

THIRD DAY

Friday 28 August 2020

DRAFT HANSARD

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES CORRECTIONS TO DAILY DRAFT HANSARD

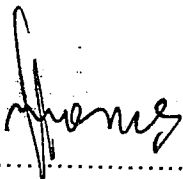
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Mr Harry Momos

Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

THIRD DAY

Friday 28 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 Speaker again resumed the Chair at 10.50 a.m., and invited the Member for Lufa, **Honourable Moriape Kavori**, to say Prayers:

‘Powerful God Creator, mipela tok gut morning long yu. Tete long morning yu bringim mipela kam long dispela House Parliament long sidaun na toktok long issue bilong country na issue bilong people inside long Papua New Guinea. Mipela ken pray na larem dispela country givim gutpela wisdom na gutpela spirit long Government na Opposition sait long discuss long issues bilong country. Sampela samtin yumi fail, yumi ken putim out, wanbel wantem yumi ronim na lukautim people bilong yu long liklik hap taim igo inap long Jesus i kam. Olgeta signs na olgeta events i wok long sowim olsem dipela graun wok long kam arere na yumi man na meri yumi stap, yumi ken lidim people bilong yu long last mile na blesim mipela wantaim gutpela wisdom na tingting na blesim Prime Minister na olgeta Ministers i kam long Opposition leaders bilong yumi olgetai i ken discuss long issue bilong country. Blessim na givim mipela gutpela tingting wanbel i stap long dispela morning long toktok long issue bilong country. Tenk yu long harim prayer bilong mipela long dispela morning, Amen’.

QUESTIONS

Budget Allocation – Covid-19

Mr PETER ISOAIMO – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister for Treasury.

Can the Minister confirm how much money the National Government has budgeted to date to address the health and economic effect of Covid-19 pandemic?

02/03

Mr IAN LING-STUCKEY – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the good Member for his question that is very current today.

Mr Speaker, since Covid-19 entered our country in the beginning of this year which resulted in our first State of Emergency (SoE) or full lockdown on 23 March, 2020, there has been much expectation and speculation on what the Government can do to assist our people in this very difficult time.

Mr Speaker, as a result, the Government announced a very large economic stimulus package and I know that at this point in time parts of that have been implemented while parts have not been implemented, this has caused frustration but as we all know coming into this year the economy was already subdued and we just did not need Covid-19 to worsen the economic problems that we face.

Nevertheless, this Government took on the Covid-19 challenge and we announced an Economic Stimulus Package of K5 700 million and this particular stimulus package was based on five principles. It had to be PNG-owned and driven; broad and still comprehensive; smart and forward looking; responsible; and the fifth principle was that we had to rely very much on foreign support.

Mr Speaker, based on those principles we announced the six measures as follows;

(1) The Government was to raise or fast forward K2 500 million to a Covid-19 Bond Exercise which we have completed successfully;

(2) To extend K600 million in a credit line to support business and individuals, and that was in coordination with our banks and financial institutions.

In this particular measure there were two interventions:

(1) To reduce the Kina Facility Rate (KFR) from 5 to 3 per cent;

(2) To reduce our cash reserve requirements from 10 to 7 per cent;

I guess the key issue here is how much actually the businesses and individuals have benefited.

(3) To raise K1.5 million in friendly foreign support from multi-lateral partners like IMF, Asian Development Bank and of course help from our bilateral partners who have always continued to support our country in our times of need;

(4) K500 million from existing or planned superannuation savings and so in coordination with our country's superannuation funds provides employees access to additional savings during economic slowdown. That particular measure has not been implemented yet because there are requirements for legislative amendments but I am pleased to inform the Parliament

that that has been completed and will be introduced to the Floor next Wednesday and I ask members for their support in this regard.

03/03

(5) To release K500 million, originally. If you can all remember, it was increased to K600 million for direct budget support, and I will give more details because it has created some confusion; and

(6) To introduce a supplementary budget, if required.

So, these were the six measures that Government had announced. And at this point I would like to focus on the direct budget support component of our K5.7 million economic stimulus packages of the original K500 million which was increased to K600 million.

We broke that up into two sections; the first one was K280 million for the health and security sectors. And K320 million for the agriculture, household and business sectors, totaling K600 million.

I thank the good Member that asked this week whether the Government had guidelines which were issued today. I thank the Minister for Finance for his response, and in addition to his response, I am pleased to advise that guidelines had been endorsed and it was a little bit late going out, but I understand the Minister for Finance has now issued them.

Mr Speaker, further, the breakup of the K600 million; if I could just share with the members today. For the K280 million that went out to all of us, that comprises K60 million for our WASH Program, especially to upgrade hygiene at potential Coronavirus hotspots, such as markets, schools, churches, and aid posts, which were to be administered by the provincial health authorities and district development authorities a total of K37 million has been distributed directly to frontline provincial health authorities as a 22 per cent increase of the 2020 Budget funding. So, this is additional focus on funding for our provincial health authorities. An extra K30 million was given to the Department of health for the purchase of PPEs and other vital health support items using international procurement practices as established by the World Bank.

Mr Speaker, K60 million went to the Royal PNG Constabulary, Defence Force and the Correctional Services to strengthen law and order aspects; K73 million has been given to the Defence Force to build 10 border posts as soon as possible and K50 million was given to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to build capacity at overseas posts and also to help repatriate our own citizens that had been trapped and could not afford to return home.

Lastly, K5 million was for administrative support for churches urban city authorities to provide food for those most in need. And that completes K280 million, the first part of our health and security sector.

Mr Speaker, K320 million went to the economic sector, covering agriculture, household and businesses; especially SMEs.

04/03

The breakup is as follows; K113 million for districts and provinces to promote agriculture development and food security to an outreach program including grants to improve crop production. A total of K50 million is for price support program for agriculture. Unfortunately, that component is yet to be implemented and the Treasury is still holding onto those funds until some issues are resolved.

There was a further K45.5 million to support rural MSMEs and households that would allow districts and provinces to undertake whatever specific measures including marketing improvements and small business training that exist in each of the 5-year plans. And K41.5 million as an additional business stimulus package to protect jobs, and lastly, K70 million as an additional standby reserve which is still not used.

Mr Speaker, that breakup completes the K320 million package.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Service Improvement Program– Audit Report

Mr ALLAN BIRD – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to direct my questions to the Finance Minister and the Ministers for National Planning and Treasury can take note.

Mr Speaker, in 2010, our GDP had grown by 21 per cent; the highest ever. Last year it dropped to negative 1.3 per cent.

In 2010, we lodged the Vision 2050 and there were some targets in the Vision 2050 and most important measure was the composite which was HDI.

Mr Speaker, during this time our biggest intervention program that was introduced in all the provinces and districts was the Service Improvement Program (SIP). Each year we've been spending about K1.1 billion as a government in the SIP; a total of about K11 billion in the last 10 years.

Mr Speaker, this is the longest running intervention program in the history of Papua New Guinea and most likely we are going to do that for another 10 years.

Mr Finance Minister, since a lot of that falls under your ambit;

(1) Have we ever done an audit of the program to determine its effectiveness?

(2) If we haven't, why not?

(3) If you are interested in doing an audit, when will it start?

And if you are going to do that audit, I'd like to volunteer the East Sepik Province for you to begin your audit.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr RAINBO PAITA – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Governor of East Sepik for his questions.

