

**FIRST DAY**

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**Thursday 11 March 2021**

**DRAFT HANSARD**

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
CORRECTIONS TO DAILY DRAFT HANSARD

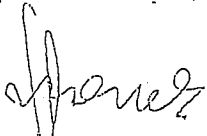
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HARRY MOMOS

Acting Principal Parliamentary Reporter

## FIRST DAY

Thursday 11 March 2021

The Parliament met at 10 a.m., as per *Section 124 of the Constitution* and *Section 2 (1) (a) (iii) of the Organic Law* on the calling of Meetings of the Parliament.

The Speaker (**Mr Job Pomat**) took the Chair and invited His Eminence, **Sir John Cardinal Ribat** to say Prayers:

‘Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. Heavenly father we thank you for gathering the elected leaders of our nation Papua New Guinea. Bless them in their work of leadership that they will continue to accept this great responsibility with respect and love for the people, who have great trust in them and have elected them as their representatives in this Parliament. Unite them with love for their people so that in all they do will be a reflection of their love and respect for them. Today is a special Parliament meeting. It is with great respect and honour for the founding father and the first Prime Minister of our country Papua New Guinea, who has passed on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021, exactly 14 days ago. Late Sir Michael Thomas Somare was a true believer, a man of integrity and he will always be a man of history. He was a man of faith which means grateful reverence towards the source of our being of what we have received our God, our country, our locality and our ancestors and family. He had a great vision to unite the many cultures and languages to become one country. In the course of his journey he encountered many obstacles but remain resolute. One of his drive he always said, ‘if we are confronted with problems there is no other way, we have to continually work for the building of peace and unity and a greater future for all of us’. Lord be with us and the whole nation in these days of mourning, bless Papua New Guinea. Let us pray for the late Sir Michael that the Lord will reward him for all that he has done for our nation and our country. Let us pray for the repose of his soul and may the Lord bless this Parliament on this special day of meeting, Amen.’

**ADMISSION OF HIS HONOUR, THE CHIEF JUSTICE, HIS EXCELLENCY, THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL AND PALL-BEARERS CARRYING THE CASKET OF LATE SIR MICHAEL THOMAS SOMARE INTO THE CHAMBER**

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable Members I wish to inform Parliament that;

(a) His Excellency, the Governor-General Grand Chief Sir Bob Dadae and His Honour, Chief Justice Sir Gibuna Gibbs Salika are in the precincts of the Parliament.

(b) Pall-bearers carrying the casket containing the body of the Grand Chief, Right Honourable Sir Michael Thomas Somare will be admitted into the Chamber.

With the concurrence of all honourable members, I invite His Excellency, the Governor-General and His Honour, the Chief Justice to be seated on the Floor of the Parliament.

Motion – agreed to.

**ENTRANCE OF THE  
CHIEF JUSTICE**

His Honour, the Chief Justice, Sir Gibbs Salika, entered the Chamber and was seated.

**ENTRANCE OF THE  
GOVERNOR-GENERAL**

His Excellency, the Governor-General Sir Bob Dadae, entered the Chamber and was seated.

02/01

**ENTRANCE OF PALL-BEARERS CARRYING THE CASKET  
OF THE LATE Sir MICHAEL THOMAS SOMARE**

The casket of the Late Grand Chief, Right Honourable Sir Michael Thomas Somare was brought into the Chamber by Pall-bearers to lie-in-state.

03/01

## MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** (Tari-Pori – Prime Minister) –, I move –

That this Parliament expresses its deepest regret at the death of the First Prime Minister of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, the Late Great Grand Chief, Right Honourable Sir Michael Thomas Somare, GCL, GCMG, GCR, CH, CF KStJ, ,KSG,PC on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021, and places on record its recognition of his long merituos and devoted service to the people of Papua New Guinea and extend its profound sympathy to his family in their bereavement. Mr Speaker it is with this regard that we are having this Special Parliament Session.

**Mr BELDEN NAMAHA** (Vanimo-Green Opposition Leader) – I second the motion.

Motion – agreed to

**04/01**

**Mr BELDEN NAMAHA** (Vanimo-Green Opposition Leader) – I rise today on this very important and special occasion of the state funeral of our founding father, the Sana, the Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare.

We are meeting here today to pay our last respects to a truly unique person in our beautiful country.

There can never be and will never be another Michael Thomas Somare. The late Right Honourable Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare was specially chosen by God to bring this nation to independence and its nationhood.

He was a clear leader; he had patience, compassion, charisma, vision and wisdom. He had the qualifications of a teacher and a communicator he consulted with others and gained consensus. He held his wife and children close to his heart. He was God fearing.

These attributes were the glue that has brought together and held this nation together so far.

From the mountains to the river valleys and the islands and the atolls of Papua New Guinea we have been blessed and touched by the life of this one man very special man, the Sana of Papua New Guinea.

Whether he was blissfully unaware as a child born in the chaotic aftermath of the great depression in 1936. Whether he has an innocent child learned the Japanese language during the Great War, the World War II, whether looking for employment as a teacher and

broadcaster while bearing the racial injustices of the colonial era in the late 1950s and the 1960s.

Whether as member of the Bully beef club plotting our nationhood in 1967 or blazing the path himself as the Chairman of the Constitutional Planning Committee between June 1972 and August 1974 or whether as Chief Minister and then the first Prime Minister steering the multi lingual shift of statehood to nationhood and repeating the honour no less than four times more than half of his living years in a political career spanning forty-nine years uninterrupted. It has happened in just 84 years in his life time.

It has happened in all our lifetimes. In one lifetime our Grand Chief wanted a united, prosperous, God fearing and free nation, he wanted an educated population to contribute meaningfully to the development of our country. He wanted fair and equitable distribution of our natural resources. He wanted things to be done in Papua New Guinean way and Melanesian way. He did not just want it; he did it and lived it. This Government and future Governments would do well to bear this in mind when they appropriate budgets to ensure that there is equal share for every one of the 89 districts, 22 provinces regardless of which

**05/01**

This is the legacy we must continue, which is the legacy of the Late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare, the founding father of our Nation.

We can never take away or discredit an amazing feat like that from the Late Grand Chief, whom we have come to honour, to pay tribute to and to bid farewell today.

In paying tribute, I am compelled to add a few words in explanation to defend myself against certain accusations against me in the last few years but more so in the last few days since the passing of Late Grand Chief, Sir Michael Thomas Somare. I am accused of mistreating the Grand Chief during the political impasse of 2011. I am accused of storming into the Court Room of the then Chief Justice Sir Salamo Injia at that time. Some Members made speeches during the Hauscry, and I feel that it is only proper that I respond as a matter of Unity during this very special occasion.

I accept the criticisms that have arisen but I will not have them taint the memory of my relationship with the Late Grand Chief or with his family, the people of East and West Sepik and the people of our beautiful country.

My conscience was and is clear. We all seem to suffer short memories or prefer to be selective in what we choose to remember. It is a dangerous thing to be selective.

In 2011, the political atmosphere was different and a call for change was heard loud and clear in our country and elsewhere. At that time it was loud and clear that a kitchen cabinet was running the government without the knowledge of the late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare.

At that time, the majority of the Members of Parliament, called for and wanted change. I was only an instrument of change at that time as I took lead and stood out so let us all not start the blame game. It is a time of mourning.

Some accused me of storming into the Chief Justice Chamber in the Court Room but, I want my accusers to view videos of the sitting in Parliament which I described the late Grand Chief, 'as a stranger in the house'. It was somebody else who introduced the description and I echoed the description and I own up to that, to my deep regret. And I am sorry for what I said to our founding father Sir Michael Thomas Somare. I would like to extend my apologies to Sana, Arthur, Junior Michael, Bertha, Dulciana and Lady Veronica, to the people of East and West Sepik and the people of our beautiful country

That said. After the induction of the Eighth Parliament in 2012, I rose on the Floor of Parliament during my Maiden Speech as Leader of Opposition then and apologized to the Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare, Lady Veronica and family, to the people of East and West Sepik and to wider Papua New Guinea. I also apologized for my behaviour towards the then Chief Justice, Sir Salamo Injia, both in Parliament and personally so if people in this country still have any grudges against me, I take the opportunity of this special occasion of the passing of our Sana – the Peacemaker, to forgive them and I beg them for their forgiveness.

## **06/01**

I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely apologise and say sorry to the Right Honourable, Sir Julius Chan, Lady Stella, his children and family and the people of New Ireland and Papua New Guinea for my part in the Sandline crises which has now brought lasting peace to our people of Bougainville which at that time interrupted Sir Julius Chan's political career. I apologise to Sir Julius Chan

I also extend my sincere apologies and say sorry to the former Chief Justice, Sir Salamo Injia, his wife and children, the people of Tsak Valley, the people of Wapenamanda, the people of Enga province, the Judiciary and Papua New Guinea for storming into the Chief Justice's court room during the 2011 political impasse. I am sorry!

I know, I have already apologised and said sorry to Sir Julius Chan and Sir Salamo Injia personally and publicly before but I am doing it again today for peace and unity to prevail in our country in this very special occasion.

I ask that you all forgive me. The late Right Honourable Grand Chief, Sir Michael Thomas Somare, I have made my peace with him, he forgave me and accepted me as his son. That was one of the greatest mark of this great man and the Father of our Nation. He fought his battles fiercely and gave his as good as he got, together or alone. In Government or in the Opposition, lose or win, but always in the end, he had the ability to embrace and to forgive.

He is the great Sana of Papua New Guinea. That's what he taught us. He taught us to forgive in a country divided by tribal differences, with more than 1200 tribes and 800 plus different languages, but he had the ability to manage because he had the trait of forgiveness. Forgiveness was the magic, our Grand Chief used to unite our beautiful nation. Forgiveness is what we must carry forward as one of the greatest gifts from our founding father.

He will be long remembered as the only Prime Minister in our country who has ever pardoned the citizens of our country. He pardoned the then Member for Manus Open, the late Nahau Rooney in the 1980s, he also pardoned Captain Belden Norman Namah, Captain Bola Rennagi, Captain Linus Osoba on their part in the Sandline Crises on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September, on the eve of our Independence in 2005. I am one of the major beneficiaries of his decision and I owe it to my Sepik Kwila, my Sana, my father. Forgiveness will be the virtue and memory I treasure about our Grand Chief, Sir Michael Thomas Somare, my Sepik Kwila, my Sana, my father.

I offer my sincere condolences of my family, my people of Vanimu-Green River district and myself to lady Veronica, my brothers Sana, Authur and Michael Junior, and my sisters Bertha, Dulciana and all the grandchildren and relatives of our great Sana, the people of East and West Sepik, to the people of our beautiful country I offer my sincerely condolences to the Late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare.

**07/01**

Farewell my greatest teacher. Farewell my Sana. Farewell my Sepik Kwila. Farewell my Father. May his soul rest in peace.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.



**Sir BOB DADAE** (Governor-General) – Speaker of Parliament, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Leader of the Opposition, Members of Cabinet and Members of Parliament, former leaders who are sitting in the Gallery, Judges of the Supreme and National courts, Members of Foreign Diplomatic Corp, Members of the Community, immediate family members of our Founding Father Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare, Lady Veronica and the children, people East and West Sepik and people of Papua New Guinea who are listening throughout the nation.

I stand here before you to pay tribute on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second and the Queen of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, thank you for calling this Special Parliament to give honour and respect to our Founding Father Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare who lies in State for the final time.

Our Founding Father was not an ordinary leader. At best, he inherited Chieftaincy title as both warrior and a peace maker from his father. Our Grand Chief was a warrior of a different kind. His charismatic words were as powerful as a sharp spear that penetrated the hearts and minds of people and those who were in colonial administration to transfer the power of Shelf-Government and Independence which was successfully achieved on 16 September 1975.

In his own words this was what he had to say about Independence. 'While others are thinking in terms of decades, I am talking about few years. As a great peacemaker and Sana he succeeded self-determination peacefully. As the PNG flag was about to be raised for the first time, on that historical moment at Sir Hubert Murray Stadium, this is what our first Governor-General Sir John Guise said in his first Independence Message. 'We are lowering the flag of Australia, not tearing it down.'

**08/01**

This is short but meaningful statement reflected a very smooth transition of mandate for political rule without revolution of bloodshed, a trend which is quite evident in many other colonies.

The peaceful power is indeed transfer of powers indeed a manifestation of extraordinary leadership of our Grand Chief as warrior and peace maker, Sana. Our Founding Father, Prime Minister did not only unit a Nation of hundred tribes and over 800 languages but equal importantly, he positions PNGs mark in the International fund as doing number of things.

For example; he forced binding relationship with rest of the world with the policy of friend to all and enemy to none.

**09/01**

But in all national elections that followed until he graciously called it quits in 2017 in doing so he set a record of longest serving member in Parliament in west Minister System of Government.

When he was first mandated to House of Assembly in the Colonial Government of Papua and New Guinea he was simply Honourable Michael Somare, today the nation will return him respectably to his homeland as founding father of this nation, The Rt Hon Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare *GCL GCMG CH CF SSI KStJ KSG PC* not forgetting a number of honorary doctors who received here and abroad for his distinguished services. Our Grand Chief and founding father of this nation wisely sows his final resting place at Kreer Heights in Wewak so that history does not become a memorable path but rather it becomes a living villa the place that he called home and raised his loving family and received mandate from his people to steer whole of Papua New Guinea his story will become a thought of knowledge, an inspiration for the generation that comes after us. The greater Papua New Guinea and the International community must also about his great leadership of this great leader of our time.

Firstly, I take this opportunity to thank the Prime Minister and his government for declaring 26 February of each year as Remembrance Day for our founding father, I must also commend the Government for the commitment made to erect a monument here in the vicinity of the Parliament to remember our Grand Chief.

Secondly, I would like to thank the Government and the people of Morobe for the commitment that they have made to declare Nadzab Airport to Sir Michael Somare International Airport when completed, it is a fitting reflection what Grand Chief means to the people of Morobe in his belt he is a Tolai son, in his blood he is a Sepik son, in Papua New Guinea he is a Grand chief, the founding father and if I may add, in Morobe, he is a solan and gasika, why are his roots in education and established man of Politics and Political Party.

Most importantly, we are so grateful and deeply indebted to Lady Veronica and the Children we want to thank you all for sharing your husband and fathers love with us, the 8 million people of Papua New Guinea, *Mama Veronica*, "*yu wanpela stronpela meri*" your faithfulness, love and loyalty to your husband made it possible for your dear husband to serve

this country faithfully with sheer determination to the end of his political career and this is what Grand Chief had to say about his one and only dear spouse, Lady Veronica.

**10/01**

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge great contributions by other founding fathers towards achieving self-governance. There are too many to name individually, but I cannot simply ignore one group of leaders; the Mataungan Association of East New Britain and the visionary leaders in the likes of Oscar Tammur and John Kaputin.

I want to say thank you for organising that memorable protest march in Rabaul in 1970 to petition the then Australian Prime Minister John Gorton - who was paying a visit - to grant independence to Papua New Guinea.

To Australia, we say thank you and also to Prime Minister Gough Whitlam who stood with Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare and Sir John Kaputin.

Finally, to our 8 million people out there, I cannot thank you enough for turning up in numbers, young and old, in the four corners of our country in true Melanesian fashion to openly grieve and shed tears to demonstrate your love for our founding father and Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare.

This is the biggest hauskarai ever held in Papua New Guinea's history.

In closing, the message that our Grand Chief has left for the young leaders today - if you want to emulate his footsteps - is and I quote; 'accountability, humility and patience sit at the centre of any kind of success,' unquote.

Thank you Grand Chief, may you rest in eternal peace.

Thank you Mama Veronica and the children. Thank you people of East and West Sepik. Thank you people of Papua New Guinea. Tenk yu tumas. Tanikiu badaherea.

May God bless the Somare family. May God bless the people of East and West Sepik. May God bless the people of Papua New Guinea. Our Grand Chief, rest in eternal peace.

**11/01**

**Sir GIBBS SALIKA** (Chief Justice of Papua New Guinea) – Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers of State, the Leader of the Opposition, Members of the Opposition and Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, firstly, I want to thank you and Members of Parliament for granting effectuancy and myself leave to enter the sacred chambers of Parliament. Thank you Members of Parliament for giving us that leave to enter your domain.

There were two former Prime Ministers who have gone before the founding father of our nation. This is one of those occasions where we are all gathered here as leaders of this country to bid farewell to the founding father of our nation, the right honourable Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare with all the titles that he has been bestowed, we acknowledge them.

This is a momentous occasion for Papua New Guinea because this is our founding father that we have come to mourn and come to gather here. It is an important occasion for this country but it is only fitting that our leadership farewell our founding father in this House that he built. Without any further due, we the people of Papua New Guinea united in one culture and tradition pay homage to the founding father of Papua New Guinea the now late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare.

Today in death, Sir Michael unites us as a people and as a united country. Before independence was attained this country was fragmented into Papuans, into New Guineans, Highlanders, Simbus, Goilalas, the Tavis, the Kiwais, the Gorabaris, the Mekeos, the Tolais, the Sepiks, the Rigos and you name it. In fact our forefathers were just coming out of our own little worlds hidden in our bushes and in our mountains to an open wide world.

Each of those fragmented groups had their own leaders and the form of leadership they lead but out of those mountains and out of those valleys and out of those bushes they came. On the 1 October, 1960, the *Pacific Islands* monthly magazine reported this article and I quote, "Papua – New Guinea on the Road of Autonomy" 1960. Natives are to be elected for the first time through a system of electoral conferences in each electorate. This method to be used only during only a transitional period." That was the beginning of a statement that was to come into reality not so long later.

**12/01**

Here we are in the peoples Parliament where decisions, policies and laws are made and we thank the foresight of our fore fathers who at that time made the call for an independent nation. A lot has being said since the passing of our late leader and our late chief which deservedly show. He was allocated a small matchbox government house at Silkut Street, Hohola opposite the now Papua New Guinea Power Headquarters. Those of you who have bought Tuesdays *National Newspaper* would have seen the photographs of his old house and the current owner of the house.

I mentioned this last Wednesday evening at the Haus Krai. I think Sir Michael at that time was at Administration College and he was also working in Parliament as well. Last Wednesday night, I said one thing that may have made Sir Michael Thomas Somare to fast track the fight for independence that he was living in a matchbox house. Dwelling in a matchbox house in his own country.

He has also considered his people living the way he was in a matchbox house while others were living in high covenant houses. As he was going around Port Moresby scoping the area only to see that no Papua New Guineans were living in high covenant houses. So, he was determined to free Papua New Guinea of domination, oppression and suppression. He succeeded in doing that.

Today you see Papua New Guinea people living in high covenant houses right throughout Port Moresby City and all over Papua New Guinea. Who do you give credit to? The man who lies in state right now. He fought for you and me to live in high covenant houses on the mountain tops and hillsides so, that we could live in freedom in those places.

There were other factors like signs at Ela Beach Hotels and other places which read "black people are not allowed". No native was human enough to enter into those places. Even Ela Beach was not opened to the natives. No one was man enough to go against those discriminatory and racist notices.

My father was a labourer at the Koitaki Rubber Plantation and he was not treated like a human being. He was not allowed into beer bars where alcohol was served and he was not allowed to do anything that was only restricted to other racist. That is the kind of domination, oppression and suppression that my father faced, but he was too scared to do anything for fear of losing his life.

This was burning in Sir Michael's heart to free you and me which he did. He led the fight from the front; the Murik Lake Sana, the Sukindimi.

Sir Michael Thomas Somare chose Constitutional and Parliamentary Democracy for Papua New Guinea rather than a Presidential style of democracy.

