

But let me remind the Prime Minister, there does not need to be a complaint from anyone when a crime has been committed and needs to be investigated and prosecuted. Murder is murder. Crime is crime. It does not necessarily need a complainant. The police is there to investigate and arrest these culprits.

Mr Deputy Speaker, there does not need to be any other legislation. There is enough legislation in the country. But I want to refer the Prime Minister to our two provinces,

Southern Highlands and Hela. Everyday there is murder taking place. Innocent lives lost at the hands of warlords and criminals who are terrorising our communities. This is happening right across the country, in places like Madang, Porgera, Lae and Port Moresby. It is becoming a daily event that some innocent young Papua New Guineans are dying every day.

I want to remind the Prime Minister that on the first few days of your government several people in our provinces died. You undertook, these are your words, 'I am coming for you', let me remind you of those words. After almost 15 months in office there is not even one single arrest made for these brutal murders that took place and are taking place right across our country.

If we conservatively look at the numbers, that means 400-500 people die every year.

(1) When is your government going to prioritise commitment going to this particular sector?

(2) Compared to this number of people dying right across the country, innocent lives are being lost, you are spending hundreds of millions of kina on Covid-19 after only four deaths.

Are you going to show the same commitment that you are showing towards covid-19 to the murders that are taking place in our country?

Mr Deputy Speaker, as we speak today your Police Minister and your Police Commissioner are very much focused on arresting covid-19. This criminal is being chased around by many hire cars that your department is hiring, costing us hundreds of millions of kina every month and every day while murderers are running free in our towns, cities and villages committing murder and terrorising families and communities.

So, my questions are,

When are you going to honour your word, a word from a Prime Minister is final, that you are going to arrest these culprits? You are going to go after them so when are you going to provide leadership in our two provinces?

Mr Deputy Speaker, I don't go around buying guns for people unlike some of our leaders.

(3) Are you going to investigate who is providing guns?

(Mr William Powi interjecting)

Mr PETER O'NEILL – Mr Deputy Speaker, I don't need to get a lecture from the corrupt Governor of my province.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Honourable Member, stick to your question.

(Mr William Powi interjecting)

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Order! Order! Governor of Southern Highlands.

Mr PETER O'NEILL – Mr Deputy Speaker, my second question is this, -

(Mr William Powi interjecting)

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Honourable Governor for Southern Highlands, the Honourable Member has the floor so he is going to ask his questions.

Mr PETER O'NEIL – I am simply asking, when will the Prime Minister honour his word by going to arrest these people who are murdering innocent people?

Mr Deputy Speaker, the second question is; do we need the Police Commissioner to be in charge of the pandemic Covid-19? It is a health issue, Mr Deputy Speaker. Let the Police Commissioner focus on his job.

Mr William Powi – Point of Order! I am asking you, Mr Deputy Speaker, through your Chair, to ask the good former Prime Minister to withdraw his words calling me, 'corrupt'

11/02

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER -Thank you Governor, your point of order is in order. Honourable Member, please withdraw your statement. We cannot brand a Member by saying he is corrupt.

Mr PETER O'NEILL – Okay! If he is so emotional about it, I withdraw my words. But actions speak louder.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the second question that I was asking the Prime Minister is very simple. Can he allow the Police Commissioner to do his day job and allow the Health Secretary to do his day job by being in charge of the pandemic? We do not need the Police Commissioner with his officers in hired cars running around chasing Covid-19 while our country needs leadership on this issue, but the law and order, especially murders are taking place right across the country.

Mr JAMES MARAPE - Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am excited that my former Prime Minister has asked a question. I have been waiting for that. Let me say that the Member for Ialibu-Pangia is a very crafty man. So, he has crafted this question cunningly to try and score some political points. But I will answer it in a very calm and nice manner.

Mr Deputy Speaker, law and order is a huge concern in our country. It is a great challenge for us while the economy remains a greater challenge, the safety and security of our people remains paramount. Let me remind that the reason why I resigned from his government is that, he does not honor his words. In the eight years that the former Prime Minister was in office; if he had ensured that the police had new structure it would be good. If the new structure for the Hela police was approved, I would have had the fire power in the province to deal with this matter.

A province like Hela in Southern highlands does not need only 60-100 policemen to deal with this. A very important province that has the PNG LNG and the Kutubu Oil, Gobe and Moran oil fields. The past governments and the government under his leadership failed to heed the cries of not only Hela but other resource provinces to ensure that the police stations and police structures get approved and looked at. He remained silent and did not honor his words. Our police stations and our police in the two provinces were left to decay. Hela police has only 60 police officers. And these are the 60 that we have had since the 1990s when we were still part of Southern Highlands. The greater Southern Highlands have only 100 police officers. What is happening in these two provinces is a compounded effect of negligence over a long period of time. The law and justice sector system faded and eroded over time.