In relation to the Special Improvement Program that we have been funding for the last 10 years - and I thank the consecutive governments starting from the former government to the current for this particular program, especially the DSIP program - I'm sure all members and governors appreciate the funding going straight into the districts and provinces.

Firstly, I don't think there has been any specific audits on that DSIP or PSIP program under the SIP program since it started.

Secondly, in relation to when the audits will be done, I am thankful to the government that we have allocated K5 million this year to the Department of Rural Development. I know there are some concerns raised by some members as to the capacity of the department to actually go down and audit some of the programs and projects done or implemented through SIP.

05/03

That funding is now available under the Department of Rural Development to carry out not just an audit, but more of a forensic audit as to the funding that has been going to districts and provinces in this country.

I am thankful to the Governor for raising this issue. We will start that process now. The first initial funding of K5 million is now available to start the process of auditing and he has volunteered that his province will be one of the first to audit and I welcome that. I call upon all the governors and their districts to prepare for the audits that will begin soon.

My district of Finschhafen will be one of the first to be audited to see whether those funds have materialised into tangible development.

I assure the Governor and this Honourable House that there is a program starting this year for us to audit any funding that we are now giving through the SIP, which is the DSIP and the PSIP, and we will continue that program now and going forward.

I thank the Governor in recognising that we need to audit the funding that is actually happening and at least we can give comfort to probably the nation and taxpayers that what we are giving direct to the district is actually doing work on the ground and not just a funding that is given to members. Some think that DSIP and PSIP are funding that members enjoy at their own disposal.

Mr Speaker, this is the assurance I can give to the Governor. If any member wants to volunteer, you can see me after this meeting for your districts to be listed for auditing so it's not seen as a political witch hunt.

Economic Stimulus Package

Mr CHRIS HAIVETA – My questions are directed to the Minister for Treasury.

The Minister has already announced details of the Economic Stimulus Package to assist Papua New Guinea businesses, SMEs, the people and the provincial and local level governments during the Covid-19 pandemic. I would like to thank you for that package.

Secondly, I would like to thank the Prime Minister and the Government for changing the country's approach towards the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Covid-19 virus is now amongst us and I am a victim who has recovered from it. It is a nasty flu. You just have to take care because there is currently no prescribed treatment for it. I am very thankful for the Government recognising that and announcing that we will have to learn to live with it and the economy must stay open.

(1) Can the Treasurer spell out all the economic stimulus measures that he has put in place?

This is because some of the directives are aimed towards the banks and some are for various ministries, Open members and governors to implement. I want to thank you for at least finally providing the guidelines for PSIPs or for the trust accounts that you have set up for the monies that are going to the districts and the provinces.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Governor, are you raising questions or making a statement?

Mr CHRIS HAIVETA – Mr Speaker, my next question is;

(2) Can the Treasurer make a commitment to the Parliament to create a package or inform those seeking assistance, whether an ordinary citizen or a business owner, on certain aspects of those reform measures that you have now announced, and how they can have access?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

06/03

Mr IAN LING-STUCKEY – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Governor for his questions.

Mr Speaker, in relation to the first question regarding the details of the Economic Stimulus Package, I provided the bulk of the details this morning but if the Governor still wants more details, he can write a letter to me and I will provide further details.

The second question asks where ordinary people can access these funds. If you have a look at the approach this Government has taken, we don't believe at this point in time that allowing the Controller to control and implement these funds is the right way to go. What we decided to do was to use the existing arms of government to implement these programs.

We took a decentralised approach which the Government believes very strongly is the right way to administer these funds. We decided to send the funds to both the provincial government and the district development authorities. To date, of the K2 million kina that has been distributed to our 89 district development authorities, we have issued K500 000.

Mr Chris Haiveta – Point of Order! Mr Speaker, the Minister has misinterpreted my question. All I am asking for is information for ordinary people to access some of these funds. I am not asking for the money to go to the Controller, everything is fine. I am only asking you to provide us with the information.

Mr Speaker, in short, as I was saying, it's a decentralised approach. The funds have been distributed; K2 million to the districts and K1.5 million to the provincial governments. As the people of our country are listening to my response, they know immediately that they would approach their provincial governments and their local development authorities. For further clarification, K2 million has been issued and received by all 89 districts and if any district has not yet received it, I am very happy to receive any queries today during this meeting of Parliament.

From the K2 million, K500 000 is set aside for our WASH programs, K1 million for agriculture and another K500 000 for MSMEs.

07/03

Mr Speaker, each district and provincial government has their own specific programmes. So, this particular package was designed to be broad and was designed to be

flexible so that it could fit into each requirement for each district and provincial government. Provincial governments receive the same amount except for MSMEs totaling K1.5 million.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Expedite Gazettal of Radiation and Safety Bill

Mr ELIAS KAPAVORE – Thank you, Mr Speaker. My questions are directed to the Honourable Prime Minister and for the ministers for Health and Commerce and Industry to take note.

On 24 of January 2019, the Parliament passed the Radiation and Safety Control Bill without any opposition. The *Act* covers transportation, safety and security of radioactive materials.

The then Health Minister, Sir Puka Temu, when presenting the Bill to Parliament, said the new law and an amendment to the National Institute of Standards and Industrial Technology Bill, under the Commerce and Industry Minister, would allow highly toxic radiation sources for cancer treatment and that PNG would follow the rules of global radiation sources entered by the International Atomic Energy Agency. It was an important decision for our country and Parliament to pass the Bill.

In June 2019, as the Health Minister, it was my priority to make sure that regulation for Radiation Safety Control Bill was to be completed by the end of last year.

Mr Speaker, 19 months on, there is still no Radiation and Safety Control Bill regulation as required under *section 85* of the Act.

On 21 August, 2020, the *Post-Courier* ran an article titled, ‘cancer treatment awaiting regulation.’ According to statistics from the Department of Health and IMR, we have estimated up to 15 hundred women dying every year of cervical cancer alone and that’s up to 4 to 5 every day. This is among the highest statistics of deaths in the region and in the world as well.

Mr Speaker, my questions are:

(1) Can the Prime Minister, as the head of the executive government, intervene on this matter and give direction to the Department of Health to expedite gazettal for the radiation and safety regulation as a matter of public importance?

Cancer Treatment Facility

(2) Can the government advise the Parliament and our people on the status of the progress of cancer facility at Angau hospital and the new facility at PMGH?

The previous government had allocated K25 million to the new facility at PMGH, which needs more support to complete that particular project.

(3) What is the current Government's support to the cancer facilities in these two hospitals?

(4) Can the project be given priority?

(5) Can an undertaking be made by the Government that the National Health Plan 2021-2030 - that is undergoing documentation - be given priority so that cancer policy and other matters related to cancer can be fully implemented?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr JAMES MARAPE – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me thank the Member for Pomio for his very important questions.

I intend to look into this matter at the earliest because it's very important, especially the Radiation and Safety Control Bill to be processed and expedited. So, I will let the Health Minister to progress this at the very earliest.

On the issue of cancer facilities both at the Angau and POM General Hospital, some of you would have seen an event in which I was part of early last week where we witnessed a signing of MoU between Kumul Petroleum Holdings Ltd and the CEO and board of both the Angau Memorial and Port Moresby General Hospital for these hospitals to be specialised hospitals and provide specialist care for cancer patients and other diagnostic care and treatment in the country.