**13/01**

He used the Pangu Party machineries to do all these things and he had in his vision Independence, Somare united all our not so much confiscated and educated leaders to forge this nation we call today as Papua New Guinea. A thousand tribes and nations all united to create a nation called Papua New Guinea. Our Founding fathers of which Sir Michael Somare was the principal architect declared a fundamental principle upon which PNG would stand

on. They were, all power belongs to the people, we must have respect for the dignity of an individual and community interdependent to be the basic principals of our society.

You and I were to guide with our lives, our PNG national identity, integrity and respect. We were to reject violent and seek consensus to solve our disputes. We were to work hard with total honesty to create our national wealth which was to be equally shared by all. Those are set out in the national goals and directive principles in our *Constitution* and those are; integral human development, equality and participation, national sovereignty and self-reliance, natural resources and environment, PNG ways to achieve development using PNG forms of social, political and economic organisations.

At Independence, we are acquired fundamental rights and freedoms individually and collectively regardless of race, places of origin, color, sex and creed. Those rights and freedoms were to be subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others. Basic rights that were not accorded to our people were accorded to our people at Independence and they were the right to life itself, liberty, security, protection of the law, the right to take part in political activities, freedom from inhuman treatment, freedom of conscience, thought and religion, freedom of information, freedom of assembly and an association, freedom of movement, freedom of employment, protection of the houses and other properties, protection from unjust deprivation of property. Those are another form of liberations the founding father late Somare wanted and achieved.

Today, you and I can enter into any beer bars, hotels and taverns where there are no longer discriminations. Nobody can stop us from entering those places. Who do we thank? One of our founding fathers is right here sleeping that we thank him and the other founding fathers for giving us these freedoms for enshrining them in our *Constitution* because under our *Constitution* those freedoms can be enforced. If we didn't have them in the *Constitution*, those freedoms would not be enforced. Our forefathers, when I read the debates of the House of Assembly and the constituent assembly debates, I saw the reason now why they included all these rights in the *Constitution* because they had the foresight that if we did not include them in the *Constitution*, governments and other more authoritative people would trend and trend on the toes of the less fortunate people. Our founding fathers were tired of being suppressed and oppressed in their own land.

Today the entire world is not yet free from such dominations and oppressions and you don't have to look far to see that. Today we can understand where our founding fathers were coming from and today we can understand their desire to have a free and democratic society.

14/01

Our leaders like Sir Michael Somare, chattered a course for us 45 years into our journey. We are in control of our own destiny. Thanks again to Sir Michael Somare and our founding fathers.

At Independence, amidst scepticism and doubt whether Papua New Guinea would survive and move forward into a living thriving democracy? That was always the talk of the world, without any experience whatsoever would they survive? Those were the questions.

Sir Michael ensured that his envisage of free democracy was achieved. A free democratic people but subject to the rule of law.

Sir Michael was able to recruit people like the late Sir Anthony Siaguru, Rabbie Namaliu and the late Sir Mekere Morauta Charles Lepani who now were famously known as PNGs gang of four. These men and others graduated from the University of PNG in the 1968 as raw intents employed by the Government. By then also Joseph Awai the first Papua New Guinean lawyer had just graduated from Australia and was also was back here in Papua New Guinea. Sir Buri Kidu followed soon after from him and Bernard Narokobi also followed soon after from thereon. Those three graduated early those times from the University of Australia.

Joseph Awai and Sir Buri Kidu from Queensland University and Bernard Narokobi from the University of New South Wales in Australia. They were handy.

Other Papua New Guineas were encouraged to work hard in all honesty and there was at that time no corruption and they helped the CTC in what is now referred to as the final report of the Constitutional Planning Committee.

The Constitutional Planning Committee we are told was made up of 15 Members of the House of Assembly, a representative body of Members of the Four Regions.

The Constitution was drafted amidst pockets of political pressure movements namely the Papua Besena, the Mataungan Association of East New Britain, the Kabifa Wali movement of the Trobriand Islands and the moves by Bougainvilleans for succession. Those pockets of political movements were very strong.

The vision of the Members of the Constitutional Planning Committee was ultimately PNG must become an egalitarian with fairness equality, fair play and opportunity for all, human dignity equal work and social obligation were all a part of that vision of Somare, Guise and Momis that Papua New Guinea was to be built on its cultural heritage and ancestral foundations. The dream was to free Papua New Guinea from all forms of domination of oppression and suppression not by the sword but by the rule of law.

Our leaders than wished for a constitutional Parliamentary democracy and they got it by participatory consultation and through consensus again using the rule of law and not by the sword.

I raise these questions today that, are we still focused on achieving the goals of what sir Michael and others fought for? That is create and egalitarian society. Have we as a nation achieved the egalitarian society they craved for in their vision and their dreams? As a nation are we still focused of achieving the national gaols and directive principles in achieving real human development? Are we focused on achieving the basic social obligations that he Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare and others fought for passionately enshrined in the Preamble of our Constitution. The Constitution has been tested many times and yet it wins all the time and has won every challenge so far.

**15/01**

In 1979 after the Rooney crisis, expatriate judges resigned and returned to go home. Somare effectively said okay, Papua New Guinea lets step up and do the judging ourselves. At the end of that same year in December, he appointed Sir Mari Kapi as our first National National Court and the Supreme Court judge that was at the end of December 1979.

Soon thereafter, in early 1980, the then Chief Justice Sir Willian Francis was retiring and was to go home again Somare took the challenge brought in Sir Buri Kidu as his first National Chief Justice of the Natoinal Court and Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea.

Somare has answered all the challenges that has been thrown at him. Soon thereafter William Kaputin, Arnold Amet, Kubulan Los, Konilio ToMarum followed to be appointed judges of the Supreme Court and National Court.

All brought about those changes fast tracked Independence, fast tracked the appointment of our national chief justice, fast tracked appointment of judges . The challenges that Somare and the others faced at that time were enormous yet he met those challenges and today we look back and say yes he made the right decisions and he made the right call at the right time.

Today we are a free and proud nation with a vibrant political climate and we hope in the not so distant future that our economy will improve to move further into the future.

Mr Speaker I urge all of you our political leadership and other leadership including the judicial leadership to keep striving to create that fair society, that egalitarian society that our founding fathers foresaw and wanted. Let us create that evasive egalitarian society that



Somare and other founding fathers fought for and envisioned. I will leave those questions that I post earlier for us to ponder over from now and into the future.

To the Somare Family, Lady Veronica, your children and grandchildren, the Deputy Chief Justice, judges and myself as the Chief Justice with our families thank you for giving us your husband, father and grand father and sharing him with us also as our father, uncle, grand father all these years up to the time of his death.

To the people of Murik Lake and Karau Village thank you for sharing your son with the rest of Papua New Guinea and the world as well.

To the people of East Sepik, through you the East Sepik Governor, we thank you the people of East Sepik and those who are listening for returning Sir Michael into parliament for the 49 years that he gave and served us all. Although he was here a representative but he served us all to give Papua New Guinea its identity and freedom

The freedom and identity that we enjoy today we owe it to our leader, our Sana and our Sukundumi. Sir Michael our father, uncle, may your soul rest in eternal peace. Thank you. Yawo!

**16/01**

**Sir JULIUS CHAN** (New Ireland) – Mr Speaker, the Right Honourable Governor-General Sir Bob Dadae, the Chief Justice, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea and former Prime Ministers and honourable members.

I want to acknowledge and I speak on behalf of the people of Papua New Guinea that the accord given to the first Prime Minister of this country and I am very certain that Lady Veronica and her family really appreciate such a dignified farewell to a good Papua New Guinean.

Mr Speaker, today, I want to somehow capture or explain what the loss in the last week has meant to me and I think mean to the country.

Our country has lost a champion in Sir Michael Somare, I have lost a dear friend and colleague. It is hard to believe that Sir Michael has been such a part of Papua New Guinea and my life and now he is gone but, what a life he lived.

Who could have foreseen that the birth of a man child in Rabaul, nearly 85 years ago was a beginning of a journey that would not only carry a man child through a turmoil of exciting life but would as well lead to a birth of a new nation, a nation unlike any other nation ever born in the history of the world. But those events were fated to occur when Sir Michael Somare was born in Rabaul on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1936 and begin a remarkable life journey over

the course of the next 85 years. And, you know I was there for much of that trip where we go back a bit Sir Michael and I.

I first met Sir Michael when we were both running for the elections in the Second House of Assembly in 1968 which is 53 years ago now. For 53 years Sir Michael and I went through the triumphs and the tragedies not only of politics but of life itself. For 53 years we laughed together and yes many times cried together but even in fact especially during the tough times Sir Michael always knew that he had my shoulder to lean on and I always knew that I had his shoulder to lean on. Sir Michael was a pillar of strength for me and I hope I was a source of strength for him.

You know, I believe some men are born for a higher purpose. There are some men who are born to fly, who have faith that could soar above the crowd and Sir Michael was such a man. He was an eagle who soared above all of us, he was a man with a dream and a vision. And our biggest dream of all, a dream that at first seemed to be too fantastic to ever come through was the dream that the Territories of Papua and New Guinea could unite. Not only unite but unite as an independent country, a Member of the World of Nations standing on our own two feet equal to any in the world. Self-determination to take responsibility of ourselves.

## 17/01

They said it could not be done, but Sir Michael put together a crew of government in 1972 that would take us to our goal of Independence. The crew included not only Somare but myself and John Kaputin from the islands, Iambakey Okuk from the Highlands, John Guise from Milne Bay, Albert Maori Kiki from Gulf.

It took leaders from all parts of the country to be creating unity out of diversity. That small group set sail for a goal that we could dimly see at that time but with a clear vision of what we wanted to desperately to achieve. And even then, there was no question who was the captain of the ship.

I said before, Sir Michael was born to soar and to take the people of Papua New Guinea to heights they have never dreamed of but this was only because Sir Michael worked harder than most. I remember he worked late into the night, every night, often until midnight. I am reminded of the old saying by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *'the heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight, but they, while companions slept were toiling upward in the night'*. Sir Michael, toiled late into the night, more nights than I have ever seen any man toil.

Those first years from 1972 to 1978 were the greatest years of creativity, cooperation and commitment to opening Papua New Guinea to the world. Together we took on the greatest challenge in the history of any country, the challenge to be independent and to be free. There was much to do if we were going to achieve that but we did it. We gained the recognition and endorsement of the United Nations; we created our own central bank – Bank of Papua New Guinea. We bought out the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and established our own commercial bank – the PNGBC; and formally introduced our kina and toea on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1975, five months prior to Independence.

We gained entry to the ADB, the IMF; we became a part of the world economic community. And though it all, Sir Michael was the captain of the ship at sail and he steered us safely to the haven of Independence.

Let us recognise the huge achievement this was. Captain was dealing with a land of a thousand cultures and the land of over 800 languages; a land in which relations among neighbouring tribes and clans had historically been more violent than peaceful and cooperative. Just think about it, United Nations had only 193 countries as members but the territory of Papua and New Guinea had nearly a thousand different nations and thousand different cultures and almost every one of them with their own languages. We have five times as many languages as there were countries in the United Nations. Now that is, Mr Speaker – the Tower of Babel. That is what Michael Somare confronted, in his quest, united the territories of Papua and New Guinea into a single nation, that is what we all confronted but Somare was the Captain and he had to take control. It was not only the internal challenges, but Michael had to deal with the colonial power – Australia. Many in Australia were not ready for Independence for Papua New Guinea, but led by Sir Michael Somare, we coolly and calmly dealt with Australian leaders such as Goff Whitlam. Malcolm Fraser and Peacock and others in the region moving us ever closer to Independence. Those of you who were not there have no idea of the climate.

**18/01**

This country was not even constructed. How many of you listening today have remember the Bougainville Independence Movement, the Mataungan Association, Papua Besena and in New Ireland the Independence Group.

Our country was splitting apart almost before it even came together but our captain was Somare and our captain was born to fly. So to his testament he fought for the destiny of Papua New Guinea.

The *Constitution* of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea could really emphasise it and put the welfare of the people of this nation first. Thanks to the leadership of Sir Michael we constructed a country dedicated to the people and not to special interests. And thanks to Sir Michael this country was born in peace.

The same time that PNG was being created many other countries around the world were being born in pain of blood, in the agonies of torment and angers of war. But not Papua New Guinea.

Sir Michael guided this country of a thousand cultures to Independence from its colonial masters without the loss of a single life in the Independence struggle. That is why we are here in this Chamber of people today.

We are here to thank God above for sending us a leader, a liberator who had the spiritual tenet to lead us into the new world of Independence and self-reliance. But now the unthinkable has happened. Now, our captain is gone. We must carry on without him. Everything we have today, our freedom, our Independence, our strong proud country, we owe it to Sir Michael. But he can no longer join us in this celebration of freedom.

I have called Somare our captain, Mr Speaker, and that he was. It reminds me of what Bothe Whitman has to say in a poem he wrote on the death of Abraham Lincoln.

Whitman called Lincoln his captain and said, O captain, my captain, rise up and hear the bells. Rise up, for you the flag is flung, is flung. For you the bugle shrilled. For you bouquets and ribbon wreaths, for you the shores are crowding, for you they call the Swaying Mass, the Eagle's face is turning. I wish Sir Michael could rise and join us today. The nation is calling for him for he was our captain. He will be sorely missed, but Mr Speaker, Sir Michael will never die in our hearts.

Each time we celebrate our country, each time we celebrate our Independence, our freedom we will celebrate Sir Michael Somare. We thank you, Sana, from the entire country and thank you from me, you old friend, your old team mate. I think my friend that we have made a good team. And I think our country has benefitted from our efforts. We can ask no more than that.

I will never forget the last time we were together. It was on Independence Day in Kavieng last year. It was ironic, Mr Speaker, but I now know that on that day we were saying goodbye for the last time.

19/01

I cannot think of a more appropriate day than Independence so say goodbye to my best friend in the creation of Papua New Guinea. We will never forget you my brother sleep and rest now. Before I conclude I want to must again thank the Prime Minister and his Government for giving such a dignify farewell to Great Man so let him rest in peace. God Bless You.

**Mr PAIAS WINGTI** (Western Highlands) – Thank you, Mr Speaker, your Excellency the Governor General, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, the Chief Justice, for all the Ministers, Members and people of Papua New Guinea. The two important days in life, one is the day of born and the other is the day he passed away. Sir Michael Somare was born on the 1936 and he passed away on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2021 this month. Surely his pashed of life, effect he has on society, the influence he had in our country and in the so huge.

The last 14 days, many has paid condolences within the country, within the region and they described in many ways. Somare was born to be a leader, he was born leader. When he went to school and became a teacher and later became a broadcasting officer. Some of the big influences that I had on him, there were influences that effect on him with shape him.

Has he going to school in Sogeri, he met a lot of good Papua New Guinean team, they were young, they were Papua New Guinea. They were going to school, seeing what their country was like, how they experience it and what our relationship was with our colonial masters and so while over there, there were many other influences that were taking place.

They see how other countries become of British Empire at many colonies in Africa region. They seeing these changes, that black people, those countries were slow to become independent. The counties like Ghana got independence in 1957. Close by they see Malaysia become independent in 1957, that made Somare was deserved, Somare was a magnet that got Papua New Guinean young together and he started his gang.

When he came into the administration college in 1955, it was another young Australian, Bob Hawk was states officer with the ACC Australian surgeon. Bob Hawk was young and he was from the Labour Party. That Labour Party in Australia were more progressive, they were international, they were not in the Government at that time in 1965.

Somare became a politician in 1968 that shaped it but that lay the foundation because he was in a region where he was able to picking up the country, the region, Indonesia, Singapore, Australia and the Pacific. He could see that so the relations he built with the Labour Party was so critical to the independence of this country.

20/01

Mr Bob Hawk became the ACTU President in 1969 that was the time Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare became a Member of Parliament in 1968 and that strong relationship with the Labor Party was so fundamental to the success of this country.

When he became Member of Parliament in 1968, there were certain changes taking place, Tanzania another country in Africa became Independent, Julius Nyerere became the Prime Minister for Tanzania, in Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta became President in 1963 and close by Singapore Lee Kuan Yew became Prime Minister in 1965, in 1967 there was another nation event that took place in Indonesia, Sukarno, the founding President was removed by General Suwato. These were all happening within their region when Somare was a young man, Somare could see that, see where his country would be and he was a magnet that brought other Papua New Guineans likeminded together, the country was not ready, Papua New Guinea was not ready for Independence because in Australia the Minty Government that ruled Australia for many years but there was the External Affairs Minister called Steve Barnes who said that Papua New Guinea will never get Independence.

Luckily in 1972 through Bob Hawk was president for Trade Union Movement for Australia that Labor Party came into Government in 1972, before 1972 Gough Whitlam was Opposition Leader and travelled throughout Papua New Guinea in 1971, he went to Rabaul and John Kaputin and Oscar Tammur were there and he told them your country will get independence when I get into government, luckily in 1972 the Labor Party came into Government Australia, the rest was history, Gough Whitlam was an International aid, Gough Whitlam was a non-racist, Gough Whitlam was a right man in that reason, he pushed Papua New Guinea to gain Independence and in 1972 we were moving in the right direction, thanks a lot to Sir Michael Somare, Sir Julius Chan, Sir Iambakey Okuk, Ebia Olewale, Dr Taureka and many others they were the founding fathers who took our country forward in 1972. These changes were so critical in our country.

Mr Speaker, the most important which I believe in 1974 was the constitutional planning committee, the grand chief knew that he had to build a house, what kind of house he must build? The house must look after the constitution of Papua New Guinea that is the house, that is what the foundation is, that is where they are. that is where the branches are, he said so much about Papua New Guineans, Paul Arek, John Kaputin, John Kaupa, Mataiabe Yuwi, Mackenzie Dauge and many others. They travelled right throughout the world they went to Tanzania, to African countries, they went all over, they travelled all Papua New Guinea throughout our country, Somare was smart, he knew he had to put this out together, what is

he going to create, the creation to make sure the constitution was right. The constitution is the foundation he gave priority to that.

That is why, today, when we pay our respect to this great man, Chief. When we respect him, we must think about what he has laid down for us.

The constitution is so clear, the executive government makes sure its clear, the courts, the parliament, what are the powers, what are the functions, he stated it clear and most detailed constitution, Somare was clear, Somare was clear; the Executive cannot interfere with the Courts and the Courts cannot interfere with the Parliament.

**21/01**

The separation of powers is clear. Today, when we pay respect we must think about what we will do from now onwards. Honourable members, we can honour him through this.

The Prime Minister of the country must know that he cannot interfere with the Police on operational matters. The Prime Minister of the country must know that he cannot interfere with the Courts. The Prime Minister of the country must know that he cannot interfere with the Ombudsman Commission. He is the policy maker; he is not supposed to interfere with the institutions that Somare built. And the same applies; Parliament cannot interfere with the Executive Government and the Courts cannot as well.

Our founding father, Michael Thomas Somare, created this to protect our country. Every prime minister and every minister must know that when we interfere with the Police on operational matters, we are weakening the system that Somare built because the powerful and the rich will manipulate and control while the silent majority will be marginalised. That is not Somare's dream. Somare's dream is to make sure there is justice, fairness and that things are operated properly in our country.

All I want us to do today is to pay great respect to the Grand Chief. I came to know him in 1977. In 1975, I was at university. Those were the exciting times. He was an inspiring leader who inspired the young ones and all of us.

My first time to meet the Grand Chief – Sir James Seeto who use to own Lings Freezers and Late Sir Cecil Abel, Charles' father, worked closely with Somare. I was at the university when my student mates asked me to go for the elections so I had to go and see Sir Cecil Abel who introduced me to Sir Maori Kiki. I went to meet Sir Maori Kiki and that was the time I met the Grand Chief with a group of young men. The impact that he had on me had changed me and made me who I am today.