Districts tried to help and provinces tried to make interventions but it needs total holistic support from the National Government to ensure it is worked upon. It makes me wonder and I am perplexed in my mind to understand where the former Prime Minister is coming from when he had every arsenal of government power before his disposal to fix those

two provinces in the last eight years. Not in the 15 months in office but for the last eight years as Prime Minister of this country and of those two provinces.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I can understand that being the Prime Minister today, I understand his mindset over the last eight years, that we are not only Prime Minister to our provinces only but for this country. So, the context of looking after law and order in Hela and Southern Highlands must come within the context of greater PNG on how we embrace law and justice in the country.

12/02

It is a problem that Minister Bryan Kramer did not create. He is trying to fix what he inherited. Leaders in my government and those in the former government of Honorable Member for Ialibu-Pangia didn't fully address those issues in the last 45-years we've been independent as a nation.

Earlier today, Governor of NCD was complaining of what 500 policemen can do for a city of a million people. In Port Moresby we cannot prosecute matters under the spotlights of cameras of Port Moresby, and police system of Port Moresby, how do you expect prosecuting matters that is taking place in the bushes of Tari for that matter? Yes, I did say and I am coming for you, and I went for them.

But at the leadership level, we can only do so much if police who are out there to arrest and prosecute are not doing what they supposed to do due to resource constraints or due to police capacity.

Some things that we are focusing, and let me assure this House and our people that whilst we're addressing Covid-19 and every other matter that needs to be addressed, we will not compromise the law and justice sector of our country too.

That is working progress for us and our Police Minister has announced it lately that in the resource constraints we have, first and foremost discipline of police is our priority and our government has given full power to discipline police; one strike or two strikes out. But at the same time, we must commend those who are faithfully serving in our uniforms right across the country, especially our police officers and our correctional institutional service staffs.

For policemen, we say one strike, one out but for those who work faithfully we are modeling a rewarding system so they could remain and reward them when they leave. We

can restore police confidence and get them to work faithfully wherever they are stationed across the country.

Going back to the question, our government has approved the Hela provincial police structure and we will be in the business to approve Jiwaka Police Station's structure because these two new provinces have no police structures. They were dealing with the police officers when they were part of Western Highlands and when Hela was part of Southern Highlands.

Our government, as far as Hela and Southern Highlands is concerned, we are restoring and putting more police to the two provinces. Hela will have over 300 new police officers out there.

We also putting a new mobile barrack in the precinct of the PNG LNG project to ensure that the people around there are given police cover and protection and to ensure that our key national assets are kept safe.

We are also transplanting a military base into Hela to ensure that from Hela they could mount military operations instead of fly-in and fly-out to Porgera, Western Province, come back to Southern Highlands and Western Highlands all the time. That is in my view, the most strategic area for easy air-lift or easy land transport in as far as military operations or police work are concerned because it is expensive exercise to fly in military all the time from Wewak or from Port Moresby when there is a need for operation.

So, law and order is our priority but I can agree with him. We don't have all solutions right away but we are working to ensure that we deal with those areas in our country that have become hotspot for law and order. It concerns me when in places like Alotou, Madang and Kokopo there is lawlessness emerging.

Police Minister has been instructed as one of his KPs that he works to ensure police discipline is restored and police incentive is been given and proper police structure is looked at so we could beef up police presence and get them to work in and around our country.

Let me also get to the negative statistics the Member for Ialibu-Pangia raise and I believe is not correct.

13/02

He said 400 to 500 people are dying every year from violence. I don't know where he is getting these statistics from. Suddenly in my electorate one life is important, that we are using losing one life or two lives in every three or four months, and because of *FaceBook* sensitive activity, people think that Taris are bad because the news of killings are posted all

over the place, but there is no number closer to 400 to 500 people dying every year from murder that is taking place. Leaders must be responsible in the types of headlines we give for outsiders to see what is happening in our country. And for the former Prime Minister, the Member for Ialibu-Pangia, to put a headline that demeans his own country and lowers the standard of leadership that he is supposed to have-

Mr Peter O'Neill – Point of Order! I am not just simply throwing these figures around. It is reported in the daily newspapers, social media and everywhere that at least one murder is taking place across the country every day. There are 365 days in a year so you don't need to be a mathematician to work it out. This is the average number of people dying so let's take ownership of the issues. We are trying to tell you; let the Police Commissioner do his job. Stop dragging him around everywhere. Answer the question! Stop beating around the bush and let the Secretary for Health do his job.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Honourable Member for Ialibu-Pangia, let me ask the Prime Minister to continue his response. You seem to be debating your questions.