08/03

Kumul Petroleum Holdings Limited under government instructions has committed K60 million to ensure these two hospitals are upgraded and prepared to address all the needs of our cancer and heart patients at the very earliest. So, we will follow up to ensure that these two hospitals, Angau and Port Moresby General Hospital, have these specialist care at the very earliest, if not early next year then by the end of next year, to stop Papua New Guineans from travelling overseas in search of heart treatment and operations and in search of cancer treatments. It is timely we deliver these services to our country so our citizens can have access to specialist care.

I give my commitment and undertaking that our Government will ensure at the very earliest, if not towards the middle of next year and the end, we will make sure these two hospitals have specialist care, especially in the area of cancer and heart disease.

I thank the Member for asking this very important question and the Bill that is awaiting us to progress, I give undertaking that the Health Minister and Health Department will process this at the very earliest and we should have it up and running.

Thank you.

Regulate Immigration Businesses

Mr GARRY JUFFA – Thank you, Mr Speaker.

My series of questions will be directed to the Minister for Immigration and I ask that the Minister for Labour, the minister for Commerce and Industry, Forests and the Minister responsible for Customs to take note.

In the last two weeks, we have had a joint operation in my province with the Ministry of Border Security and Immigration, the police and our administration based on complaints we received about the presence of foreigners unlawfully employed in the province.

Forty of them were identified, 24 were apprehended and arrested in logging camps and 16 fled. They were picked up and transported out of the province by an aircraft. We believe they did not get the proper clearance to do this and it is alarming that we have persons moving in and out of provinces without the approval or the authorisation of authorities

Firstly, let me commend the Minister and his team, they did a magnificent job. The operations exposed a few issues that give rise to the questions that I'm about to raise here.

(1) What will happen to the 16 foreigners that were illegally uplifted from Oro and taken to an unknown destination?

(2) What will happen to those who uplifted them?

The exercise also exposed the fact that the business of immigration agents is highly unregulated.

(3) Does the Minister intend to change this and bring about laws that can ensure that this particular business is regulated so that we have reputable persons involved in this business?

We have identified the same number of people involved in this business who continue to disobey our laws. They are foreigners running this particular business.

We have also noted that the pecuniary actions are outdated. The fines totalled only K100,000 but the investigations cost far more than that.

(4) Will the Minister give an undertaking that he will bring about the laws that his department administrates and enforces so that it can reflect the seriousness with which we ought to be treating these crimes.

09/03

Mr WESLEY NUKUNJ – Thank you Mr Speaker and also the Governor for Oro for his questions. Firstly, to answer his questions, we will all note that the immigration Department has been doing a few operations in the country. It started off in Port Moresby, with all the foreign businesses. And the one that the Governor is referring to is not because, it was done at the request of the Oro provincial government. It was not done at the interest of any persons or groups with vested interests. The immigration department was actually doing its mandated duties and responsibilities. You will also recall that in my Christmas message in 2019 and 2020 new year message, I made it clear to everyone in the country, including foreigners and foreign investors to take note that the immigration department will make sure that every foreigner operating in the country; either as a business or working or is a dependent or doing business that we will make sure any foreigner living in the country must have a proper legal document to live and work in Papua New Guinea.

That has always been the position of the Department of Immigration and Border Security. So, what has happened in Oro is exactly what I said we would do and it will be done in all the provinces. We are going to do the same where we suspect that there are foreigners or illegal immigrants operating or living in the country. On the questions, the Governor referred to 16 people who fled and he wants to know what will happen to these 16 that fled. I can assure the Governor as well as anyone that no foreigner in the country will escape, including those 16.

We know who they are and who assisted them. And we know the helicopter company that airlifted them. How much was paid to take them away and we know where they are. They will not escape and thanks to Covid-19. Immigration is at the gateway, there are still in the country and we will catch them. It just that, our team is still in Oro, when they get back we will capture these 16, because we know where they are. I am giving you my assurance that we will not let them get away.

Your second question as to what we are going to do to those people and agencies that facilitated their getaway. It is through the law that we will catch them. We know the helicopter company and we know their whereabouts and the people involved so they with their accomplices' and those harboring them will not run away.

10/03

We will still get them. We knew the helicopter company. So how do you think they going to escape, the laws are there.

If we continue sits for next one or two weeks and if you keeping up to date on the current events starting as early as last week, you will see that Immigration is always there. You can read about what we are doing, there's nothing secret or hidden or no personal interest and hidden motives.

So, on the second question, there are specific laws to apply to those who facilitate illegal immigrants in the country. We will be held responsible and we know who they are and where they are.

On the question on reviewing the fees and fines, I can assure the Parliament and the governor on the issue of reviewing the fees and fines that in this Parliament I did the same thing when I was the Minister for Transport, and everyone was crying foul.

People were saying that the driver's license and car registration fees were up, so I'm not new to reviewing the fees and fines. So, on the issue of fees and fines, we will look at it but not because you are raising that issue that we will review the fees and fines. It has been done and is under process and we will enforce that.

So, for those who will be charging in the future, we are going to use the new fees and fines we will impose.

• But few things that we have uncovered in that particular operation for the benefit of the public and us on the Floor of Parliament, most of these illegal immigrants in the country don't come in on their own. They come in because there's a contact in the country.

Firstly, they come because of the type of visa we provide. The visas are issued by the Department of Immigration.

The work permits for those who come to work is issued by the Department of Labor.

Mr Beldan Namah – Point of Order!

Mr Speaker, we got to stop this long story telling on the Floor of Parliament. Answer the question and allow more questions to be asked. Do a ministerial statement and present it before the Parliament. That's the way you should do it, Minister.

Mr WESTLY NUKUNDJ – Mr Speaker, I didn't complete answering the questions because of the national interest. I think it's better I explain so that everyone knows what's actually happening.

(Members interjecting)

If you don't understand English, I will speak in *tok-pidgin*.

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Mr WESTLY NUKUNDJ – People who come into the country by obtaining VISA through the Department of Immigration and for those who comes into the country for work purposes, the Department of Labour gives them work permits. Most of the immigrants we've arrested don't know how to speak in English. One of the criteria the foreigners must meet is that you must know how to read, write and speak English and most of them don't know that.

11/03

The Opposition Leader knows it. He knows it. There are many people living in our areas, there are foreigners logging trees in our forests.

(Mr Belden Namah interjecting)

Mr SPEAKER – Order!

Mr WESTLY NUKUNDJ – This is because there is a lot of corrupt activities taking place. The Works Department and Labor department has issued work permits with the requirement that for foreign employees must be English literate. Those we apprehended in Oro Province were illiterate so how did they enter the country? They came to drive trucks and operate bulldozers. These tasks can be performed by Papua New Guineans.

Furthermore, they have unregistered machinery operating on our roads. It is our duty as Members of Parliament starting from the Prime Minister to the Opposition Leader and everyone down the line. It is our job to ensure these things are fixed. I want to inform the governors that it is our job.

Mr Belden Namah – Point of Order! Mr Speaker, the Minister has used up most of the Question Time and therefore I would like to move that we extend question time.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Member, you have raised a point of order which is not the proper process of extending the Question Time, The Minister is almost at the end of it so I will allow him to wrap up his answer.