Today, members of Parliament, we have a big responsibility to our country. All of you have a big responsibility to this young country. Power must be exercised with care. Power does not mean you are custodian of the people. Power must be exercised with care in everything we do.

Look at this great man in front of us today, he has lived a simple life, he has done all the right things, he is our best teacher. And in his death, we can only learn from him. The way we can honour him is through our respect for the *Constitution* and respect for all the institutions that he has set up. Those who are appointed as police commissioner, you must always know that you are a constitutional office holder and you are not to carry out instructions of a minister or prime minister on operational matters. The chief ombudsman commissioners must know that you are not there to be manipulated and carry out instructions of politicians. You are there to do a job. The public prosecutor is there to do a job. The Courts must do the same, and if we all do this right, our people and our country will be safe.

**22/01**

Lady Veronica, Arthur, Bertha, Sana, Michael Junior. My time to meet and sit with Sir Grand Chief was at the funeral service of Sir Mekere. He was in the middle and I was sitting on the side with the Prime Minister on the other. I sat with him and then when we finished the service, I said goodbye to him. I told him I was going to the Independence Hill to witness the body of late Sir Mek laid to rest. That was the only time I met. The second time, I want to come and pay him a visit on the 26<sup>th</sup>. I told my son Nathan Wingti to get in touch with the Somare boys and let them know, I am coming down to him. I flew down on Thursday afternoon which was the last flight from Mt Hagen. I came down and Nathan gave a call for Arthur, Sana and Dulcie who answered. I told her, I am coming to pay a visit to my friend. Is he there? Can I come to the hospital? Dulcie said, Papa em mipla putim em long intensive care. Yu kam long moning taim na mi kisim yu go lukim em (Dad, we have moved him to the intensive care unit. You come in the morning and I will take you to see him). On that day, I was thinking a lot and went to sleep. The next day when I woke up, the first news that I got was on ABC. I didn't see him. I came to see him but I didn't.

He was a great Papua New Guinean. On behalf of all the people of Papua New Guinea, Grand Chief you have influenced the lives of all our people in the country. I join Sir Julius Chan on behalf of everyone, pay our biggest respect and also thank the people of East Sepik



and to the people of Murik. I also want to mention another former politician Sir Peter Lus. He was so instrumental in getting Somare into Parliament. With this Rest in Peace.

**Mr PETER O'NEILL** (Ialibu-Pangia) – Thank you Mr Speaker, your Excellency, the Governor-General of Papua New Guinea, the Chief Justice of Papua New Guinea, Prime Minister, distinguish leaders and our guests.

We are here joining millions and millions of Papua New Guineans paying our respect to great Melanesian Leader. A leader who has served his country well for over 50 years as a teacher, broadcaster, Member of Parliament, Member of the Legislative Assembly, Prime Minister, Minister of State, Opposition Leader and many capacities that we now come to acknowledge his huge lifelong contributions to the nation building of our country.

We express our sympathies and our condolences to the family in particular Lady Veronica and the children and their grandchildren, the people of East Sepik in particular the people of Murik Lakes who have shared this great man with the country and our people. His achievements are many but all we can do is express our gratitude for the service he has done for our country and our people.

We all know that he has brought us through many turbulent times in particularly when we were under the administration of our colonial administrators in attaining self-government in 1973 and then subsequently independence in 1975. Some of us or many of us who are here in this Honourable Parliament have worked closely with Sir Michael either as his minister or member of his government or Member of Parliament. We spent many years hearing all these stories that today have been recalled by both our senior leaders about the struggles of a country trying to find its identity in this global community.

**23/01**

The colonial administration was not easy for all Papua New Guineans. And Sir Michael Somare use to tell many of our colleagues here, about the treatments that he used to get under that administration.

It is no wonder that it drove in to try and get the recognition that our people truly deserved. He was able to do this because of his up-bringing in the Murik lakes; up-bringing has a chief and a leader of his tribe and his people; up-bringing has a strong Christian believer and a strong family man that he was. Those particular trades served him very well.

He was able to unite a country, united country as diverse has ours. Our country is one of the most unique countries in the world. There are not as many tribes in any other country

in the world as ours; not many different cultures, not many different languages and of course the diversity of our country itself.

It is a challenge for any man. We are thankful that our country was able to have Sir Michael leading us at that time. We must be thankful for the efforts that he has put in, forging together all this diversity and different cultures to form a united country that we are now enjoying today. A country that is progressing very well and we are achieving many of the dreams that he had for our country.

Mr Speaker, in those times Sir Michael use to recall that there were not many doctors, lawyers or not many pilots or no pilots at all. There was hardly an educated population in our country except, for a very few leaders who graduated from the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) and were given the position of responsibility. Even without working experience but, Sir Michael was able to guide them through some of the great things that they have achieved in our country.

That is largely due to this great man who is lying here today. We owe it to him that we have achieved independence in a very peaceful manner. We are now living in a very harmonious society; united society and a very strong democratic society as well Mr Speaker.

Even after achieving independence in many other countries around the world, that have similar experience as ours have gone through turbulent times in the instability of governments and institutions that they represent. But, for over 46 years our country has been able to hold together and as strong as ever. Despite changes of governments and different political opinions, we have been able to maintain the Independent State that we continue to have in this country.

Mr Speaker, Sir Michael is certainly deserving of the work and affection as part of our country. As two of our senior leaders have stated, he has forged that constitution that we are enjoying today, which is quite unique compared to any other parts of the world.

Our constitution guarantees our identity and protects our cultures, languages and protects our individual rights. It gives us equal and opportunity and participation in our country. And this is because of the foundations laid by our founding fathers and especially under the leadership of Sir Michael himself.

This constitution has been tested on many occasions but, we have been able to weather them. We are stronger today because of those experiences that we have had.

Mr Speaker, it does not matter how many times we change governments but, the guiding points and plans that Sir Michael has set. Particularly on the eighth point plan that he

introduced to our country in 1972, today guide the policy formulation of every government since independence.

**24/01**

It talks about guaranteeing equal participation for all our citizens making sure that they participate meaningfully in their economy at equal access to services that the government provides. To make sure that we are self-reliant and ensuring that the independence of government institution that we have built over the years.

Mr Speaker, in part of the Eight Point Plan when you read carefully, it also talks about things that we are now talking about in this world today. It talks about participation of women in our society, it is one of the main factors mentioned in the Eight Point Plan about women participating meaningfully. This is because of the vision of leaders like Sir Michael and his founding leaders had in this country.

Mr Speaker, a lot needs to be given credit to Sir Michael and in particular also some of the foreign policies and foreign relations that we have established right across the country. As Sir Julius has talked about IMF and World Bank but also the countries that we have established a very good strong relationship with. Australia, United States, China, Japan, United Kingdom and many more.

These are countries that Sir Michael was able to forge very strong relationships with that subsequent governments continue to follow his path. Follow the policy that he has set in being friends to all, enemy to none. That policy still stands today as we speak. This is credit to a leader in our Melanesian Society with his experiences he is able to forge that where even and despite disagreements, we always find common grounds. This is an example that Sir Michael has shown us. Finding common grounds and making sure that we own the decisions that we make. Mr Speaker, yet an opportunity to ensure that our country's stability was maintained at all times. Yes, at times we served in governments together, in times we were on opposing sides, we had different political views but that did not stop him to make sure that he maintained a cordially friendly relationship with every Member of this Honourable Parliament.

Mr Speaker, he had a big forgiving heart and the capacity to forgive was with him. That is why he was able to maintain a strong leadership for over 49 years. Much of it was not Prime Minister. For only 17 years that he was a Prime Minister but for 32 years he was serving in

other capacities. This is a man who is committed to loving his country and his people and that is why we are here today to pay the respects that he deserves.

Mr Speaker, finally, Sir Michael deserves special recommendation. He is our founding father, he is our longest serving Member of Parliament, and he is our great leader and the great chief of our country. This is why we are here today to pay tribute and in particular to Lady Veronica who stood by him for those number of years and continue to maintain the family and the respect that Sir Michael deserves. May He Rest in Peace. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr CHRIS HAIVETA** (Gulf) – Honourable Speaker of the National Parliament, Job Pomat, His Excellency the Governor-General of Papua New Guinea, Sir Bob Dadae, Your Honour Chief Justice of Papua New Guinea, Sir Gibbs Salika, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Honourable James Marape, Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable Sam Basil, our senior leaders, former Prime Ministers, Members of Parliament, Members of the Judiciary, Members of our diplomatic corp and people of Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, we are here to pay tribute to the founding father of our nation. It is fitting that his casket is here with us for the last time in the House Tambaran, by culture and all significance, a House that is built in the image of his own society, in the Murik lakes in the Sepik society.

**25/01**

On this last day, I speak for myself, I speak on behalf of Pangu Party a Party that he formed and led for over 21 years from 1968 to 1988, for all the Members together with Sir Pita Lus, Sir Paul Lapun, Boyama Sali, Sir Cecil Abel, Sir Albert Maori Kiki, Sir Thomas Kavali, Sir John Momis and the others that went before them, who found a Party to unite all Papua New Guineans in a fight for self-Government and for Independence.

Mr Speaker, today it is fitting to say that Somare and his Pangu Party gained Independence in a time where the apartheid and the inequalities that was practiced on our own people by the Australians was not fitting.

Today look at all of you, many of you now have multiple degrees while Joseph Aoae was the only graduate that was in the first Parliament. Today right around the country we enjoy these privileges and we take them for granted.

He served 49 years, where the people of East Sepik kept bringing him back continuously for 49 years. We owe the people of East Sepik a big favour for giving him to this country for 49 years in all the roles that he held.

As a Member of Pangu Party forming Pangu Party out of which came now National Alliance, National Party, Peoples Democratic Movement, League for National Advancement and then finally forming National Alliance Party which also gave birth to the New Generation Party.

So in the political history of our country we owe Sir Michael Thomas Somare because out of him came Sir Julius Chan the founding Finance Minister, who with Sir Michael, set up all the economic institutions of our country and is still here with us today. He is the third Deputy Prime Minister and also became Prime Minister. Honourable Pias Wingti is still with us today. Also Honourable Peter O'Neill served as his Minister under him and became Prime Minister, our current Prime Minister Right Honourable James Marape who was a long serving Education Minister became Prime Minister under him.

The influence, guidance and inspiration of Sir Michael over the years has helped many of us over the years including myself the right to where I am.

**26/01**

The contribution that he has done in trying and attempting to ensure that the culture of national leadership is as true to the *Constitution* the principals enshrining our *Constitution* as possible we must give him honour for doing that for us. All the institutions that have been set up under the constitution, Speaker, the challenge is upon us to carry on, from now onwards how do we do it?

Some messages have been given but for me, what I want to say is that Lady Veronica stood by him; the children have stood by him. He has endeared us all to him as our father and he is our father and we as children what do we do? Can we keep his principles alive? Respect each other? Have time for each other, listen carefully and properly and respect and work together because he was a egalitarian. Papua New Guinea is not just men; Papua New Guinea is not just leaders. For him as a compassionate Papua New Guinean, he respected every one whether you are a man, or a woman or a child or from the village or from which ever part of the country he knew that the country and the house that he built was for you as well as for everyone else and together under that spirit, I believe that if we continue to cooperate and uphold that spirit we can as a country rise to the occasion and build Papua New Guinea to greater heights and follow him.

Mr Speaker on behalf of the people of Gulf province have spoken about Pangu Party and on behalf of Gulf Province especially for those who have served with him, those that have gone, those whose families are still in mourning in the province and show their respects through services on Monday I want to place on record the deep gratitude for his life for his leadership and for involving during his time leaders from Gulf Province to assist him leaders from other Papuan provinces to assist him to meet our challenges of self-Government and Independence and to serve and build and lay the foundations of our country in the various fields not only in politics but in public service to a stage where others could participate and build our country where it is today. Mr, Speaker with those few words I bid farewell Papa rest in eternal peace. Thank you.

**Sir PUKA Temu** (Abau Open) – His Excellency the Governor General of Papua New Guinea, His Honour the Chief Justice of Papua New Guinea, Honourable Speaker, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers of State, the Provincial Governors, back benchers in Honourable House, Excellences’ from the international community and more importantly this morning the family of the Late Grand Chief Rt Honourable Sir Michael Thomas Somare particularly aiamai sinana badana Lady Veronica bona oi emu natuna ebounai on behalf of the people of Abau that I represent, may I personally pass on our deepest condolences to Lady Veronica and the family, the extended family of the Grand Chief and the people of the Late Grand Chief and the people of East Sepik.

**27/01**

I came in later to join the team but the stories that the former Prime Ministers have told about the enormous leadership challenges that the late Grand Chief faced and for him rising to the level of leadership at that time was most admirable. At that time, I was one of those at the University of Papua New Guinea that marched down to Konedobu, to protest against Grand Chief who was leading the country towards Independence. Not knowing that one day I would become a politician and at his last tenure ship as Prime Minister his deputy prime minister from 2007 to 2010.

Today, I would like to share some personal conversations I had with the Grand Chief.

The first one was when we were in Madang and I sat with him and I asked him, “Grand Chief, you are coming towards the end of your political career so what do you think about the future?” and he replied, “Puka, I am worried about the future, I am seeing many young leaders

who are well educated and I am also seeing another political culture emerging that is why I am very worried for the country moving into the next forty years”.

This is when the idea of Vision 2050 come up and I asked him to give the Nation with a forty year vision before he leaves politics. And in 2009, as the Nation remembers, the late Grand Chief and the then Governor-General, Sir Paulus Matane launched the Vision 2050. His vision was very simple and in fact it is articulated in Vision 2050 itself and I want all the leaders and the people to remember what the late Grand Chief wanted the Nation to be for the next forty years. That is to be Smart, Wise, Fair and Happy which included being wealth and healthy. Don't mix it up, he wanted the society to be smart individual, to be wise but he also added that they must be fair and happy.

My conclusion of this man that lies today in this Chamber is that he was a giant of man with a giant of heart.

A personal experience I shared was when I left him as his deputy prime minister in 2010, when we changed him just before the 2012 elections. He sat on the Prime Ministers Chair and I sat in the Opposition at the back but as soon as we walked out he met me with open arms and I just couldn't believe how open and bigger heart he had and how expectable he was.

So, today, I call him a giant of a man with a giant of heart. I remember reading history of him being the first Prime Minister and then being the first Vote-of-No-confidence was moved on the Floor against him. And, it is those post Vote-of-No-confidence that I saw the late Grand Chief stand out to be the great leader that he has demonstrated to be over the last 50 years.

**28/01**

Those are the unwritten conventions that the honourable House has accepted that no matter our political positions or the differences that we have against one Prime Minister or another politician, it is after those political dynamics; for example, in this instance, the numerous Vote of No Confidences that he went through and despite that he was re-elected as Prime Minister, that was his legacy. And the reason that I have put together was that, he was able to forgive and forget, that he was able to hold everybody together. I associate myself with all the positive sentiments that have been accorded to the Grand Chief from preceding speakers.

On behalf of the people of Abau, I want to thank the Grand Chief. There are two examples where he demonstrated his big heart and these acts will never be forgotten.

The first one was regarding one of the leaders of Abau, the late Sir Ruben Taureka. In his passing, Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare personally came to Maopa village in Abau at his burial site to witness his burial. Grand Chief, a very big thank you. You are loved. Your ability to remember leaders is unbeatable. On behalf of the Taureka family and the people of Abau, I thank you very much.

The second example is in relation to the first Governor General of this country. In the photos of Independence, you will see them both together, the late Sir John Guise. Although he is from Milne Bay, he got married to Abau. It was for some time that the late Sir John Guise's head stone was not erected at the burial site. When I became the Deputy Prime Minister, his family approached me and we asked the Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare. Sir Michael out of good heart provided the money to erect the head stone of the late Sir John Guise. Grand Chief, the right Honourable Sir Michael Thomas Somare, thank you so much on behalf of my people. Those two examples are the demonstration of this giant of a man with a giant of a heart.

My challenge to all of us today is, I don't think anywhere in history was there a gathering in the Chamber of this Parliament by the three arms of Government led by the head of the State, the Queen's representative, the Governor General. The Prime Minister, the Chief Justice, the Speaker and his Excellency, the Governor General are all here.

I think this moment calls for the nation to continue to respect the elderly by the younger leaders and young people coming up. How many times have we been profane towards our elders and senior politicians? We make generalised accusations. We need to stop that, we need to respect our elders. If the young leaders have listened to the speech made by Sir Julius Chan, these leaders have done gigantic tasks. We must respect them in this House.

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I call upon the nation to unite as, Honourable Prime Minister James Marape thank you for organising this *Hauskrai*. A very dignified way of letting the Founder of the nation, the Father of the nation off. Thank you very much for setting up this programme.

Honourable Speaker, I want to recommend two things in honour of the Grand Chief. And as head of the Legislature I want you to think about it.

The Floor, this House of Parliament belongs to the Grand Chief. Secondly, the Grand Chief died of cancer. Minister for Health, I strongly recommend that we build a cancer hospital in his honour.



**Sir PETER IPATAS** (Enga) – Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to recognise the Governor-General. I also want to recognise the head of the judiciary and those judges in the gallery, the Prime Minister, former Prime Ministers, Members of Parliament.

Today I came to Parliament to bid goodbye to the Founding Father of this nation. We, all the Members of Parliament and the people of Papua New Guinea have already heard our former Prime Ministers speak in honour of the ways of this greatest leader of this country, Papua New Guinea.

I represent my people of Enga Province to extend our condolences to Lady Veronica, Arthur, Sana, Junior Michael Somare, Betha and Dulciana.

I also wish to pass my condolences and sorrow to the Governor of East Sepik and the people of East Sepik and West Sepik. At the *Hauskrai* the people of Enga expressed their sorrow at the loss of our Founding Father who is also a big and strong leader of this country. At that time I made some remarks at the venue.

Today I was happy to hear former Prime Ministers sharing the same sentiments. When we are here to farewell and pay tribute to a man who is special in a country, like all of us, there is a time to be borne and a time to die. We are now seated here to pay tribute and farewell the Founding Prime Minister of this country.

For Enga and the people of Enga, we have gratitude for the Founding Prime Minister the Late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare for the hard work he put in at the time of Independence in recognising Enga to become the last province of this country. He recognised and established the Province, his leadership and our own people worked with his Government and other Prime Ministers to bring up the province to where it is.

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On behalf of the people of Enga, I want to thank you for establishing the Province including the close working relationship with the people and the Government of Enga Province to know and pay tribute to the founding father of the Nation.

A lot of our leaders, especially the former Prime Minister have already elaborated and I wanted to join them and say this, when we pay tribute to his good work for the country to gain independence and giving freedom to us, the freedom that we enjoy as leaders and people of this country.

The question I have asked and thought again as Sir Puka said. The man who fought very hard with his colleague at that time, we all are absent at that time including myself, I was not

around. I was just a student but because of fighting to gain independence, they must have gone through a lot of hard work, stressful hours to deliver this country to us.

When we pay tribute and known the work of Founding Prime Minister, it is time to know his visions, the way he thought when he brought independence till current and we must follow what he has thought to be free and successful as a country, those dreams and visions. I feel the same as Sir Puka Temu mention earlier.

When we pay tribute to our Founding Father of the Nation, we as responsible leaders must think if we got the wrong path, but must follow his legacies, the way he thinks, as leaders we must mourn for in the way we did things and we must make decisions, good decisions for the benefit of our people into the future.

So once representing the people of Enga to pass our condolence today, for myself as a leader of Enga and the country as a whole, I feel that passes on, it is important that we leaders must reflect and if we have shot comings, we must look to the future and try to achieved those good visions, thoughts of late Grand Chief.