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I don't think four or five hundred people are dying from murder every year in our country. The murders are certainly taking place but the numbers are not as high as 400 or 500. It's good to know that now he believes in social media for the first time; he's never believed in social media.

Mr Deputy Speaker, on the issue of the Police Commissioner doing his job, the Police Minister is balancing his time very well. The current instances of lack of policing throughout the country is part of problem that we've inherited. The Pandemic Bill gives powers to the Police Commissioner to be the controller, but that doesn't mean for one bit he's neglected his day job. Let me also emphasise and point out to the Member that under his watch, there was drug bust that took place on an island in Milne Bay in 2018.

The country knows no records of that drug bust that took place.

Under the current Police Commissioner working with AFP we knew that this flight was coming in but luckily a technical fault took place in the area, otherwise the flight would have been caught in Cairns on its return. They were working in total collaboration with our Police and AFP on what was taking place.

Mr Deputy Speaker when he talks about lawlessness, he should ask himself what he has for the last eight years when he was the Prime Minister. One point of reference is the drugs on that island of Milne Bay. Someone should ask him what happened to those drugs under his watch. Under our watch, we were able to confiscate more than 80 million dollars worth of drugs and Papua New Guinea will never be used as a transshipment point. I have made it as my business to ensure that this one doesn't get away, and for safe keeping of the evidence I've allow this cocaine to be uplifted and it is now in a safe place in Australia for evidence to be attached and will ensure those accomplices in PNG and those in Australia pay the price of criminal activity in our country. So, it makes me wonder about his saneness of mind in asking this particular question. He was the former Prime Minister; those hiccups and those criminal activities were taking place right under his doorsteps.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

14/02

**AUDITOR-GENERAL OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA – REPORT OF THE
AUDITOR-GENERAL ON THE ACCOUNTS OF EASTERN HIGHLANDS
PROVINCIAL HEALTH AUTHORITY FOR THE YEAR
ENDING 31st DECEMBER, 2014 AND 2015 – PAPER –
MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER**

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Honourable members, pursuant to statute, I present an audit report on the accounts of the Eastern Highlands Health Authority for the year ending 31st December, 2014 and 2015.

Motion (by **Sir 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.

**AUDITOR-GENERAL OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA – REPORT OF THE
AUDITOR-GENERAL ON THE ACCOUNTS OF MILNE BAY PROVINCIAL
HEALTH AUTHORITY FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER,
2016 – PAPER – MOTION TO TAKE NOTE OF PAPER**

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER – Honourable members, pursuant to statute, I present an audit report on the Milne Bay Provincial Health Authority for the year ending 31st December, 2016.

Motion (by **Sir 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.

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 Nos. 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204 and 205 of Government Business this day being called on forthwith.

HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION REFORM BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Nick Kuman** and read a first time.

Second Reading

Leave granted to move the Seconding Reading forthwith.

Mr NICK KUMAN (Gumine – Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology) – I ask leave of Parliament to move the second reading forthwith.

Mr Speaker and honourable members of Parliament, I am privileged to rise on this occasion to introduce eight pieces of legislation comprising the Higher Education Reform Bills Package.

Mr Speaker, this Reform Bills Package has been in development for over three years and represents the implementation of key aspects of NEC Decision NG25/2017 to reform, transform and unify the higher and technical education sector in PNG including the directive that regulatory oversight of all higher education institutions transfer to the Ministry and Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology.

Mr Speaker and honourable members of Parliament, the Higher Education Reform Bills package consists of the following Draft Bills:

15/02

- (1) Higher and Technical Education Reform Bill 2020;
- (2) Higher Education (General Provisions) (Amendment) Bill 2020
- (3) Education (Amendment) Bill 2020;
- (4) National Training Council (Amendment) Bill 2020;
- (5) University of Papua New Guinea (Amendment) Bill 2020;
- (6) Papua New Guinea University of Natural Resources and Environment (Amendment) Bill, 2020;
- (7) Papua New Guinea University of Technology (Amendment) Bill 2020; and

(8) The University of Goroka (Amendment) Bill, 2020

Mr Deputy Speaker and honourable members of Parliament, the Reform Bill provides the legal mechanism for the transfer of regulatory oversight of higher education institutions (HEIs) to the Ministry for Higher Education, Research Science and Technology and DHERST in accordance with NEC Decision NG25/2017.