Mr WESLY NUKUNDJ – Thank you, Mr Speaker for the opportunity to complete my answer. As I was saying to the governors, there are many unregistered machines and vehicles in the logging camps and mining sites in your provinces. So, it is your responsibility to monitor these things. So, through this operation, we found out that many of these machineries were unregistered.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Minister, please direct your question through the Chair and not directly to the governors.

Mr WESTLY NUKUNDJ – Thank you Mr Speaker, I am addressing you, and I did turn around and address everyone as well.

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Mr WESTLY NUKUNDJ – Does that mean, I will only look at you when answering the question?

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Mr SPEAKER – You can look at them when answering however you must address the Chair when responding and not address them directly.

Mr WESTLY NUKUNDJ – Before I bore everyone, I think I answered the Governor's question. Thank you.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

Question proposed –

That the grievances be noted.

Legislature Must Manage its Own Budget

Mr TOMAIT KAPILI (Laiagap-Porgera) – Thank you Mr Speaker. I have three issues I would like to raise during this Grievance Debate.

The first issue is in regard to these first arm of Government, the Legislature or the Parliament, the second arm is the Executive arm and the third being the Judiciary.

When allocating funds during the annual budget session, I have seen for the last three years that the Legislative arm of Governments has been overlooked. It seems that the Executive administers the Legislatives arm's budget, while the Judiciary administers its own budget. The Executive arm of the Government is supervising and planning the budget of the National Parliament. The National Parliament is an arm of Government it will set its Budget according to its own priorities and it is the Executives job to allocate funding to it.

Under the *Constitution*, the Parliament must administer its own annual Budget and it must be done solely by Parliament.

12/03

The National Parliament, Judiciary, and National Executive Council must submit their own yearly budget. There is no law in the *Constitution* saying that Executive Arm with the Government lead by the Department of Finance, Treasury and National Planning plan for National Parliament operation.

The National Parliament do have its own technical teams to assess and submit the yearly budget together with the other Arms of Government brought before Parliament for approval.

The *Constitution* is very clear National Parliament, Judiciary, and National Executive Council must have separate budget. We have an arrangement in place but over the years we have over looked the Budget of National Parliament.

Many of us here have our own individual revenues coming from all sources and some coming in from the salaries. Because lack of management many of the Members are not paid for 3 – 4 fortnights then when our people seek assistance, we fail to assist our people from DSIP.

We are used to assisting them from our own pockets and the pocket is build-up of what we get from Parliament as wages and salaries. Because of this arrangement some Members of Parliament are affected can we ensure Parliament to have its own budget, manage well, and request through the submission for annual budget just provide the funding that is stated in the *Constitutions*. What National Parliament and Judiciary request provide the funds?

The National Government play around with the remaining balance distributing to Department of Foreign Affairs, Provincial Government, and the list goes on. But with National Parliament request it should never be play around with, that is protected by the *Constitution* of this country.

Leading to that this country has failed to collect revenue where its due. Specifically, in terms of tax, that's lot of tax has never been collected because many companies in this country claim to be operating losses. They made loss for 10 consecutive years they have been operating in the mining industries. If they are making losses why should they are operating. Because a lot of tax evasion and avoidance going on in the country.

The government institutions tasked to administer the collection of tax are not effectively doing their duties. I don't know what IRC and Central Bank are doing.

Even from Barrick, Mr Speaker, this is outside from what is before the court. They have a non-registered joint venture so, the three partners of the joint venture keep their own books. They share the gold from Pert Mint and do their own sales. So, how they keep the book our people in IRC do not know. They all know the quality of gold that has gone out and we are not here to charge corporate tax on the ton of gold going out.

Sir Peter Ipatas – Point of Order! I just want to remind my honorable Member that MRE is a joint venture partner in Porgera and they are a tax paying company.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

13/03

Mr TOMAIT KAPILI – Thank you, my Governor. I am simply trying to explain how our government – I've started off from allocation of funds to the three arms of government, and how money comes-the government generates that allocation from revenue from collection of taxes predominantly.

So I am now leading to why we have messed up in the past through to now in failing to collect full tax, especially corporate tax. Corporate tax is charged at 35 or 30 per cent if I am not wrong, or the gross profit, and that's big money.

I just read in the media, Oil Search made a half-year profit of K85 million, and if it is net profit then we would have known how much the government is due to collect at 30 per cent corporate tax.

That leads me to also say in here that many of these unregistered joint ventures bring the gold and whatever elsewhere like Barrick brings it to Toronto, Jin Chin brings it to China and their books are kept there.

When you have Barrick's books kept in Toronto, where and how do you collect corporate tax of 30 per cent? Where are we collecting it from? How do we determine the 35 per cent; the big money that this country is supposed to be collecting? Are we collecting on the basis of the ounces of gold exported? No, on the basis of the books, the profit and loss statement. That's where we should be collecting our money. Big money is being lost.

All the companies that are operating in this country must operate their books in this country. How much they generate in this country as opposed to how much they spent to make the money, you charge them your corporate tax. Why are we investing too much in charging our employees huge tax amounts? Even after they pay their taxes through their normal pay on a fortnightly basis, when they are retiring we even tax them on their savings. When these giants are going out free while evading or avoiding tax.

Our revenue, our money that is supposed to be coming to this country is not coming and here we are fighting because there is no money. Sea of oil spilling like water, money is flowing like water into somewhere else.

We should seriously look at patching all these gaps, getting all the companies operating in this country, especially investors to comply with our accounting standards, maybe we force them to operate out of Port Moresby or anywhere else they are operating in or our tax inspectors should audit their books so that they can be made to provide tax returns to IRC to determine how much they spent in their normal expense that might be of different nature which will reduce their profits.

Some people, even their operational costs –

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Member your time for Grievance Debate has ended.

Mr TOMAIT KAPILI – Finally, Mr Speaker, there is many ways to make money for this county through our tax regime. Because we fail to do that we are saying there is no money and that is affecting our Parliament's request for a separate budget, just like the Judiciary.

Thank you.

Escalating Law and Order Problem

Mr BELDEN NAMAH (Vanimo-Green River) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Before I join Grievance Debate I wish to inform Parliament and the people of Papua New Guinea that I have been restored as Member for Vanimo-Green to perform my duties and responsibilities as Member for Vanimo-Green, hence as leader of the opposition –

Mr Speaker, the National Court through a successful judicial review –

14/03

Mr Bryan Kramer – Point of Order! Thank you, Mr Speaker, just for the record, I want to make a point that the Supreme Court ruling initially confirmed that the ruling of the former Opposition Leader took effect when he was suspended in 2018.

Therefore, he never resumed as the Opposition Leader because he was not the Opposition Leader back then so he needs to go through a formal appointment under the *Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates* before he can resume that appointment.

Thank you.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Member, there has been a series of Court decisions which were made on this matter but the Office of the Speaker has not received any official decision as yet. The official order will come from the Register of Courts not from the lawyers of each party. I directed the Parliament Lawyer to obtain the order but they have not obtained it yet so it is not official.

Once, I receive the Order from the Court then I will announce the position on the Floor. That is why I address him as Honourable Member for Vanimo-Green and not as Leader of the Opposition because I am still awaiting the official order from the Court which will inform my office that this is the decision of the Court.

I just want to clarify this on the Floor.

Mr BELDEN NAMAH – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I believe that you will receive this Court Order and you will know the effect of it. Our scientists, lawyers, auditor and judge too will know!