With this, on behalf of the people from Enga, I want to say condolence to the families and may his soul rest in peace. Thank you.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Before the Chair asks the other Member to make his speech, I want to let the Honourable House know that our time is running out. We want to give as much opportunity for every Member in Parliament to make their speech therefore I asked every Members to shorten their speeches to account for the time so that everyone will have opportunity to speak during this occasion.

**31/1**

**Sir JOHN PUNDARI** (Kompam-Ambum – Minister for Finance) – Thank you Mr Speaker, we have convened Parliament to honour the first Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, our Grand Chief, Sir Michael Thomas Somare.

These have been very trying times, Mr Speaker. Last year the world was challenged with Covid 19, a disease that has brought the world to its knees economically and reminded human beings of our mortality. The year ended tragically with the loss of one of Papua New Guinea's former Prime Minister, Sir Mekere Morauta, one of the finest gifts of the Papuan people. I also pay my sincerest of respects to the late Sir William Skate and also to our living former prime ministers as gifts of God to Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, this year begins on a sobering note; we mourn the passing of our father of the nation, our George Washington, Our Mahatma Ghandi, Our Nelson Mandela. Along with Sir Michael Somare, we have lost several prominent Papua New Guineans both in the public and private sector. Prime ministers can only do so much in laying out the strategic plans. It is those dedication public servants and private sector employees who deliver on these visions.

Mr Speaker, my condolences go out to the families of those who have passed on and we recognize their contributions. I can still remember the first time we sang our country's national anthem in 1975. The words as I recalled were, this is our flag, flag of our land. Seventeen years later as a 25 year old and representing the people of Kompiam/Ambum, I had the privilege of meeting this man, whose name I heard when I was but child. It was a great and magnificent moment for me, Mr Speaker. In order for us to sing, this is our flag, flag of our land, many great Papua New Guineans had to come together, The Grand Chief at that time was the Chairman of the Constitutional Planning Committee, the deputy chief then, John Momis was a member of the Committee alongside Sir Tei Abal, Sir Paulus Arek, Angmai Bilas, MacKenzie Daudi, Sinake Giregire, Sir John Guise, Tony Ila, John Kaputin, Pika Kasau, John Kaupa, Paul Langro, Anton Parao, Stanis Toliman and Matiabe Yuwi, all worked together as members of the Constitutional Planning Committee. Mr Speaker, let us not forget these men. They stood beside our Grand Chief during those trying hours to secure our freedom.

As an Opene's son, I'm proud of the fact that my father, Sir Tei Abal and Anton Parau stood beside the Grand Chief in the development of our Constitution. I must also mention Sir Matiabe Yuwi, the Huli Chieftain who stood equally as a founding father with his Opene brothers and the Grand Chief Somare to unite our thousand tribes. Just as those greats of all fought alongside their brother and achieved victory, their sons stand together at present, one of them wearing the mantle of prime minister with his Opene brothers standing beside him.

Mr Speaker, it is not the first time we have stood together to honour the Grand Chief. In great hours of significance when our Constitution was tested in 2011 during the impasse, the Prime Minister Mr James Marape himself, Sir Peter Ipatas, the late Anderson Aigiru, Sam Abel and myself supported him to the very end. Some of us even went to the elections from the Opposition benches.

Mr Speaker, leaders are not the products of accidents but are chosen by God. Our Chief Sir Michael Somare was set apart by God for a special role in this nation's history. Just as the Persian King Cyrus was chosen by God before his birth for the preservation of the children of Israel.

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Remember, he was a pagan king who freed the Jews from a Persian Empire. What I am trying to say is, God chooses leaders.

Mr Speaker, Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare has proven himself a worthy tool in the hands of the king of kings, the Almighty One, who raises up nations obedient to his will. The same God who is a great judge, who chooses and removes leaders; a God who crushes empires when they stray from his will.

Mr Speaker, we should not just mourn Sir Michael Somare's passing but also give honour to the true power, the sovereign God of the universe, who worked through him to change the course of our nation.

Mr Speaker, in the midst of our tears and our praise, let us take a moment to reflect on all that has transpired and to thank our God.

Mr Speaker, we reflect not only on the grandness of the life of our fallen champion, but we must reflect on the path this nation has to embark upon. In the presence of his death, it is a good time for us to think about how we should live. That has always been the price of freedom.

Many nations have stood to shed blood for their freedom. Even now as we look across our borders, we see our brothers and sisters in West Papua suffering because they are not a free people.

Papua New Guinea received her freedom in the words of the Scripture, without money and without price and free as the air we breathe. Yet in order for this gift to be received, one has to rise to the occasion. That person that stood like a giant to give birth to our nation is the man whose death has brought us together this time.

Mr Speaker, we are gathered here to honour one of our finest Kumul warriors. His cry of freedom starting from the mountain tops, ran through the beautiful valleys and all the way to the seas is now taken up by a son of his from the Huli people. A son has heard his father's cry and now takes his people to a new path of freedom. Our Prime Minister has embraced a warrior's call from the Papuan Son; a cry to take back Papua New Guinea and to strive for economic independence.

Mr Speaker, this reminds me of a similar challenge the children of Israel faced a long time ago. The children of Israel stood before Canaan and saw giants in the stronghold as they buried their leader, Moses, on the borders of Canaan. Moses had led them to the Red Sea and

for 40 years he served as a symbol of hope for the Israelites. Moses was the one who talked directly with God and now he was dead and they trembled because of the task before them. In this time of confusion and conflict, two great men rose to the challenge to carry the task that Moses had begun; Caleb and Joshua.

Mr Speaker, Caleb and Joshua were men of just ordinary abilities but it was in their courage, faith and desire to seek out what was best for their people that they were chosen by God. Just as Joshua and his companion rose to meet the challenge, today, one of the sons of Somare has stood up courageously to continue his father's fight, the fight to go on beyond political independence and achieve economic independence. Just as Israelites rallied behind the banner of Caleb and Joshua to conquer the land of the giants, we must rise to the occasion and continue the battle for economic independence.

Mr Speaker, let the death of the founding father of the nation fill us with courage and hope, taking us towards grander conquest above and beyond what he would have possibly dreamt when he won Independence for us.

Mr Speaker, Papua New Guinea's journey does not end with Somare's passing. His death reminds us that we are still yet to reach our goal – Canaan. It has been 45 years since Independence, but yet in many ways Papua New Guinea is still not yet free. We are still not in Canaan, the land of the milk and honey.

**33/01**

Mr Speaker, our nation is one of the resource rich nations in the world. Yet, it is only trading off our abandoned blessings for temporary relief to stop the cupboards of the select few. The leaders despise the people and the leaders ignore the pride of the people. We must put an end to this and start to work as one.

Mr Speaker, we should be allies in the struggle against poverty. This is in greed, instead, we have become strangers to each other. The freedom that we have been so richly blessed with have become meaningless because we have abused it in the sweets of hands which are not worthy of free men and women. What uses this freedom if we use only to further our slavery? If greed dominates our minds, lies governs our hearts and pride leads the way, we shall never be truly free.

Mr Speaker, freedom is meaningless if we do not use that freedom to do what is right. What is freedom if our people are not enjoying it?

Mr Speaker, the present status of the country is a testament of a people who have abused the gift of freedom. We have used freedom to achieve our own hands rather than the hand our founding fathers have desired and God has chosen for us.

In the west, the Christ himself, '*thy shall love the neighbor as I serve, there is none other commandment greater than this.*' We may not do what the Grand Chief has done to lead an entire diverse nation to independence but none of us was born by accident. God has placed us for a purpose and a reason. We must honor the fact that this is a Christian country. As a son of late Chief Sir Michael Somare take this menthol and calls for the nation and journey towards economic independence. This is a task that he alone can not achieve.

Mr Speaker, it must be a collective effort, each Papua New Guineans united together and working to the best of our ability will ensure this dream is achieved. A nation is not present in the Parliament but is formed in the homes, school houses and in the churches across our nation.

Mr Speaker, a nation is not made great by world or by scientist engineers. Greatness is found in the goodness of the people and their wiliness to do what is right.

In the words of one of the wisest men who ever lived rightness exalted the nation by seeing his approach to any people.

Mr Speaker, the late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare dedicated this nation to God when he established August 26 as Remembrance Day. So, the nation may never forget that it owes its existence to God.

Our Grand Chief, the Honorable Sir Michael Thomas Somare understood that though we may credit him to be the father of the nation, Mr Speaker, he pointed us through to the true father of Papua New Guinea and that is our God.

But through all, Mr Speaker, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob saw the blessings of God above the phrases of men so the children will be blessed. It is in our father Somare's covenant that will ensure that our children are blessed and will continue to be blessed in this nation.

Mr Speaker, it is up to us the children to maintain this covenant that has been established for I believe that this is the only way we shall try and find the future of Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, Grand Chief Somare and the drafters of our *Constitution* were not mistaken when they enshrined in our *mama* law that we are and will always be a Christian country.

It is not our politicking, Mr Speaker, or our formers and philosophising in greatness. It is in our christian faith our late Grand Chief ensure that we shall never forgot this.

Mr Speaker, through your Chair I appeal to my fellow leaders and other leaders in the business and the civil services, we must take this opportunity to rule with righteousness and compassion rather than with pride and greed.

To be great, Mr Speaker, is to be good. What eventually endures is not wealth, fame or genius.

**34/01**

Let us not strive to live in the history books, Mr Speaker, but like others before me had said instead let us live in the hearts of man

Mr Speaker, the only King who called God are men after his own heart was King David. That was the only King that God called a man after his own heart. King David Mr Speaker, you and I know that he killed a man and took his wife. Then God chose the son of that woman to become the King of Israel.

Mr Speaker, one of the greatest mysteries I believe you and I have always wondered is why God still named King David a man after his own heart or why God chose Solomon to be King. Maybe it has something to do with King David's heart, Mr Speaker. His actions were human and sinful but, his heart always sought out forgiveness and gave forgiveness.

Mr Speaker, we were first forgiven by God. If we do not have the heart to forgive others why should God forgive our sins? Forgiveness is Gods character.

Mr Speaker, may I say Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare showed us that. He had such a heart. He always forgave. To be great, one must forgive. I believe that this was Sir Michael Thomas Somare's true legacy.

Above all things, Sir Michael was good and a faithful man. He was quick to forgive and was full of love and genuine compassion. Whenever he called us all sought tenderly, 'pikinini'. For that we remember and adore him as our greatest leader.

Mr Speaker, we have all witnessed the exceptional out pouring of admiration and respect across the nation. Sir Michael legacy will remain in every village and all across this land and in the hearts of every citizen of this country. Sir Michael Somare was great because, he was good. Let us forgive each other and unite as one people over the death of our founding Prime Minister. Cast aside our differences of the past and work towards our brighter future.

Mr Speaker, our Papa Somare has been called to rest like him and others before all of us will go before the judgement throne of God. We all will be held up for our actions before the great God of the universe.

My heart broke for the little and common people who have gathered to pay their respects, Mr Speaker. They have cried out their heart with sheered tears of sorrow for their leader. They honoured who Sir Michael was in their own simple ways but, the actions was the most moving for me. I was touched by their grief and then reminded as leaders that we are only stewards and elected to be servants of our people. We must serve them with honesty and integrity.

Mr Speaker, we must remember that wealth gathered dishonestly will never save us from death and money will not give us a second life. We are fragile humans who are here today and gone tomorrow.

Mr Speaker, let us stop destroying and condemning each other and rise as a nation that loves and as mindful for our fellow man and woman. Let us take responsibility and give our best while we have this short life.

Mr Speaker, the remarkable document of our constitution was written by remarkable man when we take it in its entirety, it simply tells us that do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

Mr Speaker, to be really free we have to respect each other. Our rights, personal space and differences is extend from our clans and families to the unique ethnic groups in our nation and the future generation. I pray that we leaders and citizens will remember this as we mourn and lay the first and the finer servant of our nation to rest.

Mr Speaker, a great world leader has fallen but, his legacy and the story of our country will continue. Yes 'wok mas go yet' but, 'wok mas go stret'. We do not only mourn this great man but, as his children we acknowledge that we still have a great task ahead. Our Grand Chiefs work is not ours to complete, it is now ours to complete.

**35/01**

Thank the great God who gave us freedom and guide us and will always be with us. May we settle for nothing than through independence. We rarely put as one nation to complete the task, our grander of chief, *papa Somare* has begun.

Mr Speaker, to conclude, on behalf of my good wife Doris and children and grandchildren, my people of Kompiam-Ambum joining hands with our Enga Grand Chief, Sir Peter Ipatas, the people of Enga, we thank you God from the bottom of our hearts for the gift of Grand Chief, Sir Michael Thomas Somare to Papua New Guinea. Our sincerest condolences to all of us as Papua New Guineans, the people of the Sepiks, Lady Veronica and her children.



Grand Chief, Sir Michael Thomas Somare rest in peace until the resurrection.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr PATRICK PRUAITCH** (Aitape-Lumi) - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Your excellency, the Governor General of Papua New Guinea, the Honorable Chief Justice, members of the judiciary, the Prime Minister, Ministers of state, provincial governors, the leader of the Opposition and the Members of Parliament, I rise to also pay tribute to a man, a great man, my hero, my mentor and my carson-brother.

But before I do, Mr Speaker, I received a diplomatic note from a minister in the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party that is addressed to me as the leader of the National Alliance (NA) Party because we have a relationship with the Chinese Communist Party so it'll will be a remis of me not to read this out on the Floor of Parliament.

This note is sent through a diplomatic note number 35/2021 dated March 4 from Beijing. It added a message of condolence 'your honourable Pruaitch, shocked and grieved to learn of the passing away of Right Honorable Grand Chief, Sir Michael Somare, former leader of the National Alliance and former Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea. I wish to extend my deep condolences to the National Alliance and his grieved family. We acknowledged that Sir Michael Somare highly valued friendship with the Communist Party of China (CPC) and he will be remembered by us for his important contributions to the development of the relations between our two parties and our two nations. The passing of Sir Michael Somare will not only inflict the tremendous loss to Papua New Guinea and the NA, but also brings deep sorrow to us for loosing such a great friend. The CPC cherish friendship with the NA and stands ready to enhance extension and cooperation between our two parties and further promote our bilateral relationship.

Schin Chantau, Minister International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.'

**36/01**

Mr Speaker, while reading this out, I also would like to on behalf of the family to recognise what the Australian Government did insofar as flying their country's flag half-mast in honour of Sir Michael, a gesture, they did for Nelson Mandela President of South Africa when he died. Thank you, Government and people of Australia for that recognition.

Mr Speaker, there are many senior leaders of this country who have expressed their condolences, given their accolade to a man that we all call the father of our nation. Most of

us senior leaders I am sure one way or another have been trained and mentored by this grand great man.

Prime Minister, you were a Minister in his Government. One of our founding fathers Sir Julius Chan was his first deputy Prime Minister and first Treasurer and Finance Minister. The Honourable Governor for Western Highlands was his deputy Prime Minister. The honourable Peter O'Neill was his Minister. The Honourable Sir Puka Temu was his Deputy Prime Minister and many of us sitting on the Floor of this Parliament today were his Ministers and we have every right to claim that Sir Michael was a mentor of the leaders.

Many of the senior leaders have expressed what Sir Michael did when he first started history as a politician and many would say that he is the man in a hurry but I think he was confronted with an issue and he had that ability to organise people. One of the greatest attributes of Sir Michael is to identify the strengths of people and assembling them to respond to the crisis or the opportunity that our country has.

Mr Speaker, we can sit here whole day and express our grievances and sorrow but I think as leaders of this country the challenge is in our hands.

This Cancer is a deadly disease and has taken the life of many of our citizens of this country particularly our women folk.

Mr Speaker, today at the passing of Sir Michael I call upon all leaders to seriously look at investing in health facilities we have in this country. We have been talking and talking but we need to seriously invest in Health care and start addressing health issues which our citizens are succumbing to.

I think that as result of Sir Michael's departure we must come out clear on every Budget where the health Department must receive sufficient funding so we can invest in educating the citizens of this country on how we can handle this.

I thank the Prime Minister who went in his own accord to speak to his Australian counterpart in a bid to assist Sir Michael in his last days but unfortunately this disease overgrew and limited the time for us to rescue Sir Michael.

**37/01**

So instead of being dependent on neighbouring countries. The opportunity for us in the passing of our founding father. Our Government must seriously look at investment in Health. I am sure Sir Michael will be happy to hear us address our health issues. Let's set the target, we've already identified what sort of sicknesses in the country. We need to now resource the

institutions to develop and of course making sure that there is adequate medication available for our leaders particularly our senior leaders in this country.

Sir Michael is a great man, a great Prime Minister. I served under him for nine years since I got elected in 2002 and I know that had we continued, by the way under Sir Michael's leadership this country witnessed an investment of US\$ 17 billion that has never witnessed in this country. If we allow the policies of the then government, this country will be filthy, filthy rich. The rest is now history, I think we need to get together and make sure that we promote the ideas of our forefathers and look forward to making sure that we discharge responsibly or honourably with responsibility.

Before I conclude, let me take this opportunity on behalf of the family, Lady Veronica, children Bertha, Sana, Arthur, Michael Somare Jnr, Dulciana, Emma to say thank you to Prime Minister the Honourable James Marape, for being so responsive and being responsible in determining and making sure that some decisions were taken.

As leader of the National Alliance Party I am honoured, Prime Minister that you were able to make certain decisions the first day that he died, the major one being honouring his wish when he was alive.

He said to me many times, that wherever you are; make sure that you bring me back home. Prime Minister thank you so much for honouring his wish. He was thinking ahead of his time. He wanted his remains to also be seen as a uniting factor and also an invitation to the rest of the country to visit his burial site. It is fitting that he decided to come home and thank you Prime Minister on behalf of the family. Thank you Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable members, I ask you again if you would like to make a tribute to the Grand Chief, please make it simple and short. If you have it as a document, please pass it to me to have it documented into the *Hansard*.

**38/01**

**Dr ALLAN MARAT** (Rabaul) – The Holy Eyes of the Sovereign Triune God saw the unformed body of Sir Michael Thomas Somare, before God began to form him in His Image, in His Likeness in the womb of his mother. God willed and purposed his life for Greatness never before displayed by anyone living in this land now called Papua New Guinea, the Nation of nations. Before he was physically born, he had already been Divinely Set Apart for Greatness. Divine Appointment as a Leader who would receive Godly Wisdom and impart to people around him, also took place before he was born.

All the days of late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare's life were Divinely Ordained and written in God's Book of Life before the first of them came to be just before or on his birthday at Rapindik in my Rabaul District in 1936. You can debate with God what I have said of the Grand Chief thus far.

The Father of the Nation of Papua New Guinea lived the first day of his life on planet earth, in Rabaul District, East New Britain Province. The general spiritual and physical environment surrounding his birthday was divinely perfect. All the people of Rabaul District have always cherished and will always fondly remember the truth that their Rabaul District, at Rapindik, East New Britain Province, had been the birthplace of Greatness in Political Leadership for this Country PNG. He spent some six years of his childhood since his birth, in Rabaul District before he moved on with his parents to other parts of Papua New Guinea.

After WWII, his contemporaries in the public service then, and in politics knew him well as they witnessed his growing passion, patriotism, and tenacity for having a country, diverse in culture yet united in values and principles. Leaders are not born, they are developed. Some people thought he lived by the standards of this world. Though he knew he lived in this world, he knew he would not have to engage in political arguments using the standards of this world.

### 39/01

He knew that to succeed in politics he would have to use political weapons that have divine power in line with his calling to demolish the political stronghold that culminated in the lowering of the Australian flag in Papua New Guinea in 1975 and proudly hoisting our own Papua New Guinea flag. Late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare demolished the political arguments of the colonial administration and every political pretention that set themselves up against the knowledge and wisdom for Papua New Guinea God had blessed him with and he took captive every political thought throughout his political life to make it obedient to the godly values and godly principles in Christ Jesus.