Whilst the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act, 2014* (HEGPA) already requires all HEIs to be quality assured by DHERST, the Reform Bill provides a mechanism for HEIs to transfer to DHERST in relation to their governance and budgetary allocations.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the HEIs that may transfer under the Reform Bill are State-owned institutions and agency institutions where more than 50 percent of their annual funding (including staff costs) is provided by the State.

HEIs will transfer when the Minister determines a transfer date for an institution (or group of institutions) published in the Government Gazette. This allows for a planned and managed transfer of HEIs. It is proposed that the first HEIs to transfer will be the post-secondary technical colleges and teachers' colleges (from the Department of Education) and the nursing colleges (from the Department of Health). The various speciality colleges will be considered on a case-by-case basis at a later time.

From the transfer date for a HEI:

- The HEI will be subject to new governance requirements set out in the Higher Education (General Provisions) (Amendment) Bill, 2020;
- The HEI will be under the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology and DHERST;
- The HEI will be registered under the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act, 2014* and its programmes will be accredited. This registration and accreditation will be provisional subject to ongoing quality assurance processes by DHERST.

In order for the transfers to operate effectively, the Reform Bill has certain transitional arrangements.

Mr Deputy Speaker, staff of transferred HEIs will transfer on their existing employment terms and conditions for at least 12 months after which they may be offered a new contract of employment. Staff who are not offered positions or who do not wish to transfer on new contracts may be redeployed, retrenched or take retirement if eligible.

DHERST and any other department affected by the transfer of HEIs must use their best endeavours to transfer or redeploy any departmental staff affected by the Reform Bill.

16/02

Mr Deputy Speaker, existing governing council salaries will remain in place for at least six months after transfer to allow time for the new governing council to be appointed in accordance with the new governance arrangements under the Higher Education General Provisions Amendment Bill 2020. The Reform Bill provides for the appropriate transfer of academic programs, land, assets, liabilities, rights and entitlements to Higher Education Research Science and Technology in relation to each State-owned transferred institution.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Reform Bill provides for the transfer of the registration and acquittance functions in relation to providing training institutions from National Training Council to Higher Education. Higher Education already has powers under the *High Education General Provisions Acts 2014*, to undertake these functions for private training institutions. The Reform Bill and the National Training Council Amendment Bill 2022, formalises the arrangement and removes the duplications of functions that currently exist.

I therefore commend the Bill.

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

Motion – That the Bill be now read a second time – agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Bill, by leave, read a third time.

HIGHER EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Nick Kuman** and read a first time.

Second Reading

Leave granted to move the Second Reading forthwith.

Mr NICK KUMAN (Gumine - Minister for Higher Education, Science, Research and Technology) – I move –

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr Deputy Speaker and the honourable Members of Parliament the Higher Education Institutions under the Reform Bill means that the *Higher Education General Provisions Act 2014*, needs to be amended to deal with the governance of higher education institution that transferred. The amendments bill provides that the Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology may on behalf of the State negotiate arrangements with education agencies in relation to the nature and level of State support for agencies institutions.

Mr Deputy Speaker, any negotiated arrangements must be referred by the Minister to the NEC for approval.

17/02

Any negotiated arrangements must be referred by the Minister to the NEC for approval.

The Amendment Bill provides a detailed new provision in relation to the governance of transferred HEIs in Papua New Guinea.

This provision provides for the objectives, powers and functions of HEIs, the establishment of Governing Councils; the functions and powers of Governing Councils; the membership and operations of Governing Councils; the appointment of Academic Boards; the appointment of staff and Rule-making powers for HEIs.

This Provision also provides for the Minister or Departmental Head to give directions to HEIs and Governing Councils that are consistent with Government policy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this new Provision provides for significant reporting requirements for HEIs including new requirements for the development of Strategic Plans; Business Plans and for the preparation of an Annual Audited Financial and Performance

Report for each HEI. These reports must be provided to the Departmental Head who shall forward the reports to the minister by a prescribed date.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Amendment Bill provides for a process whereby DHERST may develop, or facilitate the development of, a national curriculum or national training packages in subject matter areas of national importance or as identified as national skills priorities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the proposed national curriculum or national skills packages will be developed in consultation with relevant institutions, professional accreditation organisations and other stakeholders for approval by the National Higher and Technical Education Board.

Mr Deputy Speaker, once approved by the NHTEB, the proposed national curriculum or national training packages are provided to the Minister who may determine them by publishing a Notice in the *National Gazette*.