(Laughter in the Chamber)

Mr BELDEN NAMAHA – Mr Speaker, my grievance debate is on the law and order situation which we are currently facing in the country.

Yesterday, the former Prime Minister, Honourable Peter O’Neill, asked a very good question to the Prime Minister and he failed to answer this question about the law and order situation in the country.

Mr Speaker, we have to stop this; “blame game”. Every time we come to Parliament, the Prime Minister will blame the former government, the Treasurer will also blame the former government.

The Prime Minister, should be the last person to blame the former government because he was part of the former government. We should stop the blame game in this country. What is your position as the Prime Minister or Government of the day in addressing the law and order situations in the country? You cannot wait until the Police structure for Hela or Jiwaka is approved, utilise what is before you.

The disciplinary forces are here and ready. The Prime Minister assured the perpetrators in Hela that he was going to go for them, but he has not done that yet. When will he do so –

Mr Wera Mori – Point of Order! Please, with due respect to the Member for Vanimo-Green, he should not impersonate the Prime Minister. He is a national leader. Can he focus his debate on the right track?

Thank you.

Mr BELDEN NAMAHA – Mr Speaker, the Minister, needs to open his ears and listen well when members are speaking on the Floor of Parliament. I am not using my own words.

15/03

I used his own words against him. The law and order situation in this country is a very serious issue. If you want to see development in this country, we got to address the law and order situation in the country.

This government in the last 16 months has done nothing to address the law and order situation in the country. Your Police Minister is sitting in his *Facebook* office and talking.

Mr James Marape – Point of Order! Mr Speaker, it baffles me that someone who storms into a Court room at the highest level has the audacity to talk about law and order in this House. He is one of the chief architects of the leadership woes of the past, responsible for

the breakdown of law and order system in the country. And now standing up and having the audacity to talk about respecting law and order in our country; for goodness sake! Proposing an alternative, would be fine, because you just said let us not talk about the past. Advise this government with your alternatives. It really baffles my mind that the former Deputy Prime Minister, the high and mighty can abuse the Court at the highest level.

Even the Former Prime Minister had eight years to talk about these issues and it contributed to the erosion of the law and justice sector in our country. Yet you stand up and advocating on good law and order. Listen carefully to what this government is doing; listen to the Police Minister and the Law and Justice sector Minister on what they are doing under this government for the country. They have brought for instance ICAC; and the *Whistleblowers' Act*, and giving independence to judiciary that was left behind. And trying to restore discipline into the Police Force. This is hypocrisy at the highest level; my goodness!

Mr Peter O'Neill -Point of Order! I want to ask the Chair, during Grievance Debate, is there a rule in the *Standing Orders*, that allows you to entertain continuous points of orders? It is the time for Members to raise grievances and not a time for us to debate. That is why I want clarification from the Chair? What are the grievance processes stated in the *Standing Orders*?

Mr SPEAKER – I just got clarification from the Deputy Clerk that during Grievance Debate, if statements are not in order, there can be Points of Order raised to clarify such statements.

Mr BELDEN NAMAHA – Mr Speaker, the Prime Minister can speak about the past but I successfully won that case. If you and your Police Minister stop sitting on the fence and start jumping up and down, go and read the Court Order and you will know. We are talking about real life situations. You have killings in Tari almost every day. What are you going to do about it?

Mr James Marape – Point of Order! Of course, Tari is not a good place and killings do take place but not every day. It is incorrect to say there is killing in Tari every day. Just like many parts of our country where there are law and order issues and sometimes killings do take place. We are fixing it.

16/03

But, let me remind the Member for Vanimo-Green, least he forgets, I am not just Member for Tari, but I am Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea and I've got to see it in the context of what we will do for the country, including Tari Pori.

Thank you.

Gender Based Violence

Mr JOHN ROSSO (Lae – Minister for Lands and Physical Planning) – Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I wish to continue the debate on an important subject brought up by the Governor of NCD yesterday.

This is in regard to our gender-based violence. This is occurring nationwide. There is a lot of public outcry in our towns and cities but our mothers in rural areas also suffer this violence but they are suffering silently. Those in areas like Menyamya, in Mendi and even in Lae. We have received a lot of this, where especially the vulnerable like the women and children suffer greatly from.

We hear of them being burnt alive, their well-to-do husbands violating them and even killing them without anyone standing up for them.

It is something that is permeating all aspects of our society, not only in urban areas. But I wish to say that when we talk about this, many people blame the government, but it is not only the government that is responsible. Yes we have adequate laws to address this in existence.

But this comes back to us as individuals, our personality as leaders in our respective communities, including myself as the leader of Lae. When things like this happens we need to address this a lot more and carry out more awareness on this.

Also, in the communities the husbands, uncles, and other relatives stand by and witness the women being burnt, tortured or witness their sons violating their daughters. The whole country needs to stand up and look. We need to stand up and try and protect our daughters and children.

I received a phone call this morning, a 10-year old girl was raped in Menyamya and had to be medevacked. A 10-year old, what animal does that? It's wrong. We need to ensure that these people who perpetrate these injustices to our women and children are sent to prison for life. We need to seriously address that.

The Police Minister is doing a great job, rehabilitating the police force, it's a legacy issue that he has inherited.

But at the same time, we need to do a lot more. Each Member of Parliament need to set up a Family and Sexual Violence offices in all our police stations. We need to ensure that the awareness we are talking about should actually happen. We need to conduct awareness in schools, in our villages, and our communities. This is a major shortfall. If we don't address this, who will the victims go to and cry for help? We read about it in the media every day. It is a major issue.

Also, as I have said, Papua New Guinea should not blame the politicians only. It is not us. We have passed the laws already. But, we are spectating when our daughter is violated by her husband and she come to us seeking help, we say no and send her back to her husband. That is wrong. We must try to address this. This is not a positive attitude.

Even the policemen, when they come and complain at police stations, police should not treat this as a family issue. They must lock up those people.

17/03

In terms of compensation, as the Prime Minister rightfully pointed out yesterday many times, many complaints reach the Police station but, in most cases, the aggrieved party's family opt to receive compensation payments instead of letting the perpetrator face the law. So this practice must also stop.

I agree with the Minister, who stated that we must abolish the compensation system so that we don't receive money as redress for the torture or suffering inflicted on our daughters or sisters. Do not accept compensation for any inhuman behavior towards our womenfolk.

That is the awareness I would like to create so that we as Members of the Parliament are aware.

Present Performances Report

Mr ALLAN BIRD (East Sepik) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. Before I proceed to my grievances, I would like to support the statement by the Prime Minister and the Member for Lae.

In East Sepik, we have start acting against gender-based violence and violence in general. I would like to encourage all the leaders here to take a similar stand and let's stop gender-based violence. I have joined hands with the Governor of NCD and some governors and we hope to provide some leadership on this issue.

My grievance is in relation to the questions I raised earlier to the Minister for Finance. I have been a Member of Parliament for three years. I have seen that many leaders especially

Ministers don't present report on the state of the country. We don't present the measure of performance annually, which is from the time we took office.

In 2010, we launched the Vision 2050, when Sir Puka Temu was the Deputy Prime Minister and Sir Michael Somare was the Prime Minister. Within that vision, we had inserted measurements called HDI, which is made up of three main things.