He had his mind as a strong Catholic Christian. He had in his mind, the politics of education, in the politics of health, in the politics of economics and the politics of other issues whether social or legal and whether domestic or international. Our father of the nation Papua New Guinea, had an imposing stature. He knew what he wanted for Papua New Guinea and its people. And in the political processes, he had the trenchant zeal of a crusader deserving each accolade accorded him in his lifetime.

Following the 2002 National General Election, late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare became the Prime Minister again by God's grace, I became his deputy for a few months. A couple of times, he left Papua New Guinea for overseas official engagements entrusting the best interest of Papua New Guinea in my hand or he would leave our shores he would converse with me. In our conversations, he very clearly displayed the tremendous interest in bringing up and nurturing naturally talented leaders.

He showed patience always, looking at God's oneness in his trion-nature and consequential goodness forbidding and managing a multi-cultural Papua New Guinea. We had some good laughs together in the Prime Minister's Office and I enjoyed his political father-figure displayed towards me. He was very inquisitive about issues of national importance and was always content and patient in our lack and insufficiencies socially, politically and economically.

My short stint as his Deputy Prime Minister was not enough for him, he appointed me as Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and principle legal advisor for his Cabinet following the 2007 National General Elections. No dirty politics this time, just faith and trusting and nurturing of quality human resource for national governance and keeping with this values and principles. Personally, I will always remember him for that.

On behalf of the people of Matupit Island and more particularly those who traditionally own the Rapidik land and on behalf of all the people living in Rabul District and East New Britain Province and on behalf my immediate and extended families and on behalf of the Melanesian Liberal Party and its leadership, we express deep and sincere appreciation and thanks to the parents, though long gone years ago, that God used to give us this specially appointed modern day powerful prophet in Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas To Palangat Somare and to give us greatness in leadership for Papua New Guinea.

On all of our behalf, I also express deepest sympathy and sincere condolences to Lady Veronica, children Arthur, Bertha, Sana, Dulcianna, Junior Michael, the grandchildren and great grandchildren. Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas To Palangat Somare from God you came and you have gone back to him. To us all, it is not how you started the race at Rapindik but it is how you finished it. In you few quiet moments, when you heard the still small voice of God calling you and you responded and you responded, my God, my Maker, into your hands I commend his spirit. Rest in eternal peace, Grand Chief. God bless Papua New Guinea.

40/01

**Mr WILLIAM DUMA** (Hagen-Minister for State Enterprises) – Thank you Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the presence, in our midst, our Governor-General, Grand Chief Sir Bob Dadae, the presence of our Chief Justice, Sir Gibbs Salika, our Prime Minister James Marape, our three former Prime Ministers, Sir Julius Chan, Honourable Paias Wingti and Honourable Peter O'Neill plus my fellow leaders.

Mr Speaker, I normally speak off-the-cuff but I think it is on such an occasion that I felt I should put my views on paper which I will now, with your leave, read.

Mr Speaker, it is with great sadness that I, on behalf of the people of Mt Hagen and the party that I represent, join many others including those that have gone before me to express my deepest condolences and sympathise to Lady Veronica, Betha Somare, Sana Somare, Arthur Somare, Michael Junior, Dulciana Somare and all the members of the extended Somare family of Karau Village, Murik Lakes and the relatives of our Grand Chief, the country's first Prime Minister and all the people of East and West Sepik at the time of his untimely passing.

Mr Speaker, when I was attending primary school back in 1975, I was told that our country, Papua New Guinea was getting its Independence from Australia and a man from the coast called Michael Somare was our Prime Minister.

Mr Speaker, I had read and heard a lot about Sir Michael Somare but never had the opportunity to meet him in person until 2000 when I was the Deputy Chairman of PNG Harbours Board as it was then known.

Sir Michael was, at that time Governor of East Sepik and was the Leader of Opposition and he met us at the boardroom of the PNG Harbours Board to discuss the possible leasing of land own, at that time by the Harbours Board, to a company called South Seas Tuna Company. A company in which the East Sepik Provincial Government was a shareholder for it to establish a tuna cannery on land owned by PNG Harbours Board.

Unfortunately, the PNG Harbours Board, which at that time was led by the Late Timothy Bonga, and I was the deputy chairman did not cooperate easily with South Seas Tuna Company and I could see that the Grand Chief was very, very disappointed. Not happy with myself and the Late Timothy Bonga.

Two years later, Mr Speaker, in 2002 when I first entered the National Parliament, this House, as Member for Hagen, the late Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare had become the Prime Minister.

I was very, very worried and horrified, now that he was our Prime Minister, I was of the impression that he would make life difficult for me in Parliament. And although, Mr Speaker, I was not a Member of the initial Kokopo Camp in 2002 and to my great surprise the Grand Chief Somare apparently forgave me and appointed me as is Minister for Environment and Conservation.

Mr Speaker during my time as Minister for Environment and Conservation the Prime Minister allowed us to consolidate eight different pieces of confusing and convoluted legislation in life matters in this country into this one single law which became the *Environment Act*. As a result of this new *Environment Act* the inaugural Environment Council of Papua New Guinea was established. And one of the first major resource projects to be approved and processed under this new *Environment Act* the new and the very first nickel mine in the country, which is of course, the Ramu Nickel Mine.

Mr Speaker, it was through Prime Minister Somare's leadership and support to the then Mining Minister, the Honourable Sam Akoitai that the Ramu Nickel Mine was opened after many years of planning and unnecessary delays.

**41/01**

Mr Speaker, the Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare also for the first time chaired the coalition of rainforest nations. A very powerful group for developing countries which contributed a lot in matters concerning the environment around the world and changed the way in which, wealthier and developed countries will now be able to deal with those developing countries that have abundant forest resources.

Mr Speaker, as Minister for Petroleum & Energy in Sir Michael's coalition government from 2006 to 2011, I worked closely under his leadership together with other leaders like Patrick Pruaitch, Arthur Somare; the current Prime Minister Honourable James Marape and many others to ensure that the transformational 19 billion dollar PNG LNG Project become a reality. The outcome was positive resulting in our country joining for the first time in the exclusive world-wide family of LNG producing nations.

Mr Speaker, I can recall on many occasions during the negotiations with the Exxon Mobil for this resource project when I responded to his call where he said, 'Duma I need to help on this and that'. Thank God for all of us who have responded to his call.

During the last five and long years that I have served as Minister in the Somare government, Mr Speaker, I did not at any stage witnessed Sir Michael Somare pushing and approving cabinet submissions and proposals which would benefited himself or his family.

On several occasions in matters of appointments to heads of department which, he had to choose between a nominees originally from his home province of East Sepik and other province, he opted to support the nominee from another part of the country.

Mr Speaker, it will be fair for me to say that his successes such as Honourable Peter O'Neill and our current Prime Minister Honourable James Marape, has followed his examples in many ways. He was a pathfinder, Mr Speaker, in that regard.

Mr Speaker, our Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare was a main architect of our country as we know this today. Nothing will happen without his drive and determination which has been mentioned by many other speakers before me.

Sir Michael Somare was a Chairman of the Constitution Planning Committee (CPC) as our countries first Chief Minister in 1974 which, provided the foundation of our very home grown Constitution. Our home grown Constitution, Mr Speaker, is still regarded one of the best in the world. It was to man like him that we have been able to have a very strong constitution which, is one of the best in the world.

Mr Speaker, when Grand Chief Sir Michael opted for self-governance and independence which inspired many others to help him make his dream a reality. I remember, Mr Speaker, our Grand Chief Sir Michael as my Prime Minister was a mentor. Although, we were members of different political parties, he was a father to all of us who entered the political arena for the last two decades.

Mr Speaker, the Grand Chief was a Chiefs son and he was infect a chief himself but, he could adjust himself and deal with the grass roots. Everyone has many different levels of society and still they respected him. He was a simple man of the people. He was able to mix with the Ministers on some occasions. On one occasion, I could remember as I was in Mt Hagen attending to one of the many constitution matters when I received an unknown number calling my phone which, was the Grand Chief Sir Michael himself. I could not believe that he could stoop so low to be a simple ordinary person.

**42/01**

I was lost for words that he was one hell of a man who could adjust himself to any level where ever he found himself to be. He was a simple man yet a powerful man.

Mr Speaker, Sir Michael among many things was a living encyclopedia of the history of our country both pre-independence and post-independence and he unfortunately left us and taken all those with him. He was a giant among men and unique special national leader of



leaders who come around once in a lifetime. I was lucky and among many others who have served him as minister.

Sir Michael Somare spent more years than anyone else firstly as our Chief Minister and then as our founding Prime Minister of our country. So, Mr Speaker, his passing now really is end of an era for our country.

Mr Speaker we collectively have responsibility to fulfil the legacy of this man and to ensure the continued development of our beautiful country. Whoever through politics, government business activities and off course our daily lives as one people, one country, a dream that he brought to the foe.

We will now all mourn Sir Michael passing and acknowledge his contributions to the development of this country. He really was our first Grand Chief.

Mr Speaker, in passing on behalf of my people of Mount Hagen, the United Resource Party and its Parliamentary members and supporters. I thank the people of Karau village, Murik Lakes and the people of East and West Sepik for continuing to elect this great man to National Parliament many years.

Finally, Mr Speaker as we all know God gives and God takes. I thank God for giving this special man to our country may his soul rest in eternal peace.

Farewell Sir.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Before I ask the honourable to make his speech, I want to remind you all that time is reaching us. So, I ask all honourable members to make your speech short, at least two minutes and to pay tribute to our great leader. Whoever wrote his speech we may incorporate that into Hansard.

Thank you.

**Mr SAM BASIL** (Deputy Prime Minister) – Mr Speaker of this honourable House kindly through you let me acknowledge the presence of our honourable Prime Minister, members of Cabinet and colleague members of Parliament.

Let me also warmly acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Sir Bob Dadae, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II representative as Head of State and also Chief Justice Sir Gibb Salika and our judges of Supreme and National Court who are present here in the chamber.

Mr Speaker, as Member for Bulolo and Parliamentary Leader for United Labor Party, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Commerce and Industry. I am humble to rise today

and speak on this occasion especially amid the dignified presences of this august and solemn assembly.

It is not often that one stands in the shadow of earthly greatness, we are gathered here to honor the greatest leader of our 45-year-old Sovereign State as ever produced. The amazing thing is that this greater leader we are honor today is the sphere head and in securing the Independence of the Sovereign State of Papua New Guinea.

He is the principle leader and the driving force our champion even our hero in the building and the many institutions that we now enjoy and often take for granted. It was then honourable Michael Thomas Somare that led the team and the process from the House of Assembly in the 1960 to Self-Government in 1973 and then to independence September 1975.

The historical records of the achievements of the Grand Chief Right Honourable Sir Michael Thomas Somare is attest and has become an importantly litany over the last two weeks since he left us on Friday 26 of February 2021.

**43/01**

When I was informed of the sad news of our founding father's passing, I was amongst the East New Britain people of Matupit. Noting his birthplace and his own adoption into the Matupit Vunatarai there were many solemn whispers using his Tolai name saying, 'To Palangat has gone to join his forefathers.'

But, Mr Speaker, let me reiterate, Sir Michael was not just a national leader but a global leader and a leader of leaders. He can stand tall with the likes of Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, Mahatma Gandhi of India and also Nelson Mandela. But to us Papua New Guineans, this Sana from Murik Lakes, Angoram, our founding father, is incomparable. He is the only one that stands apart. He is special and dear to all our hearts, and rightly so.

Let me place on record my many thanks and those of many Papua New Guineans to my brothers and sisters from East Sepik. Thank you for sharing your son, father and leader with all Papua New Guineans.

Many forget that Papua New Guinea, with its 800 plus languages, is home to one-sixth of the total 6700 languages globally and is possibly one of the most linguistically diverse cultures in the world. Each of the language groups are comprised of our many varied tribes and clans. Each is a nation of its own.

Sir Michael and our founding fathers did not just have to contend with colonialists, they had to deal with the many domestic and diverse multi-linguistic differences and the natural suspicions that come with new initiatives. They had to contend with the wide-ranging

illiteracy as well with the uneducated majority and they had to contend with the advanced self-determination sentiments of Bougainville and Papuans. But their collective efforts led by the founding father, who lies before us, is why we sit in dignity. It is why we sit in solemn respect in this supreme democratic institution, the National Parliament, as members of the Executive Government, members of the Legislature, and as judges in the Judiciary.

Mr Speaker, the *Hansard* records of this Honourable House will show the many embarrassing clashes, debates and near-physical fights, as well as the progressive decisions on policies and legislations made by this National Parliament.

I recall some incidences with sadness and great regret with the Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare who lies before us today. Once during the intensity and heat of the moment, I used some insulting words to the then Member for Angoram, Honourable Arthur Somare. This naturally drew the eye of the Grand Chief, obviously as a father, who traded back with threatening words. Both exchanges, while covered by parliamentary privilege, were regrettably unparliamentary. Another case arose when I was part of this House in 2011 that referred to the Grand Chief as a Stranger in the House, based on a Parliament vote upon his return from Singapore. I recall he had been bed-bound for nearly five months. That vote by Parliament on his ousting and his prime ministership were later ruled out by the Courts.

I want to assure this Honourable House and the general public that the Grand Chief and I later reconciled and made our peace together with the Member for Vanimo-Green, Honourable Belden Namah, who was then my PNG Party parliamentary leader when those events occurred.

The fruit of that reconciliation is shown in two ways, as I saw; by Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare's handing the Pangu Pati flag when I sought his blessing to resurrect the national iconic party in 2017, and in campaigning side by side with the Grand Chief in East Sepik for his daughter and my then Pangu Pati candidate, Dulciana Somare-Brash, in 2017.

#### **44/01**

Ms Somare continues to be one of my valued advisers as I served in the Ministry of Communication, Information, Technology and Energy, Ministry of National Planning, Ministry of Treasury and now as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Commerce and Industry.

Mr Speaker, I want to restate that Grand Chief Sir Michael's association with Bulolo and even down to my own Buan Local-level Government descends down historical memorial

lane to Moniau Village where Pangu Pati was born as the first political party of our country. It extends to strong ties with friendship with many Morobe leaders including Boyamu Sari, Jerry Nalau, Titi Christian and the former three term Bulolo MP, honourable Mathew Bendum to name a few. It embraces Sir Michael's three term as Prime Minister with support from Bulolo and Morobo MPs together with many Momase, Highlands, Islands and Papuan MPs.

One of the things that I noticed is that Sir Michael not only as national leader and a global leader, he had a personal touch with an extra-large heart that forgives and let bygones be bygones. He has rightly and truly earned and deserving the title, the father of Papua New Guinea. This should therefore be immortalised in our historical records.

With this few words, on behalf of the United Labour MPs representing the districts, the Union affiliates and the members nationwide, the Department of Commerce and Industry and the commercial statutorily authorities, my own people of Bulolo, my family and staff, I extend our heartfelt condolences to Lady Veronica Somare, Bertha, Arthur, Sana, Michael Junior, Dulciana and all the extended family members. I salute Grand Chief right honourable Sir Michael Thomas Somare and of course I would like to acknowledge and say thank you to my Governor for Morobe and the people of Morobe through him to have declared Nadzab Airport as Sir Michael Thomas Somare Airport. Thank you farewell and Rest in God's Eternal Peace.

**Mr WILLIAM POWI** (Southern Highlands) – Thank you Mr Speaker, Honourable Job Pomat, the Governor-General, His Excellency Sir Bob Dadae. I also recognise the Chief Justice your honour Sir Gibbs Salika, Prime Minister, Honourable James Marape, the Opposition Leader, Governors, Ministers and Members of Parliament and more importantly some of the remnants of our Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare who are here in the likes of Sir Julius Chan, Honourable Pais Wingti and other former Prime Ministers who are here in this Chamber.

Mr Speaker, at this time, I wish to represent the people of Southern Highlands. The electorates of Nipa-Kutubu who's Member of Parliament, Honourable Jeffery Komal is here. The electorate of Mendi is on lockdown and therefore he is not here. I however, have conveyed his condolence message to the family during our funeral ceremony. The Minister for Inter-government Relations and the Member for Imbonggu who is also sick and not here but I represent the people of Imbonggu. The Minister for Higher Education, Honourable Wesley Raminai and Member for Kagua-Erave who is here. The Honourable Peter O'Neill and former Prime Minister who represents the people of Ialibu-Pangia who is here.

On behalf of the people of Southern Highlands to the family of Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare, to the people of East Sepik and the people of Papua New Guinea, I express our sincere condolences. I humble myself and say sorry. My words cannot adequately describe.

#### 45/01

He stands incomparable as far as the world leadership is concern. I don't think he is just an ordinary father of the Nation. I think he is specifically ordained by God for a purpose. You look around the world and see democracy and freedom are great values of life people, leaders all over have stood for to the point of even dying for that worthy course. But in PNG yes, we see him as the father of the nation, a title rare and not just father of the nation, I think we should go further and he is being called for a destiny and he is qualified for this because some of us Members of this Parliament have the exposure of governance, service delivery, institution of government but you may have short falls, lack of exposure but he crafted the nation. So, you think this is just by chance, I think he was called by God for a purpose and I believe so and I also believe that leadership is also a special calling. He is a living testimony of that greater calling.

Let me just qualify this by saying and bringing to light some of the statements that have been echoed by the leaders in here, democracy, Constitution and freedom to life a great value. I think we need to value this PNG, Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare, has clearly lived for this and here we are gathered. But let me just give you some indications of great men in the world and in my view the Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare, should not be seen in the context of PNG but he stands amongst the leaders of the world who stand for some of this great values in life. If you look at the United States of America, like the former President Abraham Lincoln, the 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America who has people regard him as one of Americas greatest hero's due to his role as Savior of the Union and emancipated of enslave people. He is one who stood out amongst leaders who believe in values of freedom, of life and greater values of humanity.

Let me bring you to India's experience of Mahatma Gandhi, who is seen as a hero of India today, where millions remember him because he was brave and fought for independence in India and never gave up when the British Government was trying to rule India by violence, Gandhi use non-violence resistance to organise and protest the unfair treatment of the people of India. And of course, we are all familiar with and leaders like Nelson Mandela, and I quote; "if this is the worthy course to die then I am prepared to die." So, what does this kind of statements

qualify? Kits a great statement people who are able to put their life's for democracy, Constitution and freedom, and I quote; I have cherished the ideal of democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to leave and achieve". Mr Speaker if needs be it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die. So, in PNG, democracy, Constitution and freedom and titles, Father of the Nation is not just an ordinary title.

I will not match the shoes of Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare, to me it's an institution and Father of the Constitution that governs and operates and deals with the way we manage and govern, not only for now but for the future to come.

**46/01**

He may be gone today in the side of body and be buried but the legacies of Somare will linger in the minds of all of us, our children and the future years too.

On behalf of the people of Southern Highlands, I join the governors, leaders of Parliament who are here, I think we need to give credits to Prime Minister and the governor for NCD. You've organised a national mourning fitting for our people to mourn the father of the nation and we commend you for that.

For the challenges going forward, as some of my statements in the speeches I will cut it short and I have other speakers who are in the picture and those who have spoken and in the essence of time, I will end my statement to the Hansard but for now I want to leave two challenges that is confronting this country today and we leaders in the presence of the casket of the Grand Chief, the father of this nation, we need to see beyond what Somare has live for.

The *Constitution* of the people of Papua New Guinea is fundamental and rule of life. If the protection of the Constitution is not maintained, the future of the country will be at stake and it starts with us as honourable members in Parliament.