The Amendment Bill allows HEIs to apply for approval to deliver national curriculum or national training packages.

The Amendment Bill provides include a new objective to promote the support of business and industry representatives; donors and leading corporate entities to ensure programmes offered by HEIs are demand-driven and support national skills priorities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Amendment Bill gives DHERST power to enter into arrangements with external organisations (eg; private training organisations, donors, corporate entities) to provide targeted training in skills priority areas in HEIs.

Whilst power already exists under the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014* for the establishment of the National Skills Development Agency (NSDA) as an advisory body to DHERST, the HEGPA is amended to strengthen that power.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Amendment Bill removes the need for the Plan to be approved by the Head of State. Under the new process, the Plan will be developed by DHERST, endorsed by the NHTEB and approved by the NEC on recommendation of the Minister.

The transfer of HEIs under the Reform Bill means that new powers need to be given to the National Higher and Technical Education Board as follows:

- to approve the National Higher and Technical Education Plan
- to approve Rules for HEIs
- to approve national curriculum and national training packages

18/02

Mr Deputy Speaker, Schedules 1(A) and 1(B) of the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014* give DHERST power in respect to funding proposals, requests for financial assistance and the receipt and dispersal of annual budgetary appropriations as they relate to universities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, with the transfer of HEIs to DHERST regulatory oversight under the Reform Bill, these provisions are amended to expand these powers to HEIs as well as universities.

The Amendment Bill repeals *Section 109* of the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014*. Section 109 provides that a chancellor, vice-chancellor, pro chancellor and the governing body of a public university shall be made by the National Executive Council on the recommendation of the Minister through a process prescribed in regulations.

The Minister, however, retains significant power to intervene in relation to the governance and management of universities and HEIs through the powers in section 152 of the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014*

Mr. Speaker, *section 152* of the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014* provides a process for the Minister to intervene in the governance, management and operation of a public HEI or university in specific circumstances (e.g. cases of gross mismanagement, negligence, dissention, revolt etc.).

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Amendment Bill amends *section 152* to give clarity to these intervention powers and to strengthen them. The amendments are as follows:

(1) clarifying the process that must be followed in requesting a report from a HEI or university before intervening;

(2) amending the section to give the Minister direct power to appoint an acting CEO;
and

(3) amending the section to provide clear processes for how to cease Ministerial intervention once the reason for the intervention has passed.

The current *section 153* is poorly drafted and difficult to understand. It has been re-drafted to provide the same policy outcome but in a language easier to follow.

Mr. Speaker, numerous amendments are made to the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014* to address the inconsistencies in academic policies, credit points, grade point average (GPA), accreditation of academic programs, qualification pathways, thus, unify and link the sector to the PNG National Qualifications Framework. These amendments have

been identified and improved processes can be implemented to make the administration of the *Act* more efficient. These amendments are in relation to:

- (1) the introduction of new programmes in public HEIs;
- (2) the processes when a public HEI wishes to cease offering an accredited programme;
- (3) the process for programme accreditation for private HEIs;
- (4) the processes for self-accreditation by universities;
- (5) the introduction of time limitations on certain application processes;
- (6) providing for the making of approved forms by the NHTEB or departmental head;
- (7) placing five-year restrictions on applicants that have been found to have been guilty of offences under the HEGPA.

Mr Speaker, I therefore, commend this Bill to the Honourable House.

19/02

Mr POWES PARKOP (National Capital District) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

I won't say much as we all support the Minister, so I will make a brief contribution. I do not have enough time to go through the amendments but our universities and the higher educational institutions are very important for our national outcome.

One of the things that I view to be of great importance is the management of these institutions. I have eight years of experience teaching at the University of Papua New Guinea. I want the Minister to look into a problem that I have observed, since he now wants to restructure in changing the council and management of the institutions. I made mention of some of these in the last sitting of Parliament. The management structure of the institution – UPNG is such that, if you are the vice chancellor, you will not manage that institution. We are lining up that management for failure. I do not want to be a vice chancellor if I am appointed because you cannot function because of the council. It is hard to manage because we will have to wait for the council.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as I may have mentioned some time back, can we adopt the American system. This system is based on a presidential system, once you assume the post of vice chancellor or chancellor, you are the boss and it stops there. We give you the mandate and you run the institution academically and its administration as well. But, in terms of

academic neutrally and independence, there are academic boards in place to handle academic matters. These universities protect themselves in the courses and programs that they offer. They want to be independent so they will get our young people to think big, be innovative and be creative and we can respect that. But in terms of managing, functioning and decision making; we have to adopt a system that works.