The first one is the knowledge and education index. This measures the retention of students in school, the number of boys and girls that are attending school and their performance in terms of their education levels in our education system.

The second is the life expectancy. This measures the health, it also measures issues like violence within the community; and the empowerment of women and girls.

The final one is income parity. This measures the amount of money our ordinary citizens have and the way they sustain themselves financially.

Mr Speaker, we launched Vision 2050 in 2010, and it is now 2020 and we have not done a review nor have we presented our performance reports against the indicators we have chosen. No presentation has been done yet.

As part of this Government, I would like to urge us, can we start making the effort to do so, especially the front bench. Can we do that in November or December? Can we put in a report on our performance as a country? I raised the issue of our expenditure in the last 10 years. We have seen a reduction in our expenditures in the last 10 years. If you look at the HDI, we were ranked 147 but last year we were ranked 155. So Mr Speaker, we have regressed in terms of the measurement. This is out of a total of 189 countries.

As the Parliament, should we continue to accept that we will come year-by-year just to pass annual budgets or should we demand and make it incumbent upon the Government of the day to present their performance against a set of agreed criteria. So, that we try to measure the PSIP and DSIP funding in our provinces and for departments that receive funding. How do they utilize their funds, can we measure how they are using these funds and the results derived from using these funds? We need to bring a level of professionalism to this House.

18/03

We can't become complacent. Mr Speaker we are project managers. We hear members complaining about the lack of fund to deliver the services but if we give the money, we have to be responsible enough to follow up with the result. To ensure, that money is spent to improve the economy. For instance, we need to measure the performance OF the economy right down to provincial level. I need to know how East Sepik is performing.

Is it performing poorly! The people of East Sepik need to make a demand on their leaders to improve that performance. We cannot just come here to collect cheques and return to spend the cheque. We cannot keep Members of Parliament busy spending cheques.

We need Members of Parliament to be here holding the institution of the country to account whether it's the Justice system, Police force, Finance Department, or the East Sepik Provincial Government, we should all be accountable.

To date, I have not seen a report come into Parliament in the last three years. Before I exit this Parliament, I want to see a report. I think we all should demand a performance reports whether it's on improving life indicators, gender-based violence or public services housing. There should be a set of indicators that this House impose and then it is placed upon the government to deliver.

We need it Mr Speaker, because without it the member will come and say, my people are happy and we take the word of the member. There is no independent agency that goes out and takes measurement and provides it. The current measurement is based on what we members say, and that's not good enough.

Mr Speaker, we need to move Parliament to a higher level of professionalism and I have firm faith that it should come from your office. Then we should make it incumbent on the Parliament, we then have to hold the Executive accountable.

Mr Speaker, I used to blame the previous government but I am sitting here amongst the mixture, some members from the Opposition and some from previous Government, we are together. How do we measure that? We can't keep blaming each other which I see happening in Parliament all the time? We are pointing fingers? But we are not held to a standard that is neutral to everybody. The standard is, how we blame someone else.

The standard should be a set of numbers where it doesn't matter what you and I say, the data and the evidence actually hold us to account. So, we need to start bringing data and evidence, empirical data to this Floor. That data will not shift blames but need to lift performance.

So, I ask the Speaker and honorable Members here to demand accountability. I want to be held accountable to a set of performance measures. Not because someone accuses me of being corrupt and I accuse some else of being corrupt. We should stop this nonsense of shifting blames around.

We need to raise the level performance on this Floor. Because only when we raised the performance here, Mr Speaker, I believe our people will also rise and raise their performance.

As we continue lower the level of performance on this Floor and we shift blames then in our community, we are getting the same blame game and little performance.

Funding for Constitutional Offices and Consultation Processes

Mr CHRIS HAIVETA (Gulf) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to debate on two concepts. The concepts where I think leaders are confused to make certain decisions. The first concept is regarding independence of constitutional office holders, arms of government as debated by the Member for Lagaip-Porgera. The independence of the Judiciary, and Parliament from the Executive is enshrined in the *Constitution*.

19/03

And the way the Treasurer and Finance Minister control the flow of money to Parliament, or to constitutional offices that are supposed to carry out their duties, especially offices like the Electoral Commission, I believe there is no money to run the by-election in Goroka. The police, defence, and Ombudsman where we control their performances through the way that we fund them. This has to stop.

Treasurer, please, from next year onwards, can you get your financing plan right so that if your budget is K12 billion, can you make sure that K3 billion is available every quarter. That is you and the government's job.

The K3 billion must be made available quarterly every year to so that all arms of government and all constitutional offices are funded?

The Member for Lagaip-Porgera talked about pay because if you hold back salaries of members, allocations for individual institutions where do they go? They either cut back, borrow from the banks or they do nothing. The consequences are dire on families, on the institutions themselves and the stress that you cause is immeasurable. We are feeling pain without cause.

In November, we are going to pass another budget, I also believe we are going to do a supplementary budget. If we are going to do a supplementary budget I hope that a financing plan is in place for the next three to four months and that we stick to it. I hope that you give Parliament's money, you give judiciary's money, and you give the constitutional offices money so that we can all deliver the duties that we are mandated to deliver.

The experience that I have had with the judiciary, for example where I recently won my case, is very telling. In the judiciary, the way that we control the Office of the Public Prosecutor and the Office of the Solicitor-General by brief-outs where the Attorney-General

decides which lawyer gets cases where he approves lawyers for his offices is something of concern to me.

If the Public Prosecutor wants to have, or do a brief-out he must be given the independence to do a brief-out so that he can carry out his constitutional function. This should not come to the Attorney-General.

If the Ombudsman Commission wants to do a brief-out in the prosecution of leaders, it must also be given that independence to choose a lawyer it wants. And likewise, for Solicitor-General, I believe the Attorney-General has the right to do it because he is administering State functions.

So, this is an issue that I think should be picked up.

Mr Speaker, the second issue I want to raise is consultations. We use the word consultation loosely. If you want to bring in a law or policy, Ministers just talk to Members, people on the streets or in the corridors. In some legislation, the process of consultation is set out properly, in others it is not.

Mr Speaker, it is about time that the government has a policy on consultations. In the *Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Governments*; what is the process of consultation that we need to undertake?

20/03

Mr Speaker, that is not very clear and I urge the Government to look at consultation as per the Organic Law between the national, provincial and local-level governments. This must be clearly defined so that you cannot take “making a phone call to a colleague” as consultation. It needs to be proper, meaningful and needs to reach a conclusion as per the procedures.

Today, we have many misunderstandings and conflicts that are created and not much is being done because we are all off on a tangent as far as those processes are concerned.

Mr Speaker, these are the two issues that I would like to raise. Thank you.

Protect PNG from Foreign Exploitation

Mr GARRY JUFFA (Northern) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have a very brief issue to discuss and it is in relation to the question I asked earlier on.

The issue I wish to discuss is the protective mechanism that we have that guard our economy from exploitation by very powerful and sinister forces or mischievous characters that slither into this country because we have weak systems guarding this economy.

In the recent operations in the Northern Province carried out by the Migration and Border Authority with the assistance of the provincial administration, we exposed this again. Such exposer occurs from time to time again when there is an effort by relevant ministers to test –

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Governor, hold on.

To those who are in the Gallery, the Gallery is not for you to be standing and speaking to each other, okay.

Governor, you may continue.