The second biggest challenges that I see is, and of course, the Grand Chief live for is unity in diversity. I see disintegration and fragmentation of government services and delivery in governance is going to put a serious challenge to this country. We are already fragmented but the Grand Chief fostered a national unity in the midst of diversity. Service delivery and governance going forward into the future must echo this. We cannot go and fragmentise and disintegrate governance and service delivery any further where we leaders worry about our little districts and leave behind no room for national calling. We need to focus on unity as the pillar going forward. Thank you very much, I join all the leaders, the governors and the people of Papua New Guinea in sending my condolence to the family, we are here mourning together,

he is our father, he is not only the father of the biological children of Grand Chief, he is the father of all Papua New Guineans and I pay because he has leaved and gave his life for the worthy cause. I believe God will reward him a special place in Heaven.

Thank you.

**Mr IAN LING-STUCKEY** (Kavieng – Minister for Treasury) – Mr Speaker, I join with my colleagues to acknowledge the distinguish guests and leaders in this Chamber today to remember the extra ordinary contribution that this exceptional leader our Grand Chief made to our young nation.

First of all, I want to remember a few special moments we have had with the father of our nation and second, it is appropriate that I also reflect on his great economic legacy.

Mr Speaker, our special moment, like many thousands of Papua New Guineans and the past fortnight, my people of Kavieng, my family and I remember our own very special moments with Grand Chief. Those moments that captured his love for the people of Kavieng like no other Prime Minister.

**47/01**

On behalf of the Sepik community in New Ireland and the people of New Ireland I would like to convey their deepest sorrows whilst they would not be with their families' brother and sisters in Wewak next Tuesday for the final funeral program their thoughts and prayers join with Lady Veronica and the Somare family.

Sir Michael gave the people of Kavieng and Namatanai a son Arthur and Sana in Namatanai and the people of East Coast Karanalik in Kavieng and Patpatar in Namatanai gave them a precious daughter. So, the living spirit of Sana does not only flow in our veins but the Sepik wagon will forever multiply in the forest, rivers and the mountains of New Ireland.

26 years ago, in early 1994, Chief Somare together with Sir Timothy Pohai asked me if I was interested to join their beloved Pangu Party and contest the Kavieng Open Seat. Later that year my inaugural nomination was relived derailed. With no confirmation from the then leader of the Party to witness the event and my small team in Kavieng issued a mayday a cry for help to the then the Governor of East Sepik Province to travel to New Ireland within 48 short hours and endorse my nomination. As a young man I don't know how I will get there but I will be there and support the Pangu Party in New Ireland. With that gesture with no warning sacrificing his responsibilities to the people of his own province and committing to another Sir Michael Thomas Somare demonstrated his love and commitment to all Papua New

Guineans even to those of us who lived in furthest corners and the smallest islands in Papua New Guinea.

It was on a small Island 25 minutes boat ride from Kavieng town that Sir Michael and lady Veronica enjoyed his past at one of his favourite past times fishing for his daughters and concurrence that will keep that island.

Somares slate economic legacy. Mr Speaker, one of the tasks of a father is to provide for his family who put bread on the table. He demonstrates how good a provider was our Grand Chief during this time an achiever of both Pangu Party and the National Alliance.

Mr Speaker, during the Grand Chief's years as Prime Minister the PNGs economy did very well. Economists estimated the increase in the size of the economic pie after allowing insolation this is called the real world flay.

During the 18 years grand Chief was the Prime Minister the average real economic rate was 4.8 percent in start or sharp contrast in the 26 years when Grand Chief was not Prime Minister the average real economic growth rate in PNG has only being 1.4 percent.

So, we can ask ourselves the question today how much better would we in PNG if the Real economic growth rate under the Grand Chief of 4.8 percent had continued in all the year's he wasn't the father.

**48/01**

The answer is we would be more and twice as well off more than double precisely we would be on average 2.4 times better off. How much better our economy would be, how much better our household income, how many more jobs would we have if we had kept up with the performance of a true economic father of our nation. I could go on, I could talk about his record of keeping inflation at moderate levels of the increases in employment continuing and building on the reform agenda of the Marape years for this simple fact is enough he provided well for us during his 18 years as father bread winner and if everyone else had a done as gooder job the people of Papua New Guinea would be twice as well off.

Good bye Chief, the people of Kavieng will surely miss you and we will rejoice knowing that a Somare will forever travel the Buluminsky Highway.

Lady Veronica, Bertha, Sana, Arthur my in law, Michael Jnr and Dulciana, thank you for sharing your husband your father with the people of Kavieng, the people of Papua New Guinea and the people of the world.

Thank you Mr Speaker.



**Mr RICHARD MARU** (Yangoru-Saussia) – Thank you Mr Speaker, the Governor-General of Papua New Guinea His Excellency Bob Dadae, the Chief Justice, Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Ministers of Cabinet, Governors, Members of Parliament.

I rise today on behalf of my people of Yangoru-Saussia district of East Sepik to pay my respect to the Grand Chief our father our champion, prime minister of prime ministers, leader of leaders, chief of chiefs for the great work he has done to mould and shape this nation into what it is today.

I start by thanking God in Heaven for choosing Him before he was even born and raising and moulding him to be the leader of this great nation.

On behalf of our people I want to thank all our citizens our leaders from across the country, our Government, Prime Minister, you and your cabinet for the gesture in giving our Grand Chief one of the most fitting tributes that will go down in the history of our great nation.

Thank you very much for these two weeks of mourning and all that you are doing to give him a grand farewell. Thank you very much, not only from my district but I'm sure for all our people in East Sepik and the Sepik Region.

With every leader, there comes a team. Mr Speaker, this morning I want to say thank you to the Bully Beef Club, the core leaders who worked with him and supported him and believed in him.

**49/01**

On behalf of his people thank you very much for believing in his leadership and his dream to bring Independence in a very short time since he was elected into Parliament. To the families who are still alive today like Sir Peter Lus and to those who have gone, thank you very much for believing in the late Grand Chief and giving him the opportunity to lead our Nation and make him our finest leader ever. Without his team he wouldn't have been who he was and is to us so thank you to the team that stood by him. I would like to say thank you to our founding Public Servants both local and expatriates who stood beside him to forge our Nation to come into being as the Independent State of Papua New Guinea on 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1975. I can remember that date very well because I was doing my grade 7 at Brandi high School in Wewak and we all learnt about the meaning of Independence. As we all marched down to Prince Charles Oval to welcome Prince Charles to the oval as our guest of honour when our late Grand Chief usher in Independence for our Nation.

Mr Speaker, I didn't serve with him in his government but he appointed me to be the Chief Executive Officer at the National Development Bank and I recall two moments that I will never forget.

Firstly, I was tasked to go and lead an insolvent institution, the bank which was about to go bankrupt. I discovered in my first year that it owed K11 million and was about to go bankrupt and I brought a submission to Cabinet in Alotau and informed the Grand Chief that he had only two choices to either sell the bank assets and liquidate the liabilities or he would have to recapitalise the bank. I will never forget that National Executive Council Meeting because he said to me, "Managing Director, you will never close the bank" and he didn't allow any member of the cabinet to speak. Then he thanked me and I left. This was the heart of a man, he was not prepared to close down the people's bank. He found the K5 million recapitalised the bank and the National Development Bank is what it is today because of his decision not to close the people's bank. He had a heart for the people of this Nation.

Sir, I want to salute you today for one of the best decisions you made to keep the people's bank alive. It is now an iconic institution serving the people of our country, thank you very much Grand Chief.

Another experience I recall very well was when he called me up and asked me to assist his party president who wanted a loan of K2 million and if I was able to help him but I looked at him in the eye and said, "Chief, I cannot help him because this man still owed the bank K1.5 million. Although he is your party president I am not going to loan him any money. This discussion was very short and then I left and he never spoke to me about that again. He respected institutions of Government and that is what I learn about this great old man. Young leaders and prime ministers we must learn from that, he respected authority and we must learn from that.

As the Grand Chief lies in State I am so happy and I would like to thank the people of Yanggoru-Saussia for voting him election after election, this made us very proud to be called Sepiks.

## **50/01**

Papua New Guinea will be synonymous with Somare and no one will take that from us the Sepiks or from you. Thank you, thank you very much Grand Chief, we will forever be grateful for what a great leader, father and Sana you are and you will always be.

As I close, I bring top the Prime Minister one request, when I was National Planning Minister in 2018, I put in the Budget and released K25 million to build a world-class centre

in Port Moresby, it is under construction right now if you should know Prime Minister. A couple of weeks back, I went to visit the CEO of the hospital to get an update of the cancer hospital and this is what he told me, we only need K50 million more to complete the finest cancer unit in the whole region. Mr Prime Minister, this is my humble plea to you, to please find that K50 million to complete that world-class cancer hospital here which will be as good as any other cancer center in the world and please name it the Sir Michael Thomas Somare Cancer Centre.

That is my humble plea to the Prime Minister today and our Government.

He died of cancer and we need to help all our women and children and those suffering from cancer. It is a serious need in our country and it will be a fitting tribute for us to go ahead and finish and complete this cancer center and to name it after our great father and leader.

With that Grand Chief, you have run the race, you have fought the good fight, I have no doubt the Lord will reward you when he returns and I look forward with the rest of us to see you in Paradise in Heaven made new. Rest in Peace and God bless.

**Mr SPEAKER** – Before I call upon the other speakers, I would like to inform our guests in the Public Gallery to switch their mobile phones to flight mode.

**Mr GARRY JUFFA** (Northern) – Mr Speaker, Governor General, Chief Justice, Prime Minister and Chief Mourner, on behalf of the people of Northern Province whom I am very fortunate to represent, and more specifically on behalf of one of the last living dear friends of late Sir Michael Thomas Somare, Mckenzie Daudi who was a member on his constitutional planning committee, I wish to convey our most sincere condolences and sympathies to Lady Veronica, their children; Bertha, Sana, Arthur, Michael and Dulcie and his beloved grandchildren, and the people of East Sepik who gave us this great warrior.

I convey this, this is a great loss, Sir Michael Thomas Somare, a visionary, a man of great courage and a warrior for democracy not just for Papua New Guinea but in the Pacific.

**51/01**

I want to take time to acknowledge a historic amicable notes presented here by his dear friends, former Prime Ministers, Members of Parliament and I think that we need to tell this stories and they ought to be thought in all our schools so that our children can learn and understand were this great country came from and who was responsible only then we can know where we are truly going.

Rest in eternal peace, you may have left us in physical form but you will be in every breath we take, in every footstep and in every heartbeat, farewell warrior, leader, founding father of Papua New Guinea, Sir Michael Thomas Somare.

**Mr ROBERT AGAROBÉ** – Mr Speaker, Honorable Prime Minister, His Excellency Governor General, Chief Justice, Opposition Leader and Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, thank you, on behalf of my Central people, would like to say thank you for giving us the opportunity to pay our respects and tribute to our great leader and founding father of this nation, Late Grand Chief Rt Sir Michael Thomas Somare GCL GCMG CH CF SSI KStJ KSG PC.

Mr Speaker, also on behalf of my Central clan leaders, land owners, men, women, boys and girls are deeply saddened on the passing of our Grand Chief knowing his eternally embarked on a new journey.

Mr Speaker, with great respect we express deepest sympathy and sincere condolences to Lady Veronica Somare and children, Bertha, Sana, Arthur, Michael Jnr and Dulcianna and grandchildren, we stand with you all to Lady Veronica, children Arthur, Bertha, Sana, and Dulciana, and the grandchildren and great grandchildren and the people of Wewak, East Sepik, together we mourn for our beloved Grand Chief. May your soul rest in eternal peace, until we meet again.

Thank you, Mr Speaker and Members of this distinguished House.

**52/01**

**Mr PETER TSIAMALILI Jr** (Bougainville) – Thank you Mr Speaker, your Excellency; Governor General, Sir Bob Dadae, Chief Justice, Gibbs Salika, Honorable Prime Minister, Mr James Marape, Cabinet Ministers, Former Prime Ministers, Honourable Members, my colleagues, members of the diplomatic core, distinguished guest, Papua New Guinea and Bougainville.

As the Regional Member for Bougainville, I would like to acknowledge the President of Bougainville, Honourable Ishmael Toroama, the ABG Government Members and the people of Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

I take this time to thank the people that stood by our Grand Chief in 1972, all Bougainvilleans namely, Sir Paul Lapun, who in 1972 passed on the leadership to Grand Chief, Sir Alexis Sarei, who was the first Chief of Staff, Mr Donatus Mola, Mr Anthony

Anugu, Mr Joseph Luwe, Mr Raphael Bele and in the presence of this Chamber, my *Mumurai*, Grand Chief Sir John Momis, who was appointed by the Late Grand Chief as the Chairman of the Constitutional Planning Committee.

Today is a sad day for Papua New Guinea and Autonomous Region of Bougainville as we mourn the passing of our founding father. On behalf of my immediate family and the people of Kunua, Teriaka, Torokina and the Bana people of Bougainville, I would like to pass my sincerest condolence and heartfelt sorrow to Lady Veronica, my brothers, Sana, Arthur, Michael Jnr and sisters, Bertha, Dulciana and together with your children. For me, my mother and my siblings we have very special space for Grand Chief, Late Sir Michael Somare, when the Bougainville crisis erupted seriously in 1988 with reckless killing, he rescued my father, Late Tsiamalili and us from Kieta and brought us to Popondetta where my mother is from.

My late father was the last lot from the Solomon Province Secretary now known as the provincial Administrator under the Provincial Government System, North Solomons was known as that right before we got our Autonomous status, under the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

Grand Chief was the first Foreign Minister under the Namaliu Government and at that time during the peak of the crisis, the rebels were threatening elite Bougainvilleans and my late father was one of the elite Bougainvilleans the rebels had on their list but the Grand Chief is a man who foresees future ahead of time and ahead of anyone, just like he had foreseen a bright future to unite Papua New Guinea and become one nation when the odds were against him he also foresaw the future of Bougainville right from the starting of crisis.

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When everyone was considering violence to solve the crisis and a bleak future between Bougainvilleans and Papua New Guineans he foresaw a peaceful Bougainville and how both parties would work together to restore government and normalcy back on the Island of Bougainville.

Fellow Papua New Guineans and Bougainvilleans, Grand Chief saw that my father would be needed to restore Government services back on Bougainville for Bougainvilleans to carry out their peaceful daily lives by continuing their colourful and unique Melanesian traditional cultures in their tranquillity environment living in harmony with our Melanesian brothers of Solomon Islands and maintaining the relationship between this two great Melanesian brothers, and so he removed my father and brought him to Popondetta and although in Popondetta Grand Chief was still concerned about my late father's safety he still

had plans for Bougainville's future so after the crisis he sent my father to the United Nations, and then he appointed him High Commissioner to Fiji and further on he appointed him to Europe where he served the European Union in Belgium far away from the turmoil that was raging between Papua New Guinea and Bougainville and at times threatening our Solomon Islands neighbours.

While my father was faraway in safety Grand Chief was heavily involved in restoring peace on Bougainville as Bougainville Minister under the late Sir Mekere Morauta's Government.

By the time the crisis was over Grand Chief was the Prime Minister and he immediately sent my father back to Bougainville to be the first Chief Administrator.

In 2005 the formation of the Autonomous Bougainville Government was formed and it was very heart-warming for Grand Chief, during my late father's funeral service at the St Joseph's Catholic Church in Port Moresby, to retell this story as part of his tribute to my father in April 2007.

And now I am retelling this tribute as my part to my Grand Chief in this State Funeral here at the National Parliament.

This story is not only for the Somare and the Tsamalili families. It is for the new relationship for the future of Bougainvileans and Papua New Guineans.

Grand Chief already foresaw peace on Bougainville long before the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement in 2001. Long before the restoration of Government services through the formation of the ABG, and Long before the Referendum which saw 98 percent of Bougainvileans voted for Independence.

The people of West and East Sepik I say thank you on behalf of the people of Bougainville for giving us SANA. The greatest MELANESIAN Paramount Chief of all time and a trail blazing Pacific leader. PNG's father of Unity.

Farewell my Great Grand Chief may your soul rest in eternal peace with our creator until we meet again.

**Mr ALLAN BIRD** (East Sepik) – Thank you Mr Speaker, Governor General, Your Honour, Prime Minister and brother leaders.

It is my sad duty and honour to speak on behalf of my brother Governor Wouwou and all the other Members of East and West Sepik who cannot speak here in Parliament today.

I want to respond on behalf of the Sepik people to all the people of Papua New Guinea for this incredible out pouring of sorrow and love the likes of which this land has never seen.

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I also want to acknowledge, on behalf of the Sepik people, the tributes that have come from around the world for the greatest Sana that we were privileged to walk among us. I hope I can do him justice in thanking all of you. The Sepik people acknowledge and are deeply humbled by all of your tributes.

On behalf of the Sepik people, let me begin by thanking the traditional owners of this land, the Motu Koita people, whose language we heard here today for the first time in many, many years. I thank Governor Agarobe for honouring us because the Right Honourable Sir Michael Thomas Somare spoke Motu very well. It was a fitting tribute, and we thank the Motu Koita people.

The Sepik people also thank everyone who had a hand in his journey through leadership; the Tolai people, where he was born; the Morobe and the Madang people, in his formative years whose customs and values he learnt and adopted, and to everyone else who added to the wisdom of this great man over the years.

We have just witnessed the passing of a great light out of this world, and whilst this brings us great sorrow, it should also bring renewed enthusiasm to meet the challenges we face because the children are supposed to do better than the parents. That was how humankind was intended.

Late Somare and his team of founding fathers did a tremendous job. We still have a race to run. He led a great team of men and women and they did an amazing job. They tried to be better. They were better. They were our best.

Yes, we should have flown him around the country in 2017, 2018 or 2019. We did not. Just like with the cancer facility and many other things we talk about, perhaps we should do better, like they did better.

The Sepik people with much gratitude would also like to recognise all the founding fathers that worked with and elevated our Grand Chief Sana to the greatness that this country now bestows upon him. As we heard the tributes, it becomes difficult to add because there is only one Sana; there will never be another like him again.

While still living he became both legend and myth like Simogung and Yauega before him, except he grew greater than his forefathers. I am sure he drew inspiration from Yauega and Simogung because how else could he have become what we have seeing.

Everyone had a story to tell as I sat through the nights at the hauskraai. Let me place on record the deepest gratitude of the Sepik people to the chief mourner and a son of Sana, Prime

Minister Marape, and to the NCDC Governor and another son of Sana, we are in your debt for hosting the hauskraia on our behalf.

There are so many stories to tell but many of them we could not tell because we ran out of time, but that is a good thing. Let us keep the stories; let us tell our stories; let us keep his story; let us keep all our forefathers' stories. Let us keep them alive.

We are lucky because we lived in a time when our colossus walked amongst us. We are the privileged few. So, let us celebrate his life by looking to the future and not dwell on the past.

Australia described him as an angry man and they also described him as their greatest friend. And they are right; he was this and much more. Somare did not hold it against them. He and his indomitable founding fathers managed to turn a regrettable situation into an asset and we look around to see it today.

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Australia described him as an angry man. They also described him as their greatest friend and they are right. He was this and much more. Somare did not hold it against them. Him and his indomitable founding fathers manage to turn a regrettable situation into an asset and we look around to see today. Today Australia is our biggest supporter and we should learn this great lesson from Somare. Not only that we should practice it. Those who were his enemies became his enduring friends. So, on behalf of the Sepik people, I want to thank Australia and her people for moulding this man and making him what he was. The greater Sepik and the greatest Papua New Guinean so far. Few people loved this country like he did. Though small in stature, his heart was bigger than all our hearts. Even in his last breath, he was still speaking of unity of this country and for his love of our people.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank Prime Minister Morrison and the Australian people on behalf of the Sepik people and the Papua New Guinean for the great honour of flying your flag at half-mast in recognition of our founding father.