The Divine Word University follows a presidential system. The former president who is now the Secretary for the Minister; through his decisions under that system, the institution has progressed and is a beautiful university where most of our children want to attend. All government run universities are riddled with problems. This is because we have to wait on the council, the vice chancellor, the deputy and then it goes to the chancellor, so it is such a long wait. It is a serious problem and it is either, we trust the vice chancellor or we don't. It is good that the Minister has come up with this amendment and maybe this is a progress but we need to re-evaluate how we are managing this institution so that it can be managed properly. So, they have timely decisions to create conducive environment for learning and creativity. So, that our young people who came out from these universities are being prepared for this digital age and they are thinking forward.

Mr Deputy Speaker, this the challenge that the Minister should try to work out, what sort of structure is best to create a good learning environment. Funding is another thing but its another issue. For management of the universities, I support the Minister and that he should have powers to intervene, especially when it comes to administration matters of the institutions. For academic issues, the Minister cannot intervene too much and let us put an academic board in place to make academic decisions. I am not sure where our limits are in terms of academic gradings but it is something for the institution to workout.

When I was teaching at the UPNG, I was not a trained teacher. I graduated, and applied to be a teaching fellow and I became a lecturer. These are some of the things that the Minister should look into to improve the teaching abilities of all these academics. They have not gone to UOG to learn how to teach. And I am admitting on their behalf.

20/02

We have a good understanding of the subject matter but the university didn't introduce a program to impart the skills and techniques to teach.

So, we cannot interfere in the grades even the Minister and the Councils, but we can help them to improve the teaching and how to impart knowledge. So, that we help our student

get good grades and that's my small contribution and we all support the minister. Mr Minister please consider these specific points and think about restructuring and uplifting the university standards.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr RICHARD MARU (Yangoru-Saussia) – Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I support the Minister. The Bill before Parliament is giving effect to our decision to move all Higher Education functions to the Minister of Higher Education. I think it's a very good and timely move so I want to commend the Government and the Minister for bringing this amendment to Parliament today.

I have one particular issue that I hope this Bill will address. My issue is, universities at their own will are introducing new courses. That's a very serious issues in our country.

I remember the Divine Word University introduced a medical program and I met the members of the Medical Council and they didn't approve that. The Council stated that Divine Wood University may not deliver the quality required. That argument has been going on for years. I don't know if its solved yet or not.

I heard the University of Goroka who has been tasked to deliver education programs is going into accounting and medical programs. All these universities are now starting to offering courses that are for specialised universities that we have created in the past.

This is totally unacceptable. I think this is an issue that these amendments must seriously consider. Who gives the approvals to the Higher Education institutions to offer various highly technical programs. Is it at the whim of the council or who does that, who arranges funding for that, who ensures that there is quality assurance and universities have the capacities to deliver programs.

That's a serious issue and Minister I would really like these issues to be addressed. The other issue is the size and composition of the councils. Many of the councils you have seen ran for 30 - 40 years with the same people who have no new ideas and fail to think out of the box.

They become so entrenched and even challenge government decisions. So, I think the reform needs to include over hauling the governor's arrangement of universities. So, you have a small council that is highly skilled and not people who are deeply entrenched in the system and want to do things the way they always done.

They want to reform universities and work on quality and I think the size of council and the composition should be looked at very carefully. I think the start of the reform is good but I think we should keep going.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr JAMES MARAPE (Tari-Pori – Prime Minister) – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Let me commend the Minister for his leadership in this sector. He has been around in the education space for sometime and he totally understands where education must go in our country.

His leadership brought about this reform and the government has no hesitation but to support him. Some of the sediments raised by Governor Parkop and Member for Yangoru-Saussia are embraced in the reform.

This is a reform in the right direction to ensure our universities become truly modernized and ensure that courses are competent. We eradicate many of these impediments in the different governance structures we have in the current structure we are trying to get rid of. So, much consultation has been done and let me at this juncture thank the Minister for Education. I was formally Minister for Education and we used to be territorial before but under this reform all colleges and post grade twelve learning will go into the higher education space. We have a board that control curriculum and standards.

The Minister for lower education will just focus on quality and delivery of education from elementary, primary, secondary, and vocational schools.

21/02

Let me commend the Minister for Education who allowed this reform to go ahead without standing in the way. It is one of the better reforms that this Parliament must pass and hopefully we create a better higher education system for our future generation.

I note the comments by the Member for Yangoru-Saussia that universities are heading in all directions. For example, the Minister for Higher Education stood against the University of Goroka Council who were proposing in training medical personnel. He reasoned that they should be perfecting their standard in training teachers rather than trying to train medical people. In the existing status quo the council is more powerful than the Minister therefore this reform will streamline this issue and bring them all in line.