Mr GARRY JUFFA – Thank you, Mr Speaker, whenever these relevant committees that are the guardians of our community decide to test their systems and laws to administrate and force and be those guardians, they will expose the weaknesses that exist.

For example, we identified 40 foreigners illegally working in the province. We have done our due diligence. Our Administration has collected the relevant information and developed the intelligence that tells us that these foreigners have actually been operating in the country for more than a decade. They have been working with unregistered machines, shifting from camp to camp and operating with impunity which is actually making a mockery of us, especially us here because we are the chief guardians of this economy. We have so many laws that are not being enforced adequately enough.

In fact, most times, we are relying on the Police, who do not have the capacity, they are overwhelmed, overworked, understaffed and many Government Departments are failing in many instances to protect the interest of Papua New Guinea.

The operation in the Northern Province exposed 40 illegal workers so try multiple 40 by 20 provinces, you will find that there is more than 1 000 of them who are all earning an income and since they are illegally employed it is most likely that they are not paying any taxes. And, all the unregistered machines that they are operating without the knowledge of the authorities that is also revenue that is missing out.

21/03

In these operations we have taken it up ourselves to inform the Ministries of Labor so, that they can act against these companies and individuals. We must go after the companies. In this instance, those involved in the forestry sector.

The forest industry certification must be revoked. They have been given concession licensees as permits and those permits must be revoked. They are registered companies with

IPA, their registrations must also be deregistered. They must be black-listed and treated with contempt, because they have treated us with contempt. They are not only making a mockery of our laws but they are laughing at us. And we must not continue to entertain these individuals and the companies that they operate under. You would not be allowed to operate like this in Singapore, Malaysia, China or Indonesia for that matter. They will round you up, charge you, prosecute you, put you in their jails and then kick you out of their country, instantly. They will blacklist you and you will never enter their country again.

Mr Speaker, here they have stayed for more than 10 years. And they continue to do so and we let them. It is not their fault. It is our fault, because we are at the doorway and we let them. They are just walking all over us and doing a lot of things that are damaging to our country and our people. They are not paying tax, and IRC is asleep on this. They are not inspecting such companies and individuals. It is unfair on those companies that pay tax. Unless we take this seriously we are not going to progress as an economy. We are now a beacon hope for the fight against the trans-national crimes, drug cartels and individuals.

They see us as a weak spot and they make a bee-line for our economy, that is an easy transit point as they say. You're talking about drugs, it has been happening for 20 years. Human smuggling, money laundering, gun smuggling and the list goes on; all these have been happening for years and will continue to happen because we have failed our responsibilities as guardians of our economy. And once a criminal operates here, if he is illegally in the country, he is a criminal. I am surprised that they were granted bail. They are granted bail because they are constitutionally allowed. No; this is not allowed, they are not citizens. The *Constitution* only applies to citizens and those who are here with consent from relevant organizations' otherwise, they are foreigners.

Mr Speaker, to allow them bail means to allow them to commit an ongoing offense against the *Migration Act* and the foreign employment laws; because they will be allowed bail and they will continue to work. So, once a criminal comes into the country and is identified, we should immediately deal with them, with the full force of the law. So, Labor Department should immediately take him to task and the company should be deregistered, sent packing and all their assets should be ceased and auctioned. That will send a signal to the rest of the world, that we are not an easily exploited economy. And our people will be satisfied that we are actually trying to protect them and their interests. My good Ministers, these companies have polluted our waterways extensively. They have logged in areas where their permits and licenses would not allow them to log but they are still doing it.

And as the good Minister for Migration pointed out, none of them speak a word of English. How did they acquire their documents to come here at the first place? The good Minister for Forest, why are these companies being entertained? How did they get the forest industry participation certificate? And why were they given forest clearance authority? I will ask you to cancel all of those and give them to my business arm for the provincial government. So, that we can then develop our resources as best as we see fit in a sustainable manner. So, that my people can benefit.

22/03

As best as we see fit in a sustainable manner so that my people, my landowners, my resource owners can benefit.

Minister for Transport, they have been unlawfully operating these machines. There are actually millions outstanding in duties, fines, permits and other fees that we ought to be imposing.

We are saying there is no money. There is money out there. We are just not making an effort to go out there and collect it.

Minister for Treasury, you have to pull your tax office in. They have to change from their passive tax regime into an inclusive tax regime where they must go after the people who are not paying their taxes. There are many of them in the forestry sector, the fisheries sector and many other sectors.

We must zealously guard this country because you love this country and you love your people. You want inspiration, go home take your children and look into their eyes and there you find the inspiration you want. What type of country are we going to leave for them in the future?

This operation is 'Take Back PNG' in physical manifestation, that's how I see it. And I ask all my fellow Members of Parliament who have the greatest responsibility of holding ministries, I know you are very busy, please when these names come to you, the companies come to you, treat them with absolute contempt with which they have treated us and the people of Papua New Guinea.

Thank you.

Porgera Mine Situation

Mr SAM AKOITAI (Central Bougainville) – Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me time to share some of my grievances. I have three issue I have to address.

Firstly, there are a lot of speculation on social media about my trip to Porgera. Many writers have commented asking why I went there.

Mr Speaker, I responded to a call, an invitation by the communities in Porgera. This invitation was extended to all of us, 111 Members of Parliament. So, I took that invitation and I went up to Porgera and whilst I was there, I found out that I was the only one in attendance.

The issue here is that our people in Porgera wanted to air their views so I went there. However, there were rumours circulating that I went up to represent the company in Porgera. I want to inform this House that no company brought me to this House. It was the people of Central Bougainville who voted me into this House. I did not come here to represent any company or whoever else in this House.

I was glad I took that trip to see what is going on in Porgera right now. I saw that the operation is continuing. But whilst I was in Porgera, I must thank the people in Porgera and the entire province for the leadership of Governor Ipatas for giving us the support in trying to find better ways to make the livelihoods of the people of Bougainville better.

It was an opportunity for me to go and thank the ordinary people who voted us into this House. At the same time, when I arrived, I thanked them for allowing mining to happen in Porgera.

As you know, in my area we also allowed mining to happen in Bougainville. But, that was before Independence. And the kind of arrangement negotiated for Bougainville did not involve the landowners. It was an arrangement between the State and the company. My trip up there enabled me to share my experiences with the people.

23/02

My trip to Porgera was mainly to share with the people some of my experiences and challenges that we faced during the Panguna Mine crisis. I didn't go there to criticize any party or any person. I didn't criticize anyone in the speeches I made. Instead, I encourage all the landowners to be united and to come up with one voice to represent the people of Porgera to make sure that whatever deal is negotiated with the issue of Porgera Mine, it must benefit all the landowners, province and country as a whole.

I just want to clarify the reason for the trip I took to Porgera. Also, my trip was not funded by the company but it was an invitation to all 111 Members to go and hear the cry of the people of Porgera.

I thank the Government for the approach taken. During my visit, I noticed that our security forces; the Defence Force and Police personnel have done an excellent job. They protected all the properties such as buildings and equipment and also provided security for all the people there.

It was a sad case, similar to what had happened during the time when Panguna Mine closed down and the big trucks would be lining up along the benches. That similar case happened to Pogera Mine. Mr Deputy Speaker, I really want to thank the Defence Force and the Police personnel present up there for carrying out an excellent job. I also noticed that they were not well supported by the Government.