We thank also the people of Japan because they too had a hand in moulding this great Chief Somare. I hope we his children will continue to build on that relationship too. There is still much work to do. He also had a special relationship with China and her people going back many years. While we may look today the children of Sana all over the country suspiciously at countries like China and Australia, this is not what he taught us. We should



mould the relationship to suit us because that is Somare. He takes a difficult situation and makes it a better one for himself and his people.

We thank also the United States, Great Britain, France, Fiji and all of the other nations who have paid tribute to our Sana. Today Mr Speaker, like Somare did 57 years ago, and as Professor Baloiloi said in his tribute, he saw beyond the mountains, perhaps that is the Somare magic that we are missing. To see what the others did not see.

He saw the engineers, lawyers, doctors, pilots, judges and all of us before anyone else did. And that is the challenge that he leaves us to try and see what we can't see right now. Not to see with our eyes but to see with our hearts. Thank you Dr Baloiloi.

Mr Speaker, the thing I have learnt over the past two weeks was that Somare and his group of leaders were uncomfortable with their situation. They did not complain about it but went about and changed it. The founding fathers dreamed of a country of free people. Free to own their land, free to move about, free to be involved in enterprise, free to dream of a future. A self-reliant and hardworking people. It seems we have become too free that we forgot what the founding fathers wanted. Today in honour of this man, perhaps it's time to reflect.

Somare was an ordinary teacher who went on to do extra ordinary things. When PNG needed a leader, he came forth and led with absolute distinction. This is the Somare challenge to do extra ordinary things. They had little money and little education and little of everything but the little that they had was enough. We have so much and yet we do so little with it. Perhaps that is why he stayed for so long in this Parliament. Let us revisit Vision 2050 and thank you Dr Puka.

My greatest sadness and I wish that he could heard all of your tributes. I wish he could heard all the tributes of the people of Papua New Guinea because he would have loved it because he loved people. How do I know? I know because East Sepik gave him a platform last year. We gave him an opportunity to meet the people and he absolutely loved it and he thanked us for it because in his twilight years, he was moving home.

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Mr Speaker and for that Prime Minister, Marape and your Cabinet, the Sepik people are in your debt for excising your wisdom. We thank the Cabinet for allowing us to take him home as worth his wish, Sepik's understand the concept of borns and meat better than most of the children of Somare, because while we ate bones we were proud to sit around our camp fires as Somare honor the and this is of significant honor to us, his Murik tribe and the Somare family. On behalf of GC, Sir Michael Thomas Somare, the Right Honourable, we invite all

the children of PNG from the special region of Bougainville to Western Province, from Vanimto to New Ireland and everywhere in between the Father of the Nation invites you to visit him at his home.

To greater Melanesia and the Pacific, the people of Somare, will welcome you and the glue that kept you together has departed but when a great tree fall it allows the siblings to reach the sunlight and grow also. We have to be the glue that holds the country together and that job falls to every leader in this House. In closing Mr Speaker, in September 2017, on his handover of East Sepik to me at the Somare Stadium and as I spoke we looked to the Sepik flag, a flag many of you the children of Somare have become familiar with in the past few days. It shows a crocodile and a shark carrying the kumul flying proudly above.

A Sepik led the country while being carried by his people, Sana has left this responsibility and I speak on behalf of Sepik's, I call on Sepik's to continue to pursue what our great Sana has pursued for all his life. It takes an entire village to build a house, everyone brings something, and sago leaves for the roof, and saplings for the post to holdup the house and some cook food and provide it to those who are building the house. Some bring intellectual ability, some bring muscles and Mr Speaker, the Sepik people brought Somare, and we are proud of it. He was the best of us and we all feel much to contribute so to the children of Sepik who are his first born let us work to maintain the family in Momase, Highlands, New Guinea Islands, Southern Regions, we keep the fire burning, let's do better and be better and honor him that way.

As I watched all the tribes bring their fresh gifts to the haus kraai, I was touched by my own people the Abelams and I want to state in this House my deep appreciation to Member for Maprik, we brought you our shell money that I have not seen in many, many years, some of those shells were hundreds of years old. No Abelam Chief have ever brought all the Abelams together. And so, for the first time what you witnessed last night in the small ceremony, Grand Chief brought all three Abelam ethnic groups together and we are proud of that.

I want to put on record my great pride in what Sir Michael had done for us. On behalf of the 98 East Sepik tribe and our 100 odd tribes in West Sepik, we thank all our brothers and sisters throughout the length and breadth of this country and of course the ocean. To all of you I say, maulu, maulu.

Mr Speaker, this morning for the first time in all my life I looked for word in my language in my Abelam language that said goodbye or farewell and I could not find one in my language to they say goodbye or farewell, I could not find one. I could not find a word in

my language to farewell this great man. So, until we meet again, the Grand Chief, the Right Honourable Sana Sir Michael Thomas Somare, *babudu, nomadu, wonana, hunana gundi yabagbye, nolu maunu*.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

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**Mr SPEAKER** – Thank you, all Honourable Members, I know that every one of us who are here would like to make a tribute speech but our time is not allowing us. Therefore, I am asking those of you with a written speech to bring them to the Clerk so that they can incorporate all your speeches.

I, on behalf of the Parliament and the Members of Parliament, want to recognise the Grand Chief, His Excellency the Governor General Sir Bob Dadaï, His Honor Chief Justice, Sir Gibbs Salika, Honourable Prime Minister, all members of the judiciary, immediate families, all diplomatic citizens, former Members and the rest of you who are here.

Some years ago, I have asked this question, there will be a time when the Creator will call him home, how will Papua New Guinea recognise this great man? Now the time has come and we are here.

I never thought I will have the privilege to preside over this special occasion. But, I thank that it will go down the history of this country and will never come again. This special occasion will go down the history of Papua New Guinea that our Grand Chief, late Sir Michael Thomas Somare's casket was laid-in-state on the Floor of Parliament.

However, most of the Members have already spoken about this great man and I won't make a lengthy speech. In the coastal areas they used to say that when a dry leaf of a coconut tree falls on the ground, a new leaf will eventually be developed to replace it. This new leaf, within the tribes and in the family, it refers to you Sana and Arthur and in East Sepik, it refers you Governor Mr Allan Bird. This new coconut leaf in terms of Papua New Guinea, it refers to you Prime Minister James Marape or what does it refers to? When this coconut tree bares coconuts, the juice of the coconut is very sweet that when you drink plenty you'll be satisfied. This coconut when it is dry and falls on the ground, you scrap it and cream your food. How does your food prepare with coconut cream taste?

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Today, all of us seated here and the people of Papua New Guinea have heard the stories of this great man, his words, his dreams along with all the pioneering engineers for

independence who have been mentioned by many of you leaders today. He was first in the Constitution of our great nation, he went ahead to unite more than 1000 tribes and villages and I want to state that as he lies here on the Floor of this Chamber it should be significance united force for this country as a whole and its leaders. He has passed on but his spirit must live on.

In Cabinet the Prime Minister is the head and authorises decisions. In Party Caucus each Party with its leaders work together to endorse its decisions. But here in Parliament House every Member who represents their people in Papua New Guinea decide together on decisions.

For our Great Grand Chief to lie here in the Parliament Chamber's I believe his wishes is a unified leadership where Members of Parliament must take up this vision and the wishes of this one great man deliver to our people.

May this solemn occasion where he lies in this Chamber for the last time where he leaves us leader and go to his final resting place unite every Member and leader of this great nation.

We all have our disagreements and we all agree to disagree in this Parliament but despite all that we today are urged to unite and stand together as one nation.

Today we have all gathered and we have dressed in black to mourn a great man but I want to say that we must celebrate this one great man's life in this country.

With that let me conclude and extend my gratitude to the Australian Government in recognising our founding father in joining our mourning by flying their country's flag half-mast and on behalf of the Papua New Guinea National Parliament I say thank you very much.

On behalf of the people of Manus I extend my greatest gratitude to the Somare family, his clansmen, the people of Murik Lakes and East Sepik Province for giving us this man to serve this nation in Papua New Guinea.

There will no longer be the greeting of One ples. Every time I bumped into Sir Michael Somare I say father and he says *wanples*.

Sepiks call Manus people *wanples* and I say thank you. On behalf of the people of Manus we join in sharing your sorrow as one.

With that we Manus will chant shouting and proclaiming wuroh, wuroh, wuroh, wuroh, wuroh with Sepik and Papua New Guinea for this great man who has served us.

Farewell Grand Chief and father of this nation.

**Mr JAMES MARAPE** (Tari-Pori – Prime Minister) – Mr Speaker, I thank you for your invitation and I thank you for presiding over this very solemn occasion in which we are seated in the presence of the body of the late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare our founding father.

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Mr Speaker, we acknowledge the presence of our Head of State and also to the Head of the Judiciary Sir Gibbs Salika together with his fellow judges from the Court House who are seated together now in this parliament to pay respect to our founding father who set up our parliament, our executive and judiciary arms, the two arms of Government who are present today at which our forefathers and Somare have worked hard for and we are seated here today enjoying the freedom where our Constitution has given. I acknowledge the presence and of the Members of Parliament and thank you all for your patience

As our Grand Chief rests, I also acknowledge Dr. John Momis, one of the pillars who have put together our Constitution who is also here with us today, also former members of Parliament from 1968 until today. I also acknowledge the family of late Somare, Lady Veronica and the family who are also here with us today, the members of the Diplomatic Core, members of the Christian Community, the Business Community, distinguished guests and the people of Papua New Guinea who are also listening and watching this special parliament session where we give special respect to the father of Papua New Guinea.

First of all I would like to convey my deepest condolences to Lady Veronica, his children and the Somare family for the loss of the founding father of the country, the first Prime Minister of this country and I stand here to pay tribute together with my fellow members of Parliament who have spoken and more importantly for the rest of the members of Parliament who have not spoken. I stand here now representing all of us including the entire people of Papua New Guinea to say that without this man, who gave nearly 49 years of service to this country I stand here to pay tribute and respect to this man.

I don't think I can come near to the work that he has done. History will judge, for us today he is the number one man in our country today.

In my speech today which will go into the Hansard, I have labelled him as the Great Grand Chief of Papua New Guinea. This house that we are all in today, he built from his wisdom and knowledge. The three arms of Government that come under the Constitution that his team has made and we are seated here today to pay respect to him.

In the late sixties a group of young Papua New Guinean leaders between the ages of twenty to thirty years old formed a club called the Bully Beef club now Pangu Party who had big dreams for our country came together with one vision to derive and reform changes to the country

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They thought about the best interest of the country. When the Bully Beef club entered politics in 1968, Somare was only 33 years old when he entered Parliament.

I thank Sir Paul Lapun one of the great leaders of Bougainville and what a time for the Honourable Peter Tsiamlili Junior to make entry into Papua New Guinea Parliament.

It is not a mistake, this is your first Sitting of Parliament and I congratulate you from the Autonomous region of Bougainville. You have arrived at the founding father's passing. Sir Paul Lapun, was a strong member of Pangu Party, *strongpla kwila*.

In case young Papua New Guineans are unaware of the name Pangu, in the 1970s and later 60's when I read the Hansard, there was a conflict when deciding the name of our country. Some said, Papua, others said New Guinea, even the Papua Besena movement very active at that time. In New Guinea, Bougainville wanted Independence, there was also movements in Rabaul. There was chaos. Our island was divided to separate the West Papuans.

There were so many issues prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s, yet after being elected into office in 1968, it took only seven years, for this great Sana of Sepik to deliver our political Independence. As I read his accounts in the Hansard, I was totally mesmerised and I encourage the Member seated here today, go to the Hansards and read of the events that led up to our Independence. There you will draw inspiration; there you will see what they were thinking. Men who were not educated as us The Budget was small that time yet they were focused for the country. They knew what they want to deliver for our country.

Somare was the Chief amongst the leaders of that time. I described him as a bull dozer. As I read through, only one word came to my mind, he bulldozed every obstacle in front of him. At 1968, in the 1972 Elections he became chief Minister in 1973, it took him only two years to set up the constitutional planning committee.

Dr Momis, I pay respect to him, one of the icons and father of our nation sitting up there in our Public Gallery, came and in two years, consulted the country, in two years he set up one of the best Constitutions in any democracy globally speaking. This is the legacy of the father of our country lying here. For it is contemptuous of any one of us now and into the future to play around with the *Constitution* of our country that holds the fabric of unity

together in our nation of a thousand tribes. He did it. He was 39 when he delivered Independence for our country.

Those of you who are in your 30's, the Namahs, the Rainbo Paitas, the younger ones who are sitting here who were born in the 80's, don't think that you are here passing time for your DSIP for your district. DSIP and PSIP is not the answer for our country. These people were thinking PNG first, not Tari first, Finschhafen first, Rabaul first, Wewak first. In 1975, he was thinking PNG first not Sepik first.

The road to Independence in 1968 to 1975 was not easy, lest we forgot there were many oppositions to Independence from within and from abroad. As I said, there were successionist movements within our country, there were debates between Papua and New Guinea. Some part of the Highlands led by the then Opposition Leader, because white men just arrived in the Highlands, they were thinking we were not ready for Independence. But this giant of a man, the colossal of Papua New Guinea stood fixed in his view that Independence it must be and seven years on Independence was delivered

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Mr Speaker, let me read some of the statements he made from 1971 to 1975. Due to limited time, I will only read some key lines to hear his words from the years leading up to Independence.

These are some extracts of his conversation in Parliament or House of Assembly. This is a statement when there was a debate on the *Constitution*, 'no one is perfect except God and I believe we have a good *Constitution*. There is one law we cannot change and that is the Ten Commandments of God but the law that is made by man can be changed by man'. He was saying this in a Parliamentary debate when the draft *Constitution* was presented in 1974.

Another statement he made, 'it is up to the future generation of this country to make sure that the *Constitution* is not displaced'. He also said, 'the *Constitution* is the very heart of the foundation on which this country stands, for those of you who dare hold contempt the *Constitution*'.

Another longer quotation, 'I have been subjected to pressure by many of the honourable members of this House who were in turn manipulated by people from outside and telling me, I was not doing in the best interest of the country some of you have alleged that we do not have Papua New Guinean advisors, I say that we do have Papua New Guinean advisors and these Papua New Guinean advisors here had a part in giving me advice'.

I pay respect to those Papua New Guineans who were around him at that time, the club of four, and others.

‘However, what I am trying to say here is that, there will be criticism from certain members of this House especially from a black person and a white person from these House and these criticisms I consider as being unnecessary criticisms but I have stood up as an elephant with my trunk thrust out and I have not allowed myself to step down in pursuit of Independence.’

He was a bull dozer, bull dozing his way through to Independence.

‘I would like today that the strength of this is in the loyalty and the commitment of the people of this country. You must believe in this country and be committed to this country and the citizens of this country are the ones who have the loyalty and the commitment to this country, if they will have this belief and they believe in their country then they will make their country into a better country.’

This is raw from the Hansard just like what I’m saying is being directly transcribed into the Hansard, this is what he spoke in the early days. ‘We are now trying to create a better country, a better nation and to do this we have to have a good *Constitution* on which to build our country.’

That was his vision back then. Another quotation, ‘it is our duty and responsibility as the constituent assembly to make the final decision as to the acceptance of the draft *Constitution*. We must keep in mind that we are going to agree or its going to affect future generations to come, maybe in 15-20 years. None of us can look back into the future. We do not know if the road ahead is straight but it is up to this assembly to set the foundation upon which the stability of our future will be guaranteed. I do not want us to leave it to the future leaders to condemn us present leaders for not coming up with a *Constitution* that is good for our country’.

Another quotation, ‘Mr Chairman, I feel that all members of the constituent assemblies are pleased and they will be speaking on this. I presume and I want to say that I am very proud to day to see that we are now about to draw up our *Constitution* and I would like to express my gratitude to Father Momis and the fellow members of the pressure group for trying to see that the Government does not step out of line’.

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Another quotation, as I said I wish to extend my gratitude to the United Party the pressure groups and other parties and the legal advisors who have taken in hand and establishing or creating home grown *Constitution* for our country. This was the approach they collectively took for making our country. And of course they did present the draft *Constitution* to our country’.

Mr Speaker, why did I say these? These are words that he said in 72, 73 and 74. After he became Chief Minister in 73, it took only two years and we have taken some 10 to 15 years to do some things that we need to do for the country.

Mr Speaker, in 1975, the Grand Chief, from what I read, was a strong minded, strong willed, determined person who was not pessimist but optimistic about this country. In just seven years from obscurity in the 60s into leadership in 68 and in 75 our country was independent politically.



Mr Speaker, I was privileged to know Somare when I came into politics. I recall my life story in politics. In 2007 he was Prime Minister and he flew without proper protocols. Early one morning he arrived in Tari. We were not ready to receive him. He said I came to look for my candidate. He was accompanied by one of his close protection officers by the name of Norman Barbie and a staff of the National Alliance Party Joyce Grant, they walked into the dusty streets of Tari and into the district office. I was in my village when they said the Prime Minister is already here looking for you. That was how humbled this man was.

I showed up five or 10 minutes later apologising and said, all good. Its campaign time. I am here to campaign.

To cut a long story short, I have many moments of contact with him at the Golf Course, in Cabinet, at times when he appointed me to represent him in various events but one conversation with him that sticks out in my mind was July 2007 political camp at Warangoi.

That time all Members who won met at Warangoi in the political camp of the National Alliance Party, he made a statement. And Grand Chief I wish to repeat your words to my colleague for all of us to hear. He said, in 1975, with few university graduates we delivered political independence. Today, I speak to you in 2007. We said we were going to train lawyers, many of you have already become Members of Parliament. Many accountants and other professional we were going to train have already become Members of Parliament. Today I want you to work to deliver economic independence for our country.

For those of you who were in this camp at Warangoi you would have heard him speak. I took that challenge very seriously. Because for me, that was one of the reasons I stood for elections as Member for Tari.

Mr Speaker and Members of Parliament, he was only 32 years of age with no university degree when he entered politics. Yet he moved mountains to deliver political independence for us and worked the last 49 years in his political life to assist us as a country to get to where we are today.

My maiden speech conversation when I was given the privilege to be Prime Minister on 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2019, if you read in it, in the core of my message is a message of economic independence for our country. That message stems from the Vision 2050. That message comes from the Fathers of our country who gave us the Eight Point Plan in 1975.

I want to ask our country to unite now as we've united in the last two weeks in mourning the loss of the greatest leader ever lived in our country or t ever ,live in our country, in my view, let us come together and make resolutions for unity, maintain unity and find common purpose and I put to us, in the face of this casket.

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We must now look into every possible public policy that goes towards abundantly resources in our country to make us truly economically independence and it starts with us. Here as Prime Minister and those of being in charge of ministers to get the ball rolling and not occupied with the issues of election that is coming up. Our leadership must be forecast on the next generation and not the next election that is coming up in 2022.

Let me passed my sympathy to Lady Veronica, thank you for lending your husband to us and pass my sympathies to the children thank you for lending your father to us for us to call him Papa of our unified country.

I want to say thank you to the East Sepik people for allowing your regional member to be the leader of our country and thank you for allowing your Sana to also Sana of our country. He retires in 2017, the first election he contested and won and conferred Prime Minister seat was in 1977, off course he became Prime Minister in 1975. He was Chief Minister in 1973, but the very first election he contested and won to mandate of the constituent of an electorate was 1977. He served since then, 40 years and he stepped out in 2017.

We pay great respect and homage to him, to the people of East Sepik Province, thank you very much and I also want to thank sincerely we are tribal nation and thank sincerely Murik Lake people. The last conversation I had with him on the 14 of February, a conversation I will hold very close to my heart. Something he spoke of a sea level rise in the Murik Lake area where he comes from. I said East Sepik Provincial Government and Angoram District and myself will work in partnership to address this issue.