Mr Speaker, I commend these Bills to Parliament and I urge all Members of Parliament to support them. If in the future there is need for another change then by all means this Government is for change and we will move to make a change for the better of our future generation.

The Clerk has informed me that all these bills have been circulated for all Members of Parliament to have a look and have their say on them. I believe you have done so therefore I once urge you all to support these bills. Thank you.

Motion (by **Mr Michael Nali**) agreed to –

That the question be now put.

Motion – That the Bill be now read a second time – agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Bill, by leave read, a third time.

UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA (AMENDMENT) BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Nick Kuman** and read a first time.

Second Reading

Leave granted to move the Second Reading forthwith.

Mr NICK KUMAN (Gumine – Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology) – I move –

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, the appointments of chancellor, vice-chancellor, pro chancellors and governing body members as in section 109 of the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014*, conflict with the current powers contained in the governing legislation of existing public universities in relation to those appointments.

22/02

Also, no regulations have been made under the *HEGP Act* to support section 109. Thus, the *Papua New Guinea University of Technology Act* will be amended to reflect this change through consequential amendments to this Act to make provisions for those appointments.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the *Papua New Guinea University of Technology Act* will be amended to pick up other consequential amendments formerly in *Schedule 2* of the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014*.

The Minister retains extensive power to intervene in the operation, management and governance of HEIs in defined circumstances through the enhanced powers set out in *Section 152* of the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014*.

Mr Speaker, with these remarks, I now commend the Bill.

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

Motion – That the Bill be read a second time – agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Bill, by leave, read a third time.

**PAPUA NEW GUINEA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
(AMENDMENT) BILL 2020**

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Nick Kuman** and read a first time.

Second Reading

Leave granted to move the Second Reading forthwith.

Mr NICK KUMAN (Gumine – Minister for Higher Education, Science, Research and Technology) – I move –

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Thankyou Mr Deputy Speaker, the appointment chancellor, vice-chancellor, pro-chancellors, and governing body members has in Section 109 of the *Higher Education (General Provision) Act 2014*, conflict with the current powers contained in the governing legislation of the existing public universities in relation to those appointments. Also no regulations have been made under the *Higher Education (General Provision) Act 2014*, to support Section 109, thus the *Papua New Guinea University Technology Act* will be amended to reflect this changes to consequential amendment to this act to make provisions to those appointments.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the *University of Technology Act* will be amended to pick up other consequential amendments formally in schedule 2 of the *Higher Education (General Provision) Act 2014*, the Minister retains extensive power to intervene in the operations, management and governance of Higher Education Institutions in define circumstances through the enhance power set out under Section 152 of the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, therefore, I commend the Bill.

23/02

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

Motion – That the Bill be now read a second time – agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Bill, by leave, read a third time.

UNIVERSITY OF GOROKA (AMENDMENT) BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Nick Kuman** and read a first time.

Second Reading

Leave granted to move the Second Reading forthwith.

Mr NICK KUMAN (Gumine – Minister for Higher Education, Science, Research and Technology) – I move –

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the appointments of the chancellor, vice-chancellor, pro chancellors and governing body members as in Section 109 of the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014*, conflict with the current powers contained in the governing legislation in relation to those appointments. Also, no regulations have been made under the *Higher Education (General Provision) Act 2014*, to support Section 109. *The University of Goroka Act* will be amended to reflect these changes to consequential amendment to make provisions for those appointments.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the *University of Goroka Act* will be amended to pick up other consequential amendments formally in schedule 2 of the *Higher Education (General Provision) Act 2014*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Minister retains extensive power to intervene in the operation, management and governance of higher education institutions in defined circumstances to the enhanced powers set out in Section 152 of *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I commend this Bill.

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

Motion – That the Bill be now read the second time – agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Bill, by leave, read a third time.

24/02

PAPUA NEW GUINEA UNIVERSITY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Nick Kuman** and read a first time.

Second Reading

Leave granted to move the Second Reading forthwith.

Mr NICK KUMAN (Gumine – Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology) – I move –

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, the appointment of Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Pro Vice Chancellors and Governing Council members as in *section 109* of the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014* conflicts with the current powers contained in the governing legislation of existing public universities in relation to those appointments.

Also, no regulations have been made under the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act* to support *section 109* and therefore the *University of Natural Resources and Environment Act* will be amended to reflect the change to consequential amendments to this *Act* to make provisions for these amendments.