But on behalf of the people of Central Bougainville, I thank the Provincial Government through the Governor for their support in terms of food and maintaining peace at the mine site.

Mr James Marape – Point of Order! Mr Deputy Speaker, let me assist the Member for Central Bougainville, we are funding the Provincial Government. And that's the closest the government is on the ground so let me place on record here that the National Government is supporting. Just recently, we released K2 million to the Provincial Government and in that way, they are addressing the police personnel and Defence Forces on the ground, thank you.

Relocation of Panguna Landowners

Mr SAM AKOITAI – Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Its good the Prime Minister is clarifying it here because the troops on the ground are assuming that its purely from the Provincial Government.

I am glad I took this trip because I now know what is really affecting the people up there and what they are missing out on as well.

The other point is that, I want to thank the Government through the Minister for National Planning and Monitoring for visiting Central Bougainville and South Bougainville during the launching of the Development Plan when Parliament was in recess. On behalf of the people of Central Bougainville, I really appreciate the Government for approving the plan.

Whilst he was there, I took him to Panguna Mine site to see our people there. He was the first Minister to visit Panguna Mine and also went right down to ground zero, which is right down to the pit where some of our people dig trying to find gold.

24/03

Our people are also trying to process some gold from the pit. The Minister's visit also extended to Dapira. I have raised a question to the Prime Minister to assist me with the relocation of settlers out there who were displaced by the company

The displaced people reside up in the dump and its unhygienic for humans to settle out there. The Government and Rio Tinto are responsible for the damage done to Panguna.

I ask the government to assist me as one of the partners to Panguna Mine to relocate my people to another place where they can able to stay and do gardening. The place they reside in is similar to Porgera and they are not able to produce cash crops like cocoa because the land has been dug out by the mining company.

So, my Honorable Prime Minister, please, I am still waiting for the response from my question if you can assist in the relocation of my people who are settling up in the stones which is unfit for human occupation.

So, this is my debate and I am happy because the Minister has paid a visit to the site.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Future of Porgera Mine

Sir PETER IPATAS (Enga) – Mr Speaker, I have two issues to debate.

(1) I want to take this time to thank the Prime Minister on behalf of my people and the government regarding the position of Porgera.

I am happy that the Member Honorable Sam Akoitai went up to Porgera. The Province is under my leadership it was not an easy decision. In the province, tax credit scheme projects came to a standstill, and there was no cash flow, so these are some case scenarios.

But most governors and leaders of this Parliament are saying some of us have to make tough decisions for the interest of this country.

I take this time to commend the Prime Minister for taking a bold stand on this issue. Because the Porgera mine is 30 years old. I want the Ministers and Members to inform me when you are visiting Porgera because I am the leader on ground for the past 23 years and I know what is exactly happening in my Province.

Thirty years, not one day did my people ever stop the mine. We have patiently waited and the SML expired and it is our time. We did not use weapons to close down the mine and we waited patiently. We know after 30 years, we could exercise this right and try to stop the company to show them that the resource belongs to our country.

The law states that if the SML expired and was not renewed it returns to the State. Whether we get 100, 20, or 30 per cent going into the future at least there will be a greater benefit for our people in the province as well as this country.

So, Prime Minister, this is the greatest decision ever you have made and thank you for this and I also thank the former Prime Minister for making a similar decision for Ok Tedi.

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I also thank the former Prime Minister for making decision on Ok-Tedi. Ok-Tedi is now benefiting and we are also watching it. There is a precedence set already.

After being patient for 30-years, I thank the Prime Minister for giving my people the opportunity to try and negotiate a better outcome. So, despite whatever I say, people will always say something negative but on the overall, the people of Enga support the Prime Minister and my stand.

Mr SPEAKER – Honourable Governor, the issue you mentioned is before the Courts.

Sir PETER IPATAS - Mr Speaker, I am aware of that and I'm making a general statement.

Mr SPEAKER – I'm sure you do; however, your statement seems to lead towards the issue that is before the Courts. Therefore, the Chair prohibits you from discussing this matter further.

Sir PETER IPATAS – Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to thank this Government. It is easy for this country to compromise the interest of our country in many projects. We may be tempted to compromise for our personal interest, but we stand firm for the interest of our people. This is what will happen in Porgera.

Many times, Prime Minister used to say, short term pain for long term gain. We are resilient people. How long it takes, we will achieve what we want to achieve.

If the people of Western Province can enjoy 33 per cent, Enga people will not standby and accept anything lower than what is offered to the Ok Tedi land owners.

So I want to remind the Parliament and the nation and I want to inform the Prime Minister that my province and I, and the country are 100 per cent in support of your position.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, most times we forgot about things that occurred yesterday. I want to bring you all the 111 honorable MPs to 2011. There was an impasse. We nearly lost this country that time. We the members, former Prime Minister and layers during that impasse have reconciled and received money from the government to settle your bills. But, the police officers in NCD were the ones stood up to enforce the decisions of the Supreme Court that time.

More than 100 policemen in NCD lost their jobs and some of them have struggled to come into the system again. These police officers had put their lives on the line for this country.

Prime Minister, former Prime Minister and most of us here, we are aware. At that time, institutions of government were compromised. Some Policemen here in NCD are suffering and they continue to suffer.

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Mr Speaker, just yesterday, I was informed that one of the police officers from that group passed away. He died from stress.

Since 2011, some of our Members here have reconciled but why have we not recognised this small group of policemen who stood for the *Constitution* of this Nation. They are heroes. This country is always looking for heroes but we already have them, as far as I am concerned these lot of policemen are heroes in this country.

I want our Government under the leadership of the Prime Minister to recognise these policemen and make sure that they all revert back to their old positions.

There are many officers who are being promoted who were in support of former Prime Minister, Peter O'Neill's regime, while these group of policemen were not recognised for the past nine years

Mr Acting Speaker, I will bring their grievances to you, Mr Prime Minister.

Thank you.

Motion – That the grievances be noted – agreed to.

MOTION BY LEAVE

Mr RAINBO PAITA (Finschhafen – Minister for Finance) – I ask leave of Parliament to move a motion without notice.

Leave granted.

PERMANENT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON LAW AND ORDER – DISCHARGE AND APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

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

That Mr Walter Schnaubelt be discharged from attendance as Chairman of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Law and Order and that Mr Peter Isoaimo be appointed Chairman of the Committee.

Mr RAINBO PAITA (Finschhafen – Minister for Finance) – Mr Speaker, I want to thank the Members who attended this week's Parliament Session. The members who have sat through on both side of the House, it gives confidence to the people. As I always say, "My job as Leader of Government Business, I keep reminding this House that our first job as Members of this Parliament is legislators and we should always be in this House regardless of any title, your first priority is to this Floor and Chair that you fight for."

I can imagine all the things we go through to get to this House and finally when we get here and it is time for meetings most of us are not here to attend. So, I would like to urge the Member on both sides to show support to our agenda on matters of this House and just be on the Floor to represent your people.

Mr Speaker, I think we need to renew the *Standing Orders*, so if any Member does not attend for a full one week, you should have your pay cut so Members can attend the full Parliament Session. We must also show respect to this House, as it is one Arm of the Government.

Thank you for the debates that took place and at this juncture, I move that the Parliament be adjourned to Tuesday 1 September, 2020 at 10 a.m.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 1 p.m.