Let me conclude by saying on behalf of my own Duna, Huli, Opener, Tukuba and Herwa tribes, my wife Racheal and her Sepik family, my children, we convey our deepest condolences to the Somare family and Somare network nationwide.

We have lost a husband, father, and grandfather but a nation as also lost someone they call a father. May his memory leave long into the future and we take comfort in knowing that sovereign God who created him, the God of our country has rested him from his life of toil and planet earth. God gives and God takes.

Romans 8:28 says, 'all things work together for the good of those who loved him'. God knows the best time to call him rest as God knew the best time to bring him into life for his deliverance of our country as independent nation.

I want to conclude by asking our citizen in our country we have received great support far and wide. Our bilateral partners, all of them have send their condolences inside. Australia government for instance has lowered flag in respect of Sir Michael, right across our country

every citizen of our country has paid great respect. Let us regroup in the unity Somare in passing as great for us to recast and build a better future for our country going forward.

Grand Chief you have worked very hard rest now, God bless.

Motion by (**Mr James Marape**) agreed to –

That the message of condolences be noted.

**64/01**

*All honourable Members present stood in their places as a mark of respect to the memory of the late Grand Chief, Right Honourable Sir Michael Thomas Somare.*

**DEPARTURE OF THE CASKET OF LATE GRAND CHIEF, Sir MICHAEL  
THOMAS SOMARE**

*(Pall-bearers carrying the casket of the late Grand chief, leave the Chamber)*

**65/01**

**Mr SPEAKER** – Honourable members, in regard to some of the points raised by members, especially Sir Puka Temu, the House Committee will sit and deliberate on those suggestions.

I also wish to inform the Honourable House that between the site we agreed upon to erect the Unity Pillar facing the Parliament House, the very place our *Constitution* was born, a statue of our great Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare will be built in his honour.

**66/01**

**Mr RAINBO PAITA** (Finschhafen-Minister for National Planning and Monitoring) – I would like to thank all Members of Parliament for their participation and their attendance. I thank everyone on both sides of the House. Those that did not attend are sick. I apologise that time does not allow for all who may want to say a few words.

Mr Speaker, I would like to challenge all Members of Parliament that especially those who have served under our late Grand Chief to put your differences aside and work together for the good of our country and our people. Some of us young leaders did not serve under him. I do not think that there will be another passing that will unite this country. His passing

is at a time when we really need to work together. We have so many problems facing us in these times therefore we need to put our differences aside and work together.

On behalf of my people of Finschhafen, I pass my people's sincere condolences to Lady Veronica and the Somare Family. I must also say that we too regard Somare as a Finschhafen man. He grew up in Finschhafen therefore we are as much part of him and his passing is also a great lose to us.

Secondly, we would also like to say thank you to the people of East Sepik for giving this leader to Papua New Guinea. I thank this Cabinet and Prime Minister Marape to give his body back to the Sepik people. The Sepik people gave and are now taking him back.

I also thank the Somare children and Lady Veronica to have given Somare to us. The family has made a lot of sacrifice for all those years. I thank you for all the sacrifice that you have made.

I say thank you to you Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare for all that you have done and contributed to our country. I do not think that anyone will replace and all that you have done. Your legacy will immortalise in our minds and spirits. Our challenge is that when one Somare falls a hundred Somares must rise moving into the future. When we lay him to rest I challenge all Members of Parliament both in the Government and the Opposition to work together for the good of Papua New Guinea.

## **INCORPORATION OF CONDOLENCE MESSAGES**

*The Following tributes and condolence messages, by leave were incorporated –*

Statement by the Prime Minister Honourable James Marape, MP on the occasion of the special sitting of Parliament to farewell the Founding Father of our Nation, late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare GCI, GCMG, CH, CF, SSI, KSG, PC, 11 March 2021

Salutations:

Speaker, Hon Job Pomat

Governor General, Grand Chief Sir Bob Dadae

Chief Justice, Sir Gibbs Salika

Members of Parliament

Lady Veronica Somare  
Members of the Diplomatic Corp  
Members of the Business Community  
Distinguished Guests  
People of Papua New Guinea

Mr Speaker, I rise on this sad and solemn occasion to offer sincere condolences to Lady Veronica and the Somare family on the passing of our Founding Father and First Prime Minister, and pay tribute to Late Grand Chief Right. Hononourable. Sir Michael Thomas Somare for an unparalleled era, illustrious legacy, and political career spanning five decades of unbroken meritorious commitment, loyalty and selfless nation-building during those formative years, for the country he so loved and nurtured to a fully-fledged Independent Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, it is only fitting that we honour and farewell this Great Leader at this Special Parliament Session. This is the very Institution of Democracy that he and his Team of young Political Leaders commonly known as the "Bully Beef Club" established during those determining years leading to Self-Government in 1973 to map out our destiny.

We thank him and our other founding fathers who stood by him for their selflessness, wisdom and foresight in deciding our political future. They were men ahead of their time considering the challenges pertaining to the formulation of our home-grown Constitution and deciding our Foreign Policy as well as laying the foundation for our socio-economic development.

The life and journey of Sir Michael are well documented and I would rather say that we all hold it at heart, and in our conscience as the greatest legacy in our history.

Mr Speaker, I must say that, not even the best of words can describe this colossus of a man that shaped the political realm from a Territory to Sovereignty, the result of which is the freedom that we all now enjoy.

All of us would have been touched by his affection for this nation and his ambitious political will to unite the one thousand tribes as one people, one nation and one PNG.

Many of us current members of Parliament are privileged to have served and mentored by him as Prime Minister, and I am pleased to say that I have learned a great deal under his stewardship.

Mr Speaker, late Grand Chief Somare ensured that we join the global community of nations as the 143<sup>rd</sup> Member of the United Nations General Assembly on 1 0<sup>th</sup> October 1975.

That set the basis for us as a nation capable of holding our own, and determining our destiny and well-being as an independent country, equal among others.

At a personal level, that puts him on equal footing with all World Leaders.

On the regional front, particularly in the Pacific region, he was a leading statesman and was held in high esteem, contributing immensely to the Pacific Islands Forum and the Melanesian Spearhead Group.

Even in retirement from political and public life, Sir Michael still had the "fight in his belly" for a better Papua New Guinea politically, economically and socially.

Mr Speaker, late Grand Chief Somare gifted us with Political Independence and his passing must not be perceived as a great loss, but rather an inspiration towards nation building.

In celebrating his life-long legacy, let us reflect on his milestone achievements and challenges he encountered during this deciding journey and emulate his leadership qualities.

May I call on all political leaders and bureaucrats to rise up from complacency and to strive for economic independence.

Mr Speaker, our intent, prior to his passing to "Take Back PNG" is a strategic move and we all must work hard to achieve economic independence in the future.

Mr Speaker, as the saying goes, 'Behind every successful man, is a strong woman' and the most important person and his life-long companion is in our midst. Lady Veronica, we thank you for your undivided commitment and support to your late husband which ensured that he accomplished his dreams and achievements for a better independent and unified Papua New Guinea.

Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Tenth Parliament and the people, I convey my deepest and heartfelt condolences to Lady Veronica and immediate family on the passing of the Founding Father of this Nation.

May His Soul Rest in Eternal Peace.

**Mr TIMOTHY MASIU** (South Bougainville Minister for Communication Information and Technology) – ON behalf of my family and I, and the people of South Bougainville, we express our deepest condolences to the family of the late Grand Chief and founding father of Papua New Guinea Sir Michael Thomas Somare on his passing on Friday February 26, 2021.

I also pass on sincere condolences to the family on behalf of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) and the National Information and Communications Technology Authority (NICTA) of which I am Minister responsible.

He was an extraordinary man as his was a life of service, love, compassion and excellence.

In nation building he was a staunch supporter of effective communication for development purposes thereby establishing the then National Broadcasting Commission which was handed over to PNG by ABC Australia on December 1, 1973.

His vision and commitment for effective communications remained intact resulting in the establishment of the 22 NBC stations throughout PNC, Kundu television, licencing of TV networks and the maintenance of the Department of Information and Communications to let the people know what their government was doing for them.

Being a broadcaster himself he appreciated the value of effective communications and as a result the establishment of NICTA also took effect in order to harness and integrate into the governance of the country modern information and communications technology which we now enjoy.

His foundational and progressive achievements for Papua New Guinea are far too many to be recounted having selflessly dedicated his life to the political and economic development of the country.

The Grand Chief will be truly missed. Your family is in our thoughts and prayers. Words are not enough to ease your pain but know that you are in our prayers.

**Mr KERENGA KUA** (Sinasin Yongamugl – Minister for Petroleum) – His Excellency the Governor General Sir Bob Dadae, Speaker of the National Parliament, Hon. Job Pomat, Chief Justice of the National and Supreme Courts of Papua New Guinea Sir Gibbs Salika, and all your Judges present in the Chamber, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea Hon. James Marape, and all your Members of the National Executive Council, all Members of the National Parliament, Leader of the Opposition Hon. Belden Namah and Members of the Opposition, Members of the Diplomatic Corp, all Distinguished Guests and Citizens of Papua New Guinea. I thank the Speaker for convening this special sitting of the National

Parliament to honour and thank the Late Grand Chief, Sir Michael Thomas Somare, for all that he has given to us as individuals, a people and a country. It is unprecedented globally for a leader to win 10 consecutive democratic elections spanning a period of 50 years straight. The Grand Chief has been able to achieve that. There is so much to say as a tribute to this truly great man. But the time we have available will not allow us that liberty.

The Grand Chief was a unique leader, one of a kind. He had a penetrating vision for his people and his country, matched by the same level of passion and unwavering commitment. On top of that he had a very high degree of humility, he was able to see the tree from the forest in every crowd that he went into. Where people saw darkness, he saw light, where some saw a mountain in front of them, he saw the valley behind that mountain, where some saw mists and cloud, and he saw none of that. Where others saw obstacles, he saw opportunities, indeed plenty of opportunities, big and small. In his eyes people have no status, they were all equal, and he accorded them the same respect irrespective of social positions.

For most of us we've never lived a life without the towering presence of the Grand Chief. At his passing, as we pay tributes and accolades to him, we must take a moment to think about how we can advance ourselves in the unknown future without his presence and advices. We attribute the following things directly to the Grand Chief, and I mention them as his legacies:

1. The creation of a dynamic constitutional democracy.
2. The creation of a dynamic Parliamentary system.
3. The creation of a dynamic Executive arm of Government.
4. The creation of a fiercely independent Judiciary.
5. The constitutionalisation of Christianity as the only national religion.
6. The adoption of the free market system of businesses and capitalism.

But above all of these, he gave us back our human dignity. By fighting for and giving us early independence from our colonial forebearers, he gave us a country of our own. Whether we had food in our stomachs, or whether we had education in heads, or money in our bank accounts, he valued our individual human dignity far above all these other things. So now, we have a country that we can call our very own, make all our own successes and mistakes, take a straight-line course or a meandering one, like our rivers in the mountains and the flood plains. At least, we no longer have to suffer the indignity of being classified as a second or third rate citizens on our ancestral lands. That's what Sir Michael Somare means to all of us, the source of our freedoms, liberties and human dignity. God knows where we would be today as a people and country, if Sir Michael Somare was never there?

Sir Michael may have passed on, but his legacies and his visions will live on. The Constitution that the Grand Chief has left us with is one of the most comprehensive statement of vision for a constitutional democracy based on the rule of law. Everything we need to know about of the Parliamentary Powers and Functions and Limitations are defined in that Constitution. Everything we need to know about the powers of the Executive Government is defined in that Constitution. Everything we need to know about our Judiciary Services is all



defined in that Constitution. His vision for the use and conservation of all the natural resources is all elaborated in the Constitution. There is a provision for almost everything you can think of.

In the years that will follow after the life and work of the Grand Chief, slavish adherence to the words of the Constitution of Papua New Guinea will keep and maintain its unity and survival as a united nation. It will guarantee many many more successes.

Our collective journey with the Grand Chief did admittedly have its ups and downs. Where we went down, an apology has been called for, and apology has been honourably given - very swiftly. I am proud of those who had the humility to apologise. For me personally, as the duly elected Member of Sinasina Yongomugl and a lawyer to the Grand Chief for many years, we are square - we are even. As we bury the Grand Chief, we shall open a completely new page - as on a clean new white sheet of paper, where we shall build new relationships, uphold the rule of law, the Constitution and the unity of our people.

Before I take my seat, I want to thank the people of East Sepik for upholding the Grand Chief through 10 consecutive election processes spanning over 50 years. For without that support all that the Grand Chief has achieved would have not been possible. The people of Papua New Guinea thank you from the deep recesses of their hearts for your steadfast and enduring support for the Grand Chief. My condolences to all the people of East and West Sepik.

By the same token I extend a sincere word of thank you to Lady Veronica Somare, and the Somare children, Betha, Arthur, Sana, Dulcie, and Michael Jnr for all that each one of you have done to uphold the Grand Chief.

To each and every one of you, my sincerest condolences.

**Dr ALLAN MARAT** (Rabaul) – The Holy Eyes of the Sovereign Triune God saw the unformed body of Michael Thomas Somare before God began to form him in His Image, in His Likeness in the womb of his mother. God Willed and Purposed his life for Greatness never before displayed by anyone living in this land now called PNG, the Nation of nations. Before he was physically born, he had already been Divinely Set Apart for Greatness. Divine Appointment as a Leader who would receive Godly Wisdom and impart to people around him, also took place before he was born.

All the days of late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare's life were Divinely Ordained and written in God's Book of Life before the first of them came to be just before or

on his birthday at Rapindik in my Rabaul District in 1936. You can debate with God what I have said of the Grand Chief thus far.

The Father of the Nation of PNG lived the first day of his life on planet earth, in Rabaul District, ENBP. The general spiritual and physical environment surrounding his birthday was divinely perfect. All the people of Rabaul District have always cherished and will always fondly remember the truth that their Rabaul District, at Rapidik, East New Britain Province, had been the birthplace of Greatness in Political Leadership for this Country PNG. He spent some six years of his childhood since his birth, in Rabaul District before he moved on with his parents to other parts of PNG.

After WWII, his contemporaries in the public service then, and in politics knew him well as they witnessed his growing passion, patriotism, and tenacity for having a Country, diverse in culture yet united in Values and Principles. Leaders are not born. They are developed. Some people thought he lived by the standards of this world. Though he knew he lived in this world, he knew he would not have to engage in political arguments using the standards of this world. He knew that to succeed in politics he would have to use political weapons that have divine power in line with his calling to demolish political strongholds that culminated in his lowering the Australian Flag and proudly hoisting our own Papua New Guinea Flag.

Late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare demolished political arguments of the Colonial Administration and every political pretension that set themselves up against the knowledge and wisdom for PNG God had blessed him with, and he took captive every political thought throughout his political life, to make it obedient to the Godly Values and Godly Principles in Christ Jesus he had in his Mind as a strong Catholic Christian.

In the politics of Education, in the politics of Health, in the politics of Economics, and in the politics of other issues whether social or legal, and whether domestic or international, our Father of the Nation PNG had an imposing stature. He knew what he wanted for PNG and its people, and in the political processes he had the trenchant zeal of a Crusader deserving each accolade accorded him in his lifetime.

Following the 2002 NGEs, late Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare became the Prime Minister again. I became his Deputy for a few months. A couple of times he left PNG for overseas official engagements entrusting the best interests of PNG in my hands. Before he would leave our shores, he would converse with me. From our conversations he very clearly displayed a tremendous interest in bringing up and nurturing naturally talented Leaders. He showed patience always looking at God's Oneness in His Triune Nature and

Consequential Goodness for Leading and Managing a Multi-Cultural PNG. We had some good laughs together in his prime ministerial office and I enjoyed his political father figure displayed towards me. He was very inquisitive about issues of National importance and was always content and patient in our lack and insufficiencies socially, politically, and economically.

My short stint as his Deputy PM, was not enough for him. He appointed me as Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Principal Legal Advisor of his Cabinet following the 2007 NGEs - no dirty politics, just Faith and Trust in, and nurturing of, Quality Human Resources for National Governance and keeping with his Values and Principles. Personally, I will always remember him for that.

On behalf of the people of Matupit Island and more particularly those who traditionally own the Rapidik land, and on behalf of all the people living in Rabaul District and East New Britain Province, and on behalf of my immediate and extended families, and on behalf of the Melanesian Liberal Party and its Leadership, we express deep and sincere appreciation and thanks to the parents (though long gone years ago) that God used to give us a specially appointed modern day powerful 'prophet' in Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas ToPalangat Somare, and to give us Greatness in Leadership for PNG. On all of our behalf also I express deepest sympathy and sincere condolences to Lady Veronica, children Arthur, Bertha, Sana, and Dulciana, and the grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas ToPalangat Somare, from God you came, and you have gone back to Him. To us, it is not how you started the race at Rapidik, but it is how you finished it, in your few quiet moments when you heard the still small voice of God calling you and you responded: 'My God, my Maker, into your hands I commend my Spirit.' Rest in Eternal Peace Grand Chief.

**Mr ROSS SEYMOR** (Huon Gulf) – We are all here today to pay tribute to the Father of this great Nation. Even though we are of many different tribes, customs and languages, it is certain that we all have one thing in common: our admiration of a man who never quits until the job is done. That man, of course, is Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare.

We the people of Huon Gulf had the greatest privilege to have Grand Chief visit and stay with us for 3 day for the launching of the School of Academy at Zifasing Primary School on 11th September, 2020.

Even though the roads from 9 mile to Clean water, where I live, was very bad, he made time to visit my family home the day before the launching, he saw cattle grazing a few hundred

meters from him and he talk about farm life and asked about cattle breeding. After refreshments he rested in the breeze under the shade tree, closed his eyes and dozed off for about half an hour. It was a good feeling to see him relax enough to fall asleep.

The next day he made a spectacular entrance on a Manolos chopper which when landing blew away coconut leaf market houses and probably grass skirts on our singsing groups that was waiting for him too but fortunately these days our men-folks wear shorts so all safe.

The highlight of my launching day was having all those members, ministers, the Prime Minister Hon. James Marape and his good wife Rachel present, but the special treat was having my whole community and the people of Huon Gulf see Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare in person, not on the radio or television but alive and well in person, that was every Man, Women and Child's dream come true.

We the People of Morobe and especially Huon Gulf District where the Nadzab Airport lies, have been blessed again and proud to have Nadzab Airport re named after GC S MTS.

Sir Michael was a man that always had time to spare for everyone in all walks of life whether it be a small man on the street or a CEO, his ways has captured the hearts of everyone that has crossed paths with him.

So, Sir Michael, I'd like to say thanks for being a Leader with a dream to unite Papua New Guinea under one flag and you fought tirelessly against all odds, rallying strong leaders to work together with you to give Independence to our beautiful country Papua New Guinea. It would never have happened without you. You are truly a Chief of a Thousand Tribes

A quote from a great man. "When a man has done what he considers as his duty to his people and his country, he can rest in peace.... I know that GC S MTS has done just that,

On behalf of my people in the Huon Gulf District, from the Markham plains of Wampar LLG to the Hinterlands of Salamaua LLG and the roughed rugged shores of Morobe LLG, my family and myself, Please accept our sincere condolences, Lady Veronica, the Somare Family, the people of Murik Lakes, the people of East Sepik for the loss of our Father and a Great Leader.

Sir Michael, as we all have memories to cherish, we pray that you rest in ever lasting peace.

### **SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT**

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

That Parliament at its rising adjourn until Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April at 2 p.m.

## ADJOURNMENT

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

That the Parliament do now adjourn.

The Parliament adjourned at 4.15 p.m.