The *University of Natural Resources and Environment Act* will be amended to pick up other consequential amendments formerly in Schedule 2 of the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Minister retains extensive powers to interfere in the operations, management and governance of higher education institutions in defined circumstances through the enhanced powers set out in the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014*.

I therefore commend this Bill.

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

Motion – That the Bill be now read a second time – agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Bill, by leave, read a third time.

NATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Nick Kuman** and read a first time.

25/02

Second Reading

Leave granted to move the Second Reading forthwith.

Mr NICK KUMAN (Gumine – Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology) – I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in order for the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology to be responsible for all accreditation of all post-secondary higher education institutions, both public and private, amendments must be made to the *National Training Council Act 1992*. To move the National Training Council registration and accreditation functions in relation to private training institutions.

The National Training Council Amendment Bill 2020 achieves its policy outcome. I therefore commend the Bill to Parliament.

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

Motion – That the Bill be now read a second time – agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Bill, by leave, read a third time.

EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2020

First Reading

Bill presented by **Mr Nick Kuman** and read a first time.

Second Reading

Leave granted to move the Second Reading forthwith.

Mr NICK KUMAN (Gumine – Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology) – I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr Deputy Speaker and the members of Parliament, in order for post-secondary and technical colleges and teachers' colleges to return to the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, regulatory oversight under the reform bill and the *Higher Education General Provision Act 2014*, the *National Education Act 1983* must be amended to remove the higher education institutions from the operation of that Act.

The Education Amendment Bill 2020 achieves this policy outcome. I therefore commend the Bill.

Sir PUKA TEMU (Abau – Minister for Bougainville Affairs) – Mr Deputy Speaker, I intend to support the hardworking Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology. I wish to make a short intervention in this entire debate. Firstly, on the bill that is currently being debated; I could not agree more that the technical component of the education system, now moving to the higher education is in order.

We really need to emphasis and therefore urge all of us to continue to support for example the TVET program in the country; because there lies a much skilled development of the young generation for our country. So, a greater investment and am sure the Minister through his capable leadership and through the Prime Minister and our Government's support that we will give a very focused and dedicated support to this important subsector of the education program in the country.

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I am sure through the Ministers capable leadership and through the Prime Minister and our governments support that we will give a very focused and dedicated support to this important subject in the education program in the country.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I've been looking at the history of all the universities in Papua New Guinea, they started in 1966, that was 54-years ago. Since then, a bit more specialised universities like university of Technology and then converted Goroka Teachers College to a university and then Vudal into university.

While that is in order, I want to request the Minister for Higher Education to relook at that movement towards specialised universities rather we should look at general universities which we lack.

We don't have enough spaces for example, at the university of Papua New Guinea. The number of our grade 12 graduates is big but there is not enough space. So, over the last 45 years since UPNG started its first intake in 1966, we really have not progressed in the number of higher-level education space for our growing population, particularly at the university level.

I am coming from the point that was raised by the Member for Yangoru-Saussia on the University of Goroka trying to established a medical school and the Divine Word University proposed medical school.

I want to argue against this debate. I think we should move towards universities in Papua New Guinea becoming full university status and not just specialised in teacher training or environmentalist or mining engineering. We should relook at creating, perhaps more UPNG like universities, so that medical school can be established. Other specialised schools can be established in those full status universities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I had a privilege of sitting down with the Vice Chancellor of the University of Goroka and their argument was since they transferred from the Goroka Teachers College status to university status they have now achieved full university status. That means they are capable of bringing in other schools within the University of Goroka and my argument is, why don't we allow that while they continue to specialise on teacher training.

One medical school in Papua New Guinea is not enough, we must make sure that if other universities reach full status, they are allowed by law to bring in other schools; for example, the University of Goroka.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I request honorable Minister to look at this and advise the Parliament through the executive government to try and give a policy direction in this regard.

Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Motion – That the question be now put – agreed to

Motion – That the Bill be now read a second time – agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Bill by leave, read a third time.

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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.

APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT SPEAKERS

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

That in accordance with the *Standing Order 14*; 1. Mr James Donald, 2. Mr Isi Henry Leonard and 3. Mr William Nakin be appointed Assistant Speakers.

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.

**PERMANENT PARLIMENTARY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS –
APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS**

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

That in accordance with the *Public (Finances) Management Act 1995*; 1. Mr Benjamin Philip, 2. Mr Moriape Kavori, 3. Mr Kennedy Wenge, and 4. Mr Jonny Alonk, be appointed members of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That Parliament do now adjourn

The Parliament adjourned at 1.17 p.m.